

# ODYSSEY HOUSE

## news

www.odysseyhouseinc.org

Saving lives, rebuilding families, restoring communities

Fall 2007

## Groundbreaking Brings Community Together

### Construction Begins on Supportive Housing

Numerous community supporters joined representatives from Odyssey House and New York State and City agencies in officially breaking ground on a fifty-apartment, long-term housing development. The building will provide a supportive, independent living environment for individuals who have overcome many life challenges, including mental health problems and drug, alcohol and/or significant medical conditions.

The project was developed by Odyssey House with support from New York State Office of Mental Health and New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

“When the building is opened, it will be a new beginning for the residents and will provide them with opportunities to move their lives ahead,” said Caren Abate, assistant housing director at the New York State Office of Mental Health, which is providing capital and operational funding for the new development.

This project “really is a fine example of community partnerships working together to provide services for a neglected – but high-need – population,” said Dr. Peter Provet, president of Odyssey House. “We are grateful to our partners in state and city government and the many community leaders who are supporting this new project.”

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## 2007 Odyssey House “Run for Your Life” 5K race



Everyone's a winner! Race day fun for families. See pages 4 and 5 for full coverage.



## re(collect)ions

memories of childhood:  
collected artwork by men and  
women coping with mental illness

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ODYSSEY HOUSE

## Graduates Show Hard Work Pays Off

Becoming drug free takes work – a lot of work – and it doesn't happen overnight. For most of the people who attended the recent graduation ceremony at the MABON Family Center on Ward's Island, that's a message they've heard many times before. They know it's true that change takes time, because as Odyssey House graduates they've worked hard to make a new life for themselves and their families.

Three of them – a mother, a young man and a young woman – spoke about their personal journey to sobriety.



Diploma in hand: A graduate celebrates her success.

### Family Treatment

For the parents whose young children lived with them while they were in treatment, recovery really is a family affair. "I couldn't have done it without my daughter with me; she's the reason I walked into treatment," said Jeanine Zizza, who says today she's "a different person, someone with a job and something to live for."



Proud day for speakers, from left: Jeanine Zizza, Kristina Sellers, and Jesus Torres.

### Making Dreams Come True

To Jesus Torres, graduation is "a dream come true." As a resident, Mr. Torres recalls sitting in the back row watching last year's graduates receive their diplomas. He was impressed and vowed to be one of them. It took time, but he kept his promise and told the crowd that being a graduate is even better than he imagined. "I'm honored to be here – more humble, more open-minded, and trying to be a better man."

### Chance to Change

The third speaker represented teens who completed treatment at the new all-girls program in the South Bronx. Kristina Sellers came to the Lafayette Avenue center unsure of who she was and what she was going to do with her life. "Today," she said, "I'm working, in college and reunited with my parents. I'm grateful for the chance to change."

## Taking to the Streets: Health Fair is a Huge Hit

Earlier this summer, families who live in and around East 121st Street joined Odyssey House staff and residents at an agency-hosted health fair celebrating 40 years of community services.



Fairgoer stops by for a check up.

Included at the fair were representatives from local health, social services, and public safety organizations who offered families a choice of free wellness screenings, fire safety information, and healthy snacks.

Prevention was the theme at the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) table and at booths staffed by outreach workers from Harlem and North General Hospitals. FDNY fire safety officers dispensed fire safety tips along with free smoke alarms and batteries, and community health specialists conducted on-the-spot blood pressure and diabetes screenings.

While their parents checked out the free health information, local children and youngsters from the Odyssey House Family Center kept the volunteer artists at the face painting tables busy with requests for colorful butterflies and animals.

In all, more than 20 community organizations supported the health fair, including: treatment providers; cultural and health advocacy groups; and Aetna, the health insurance company, which provided health information brochures in English and Spanish.

"We want people to know that we can take care of their medical needs as well as substance abuse problems," said Diane DeCarolis, head of nursing at Odyssey House, who joined staff volunteers in handing out free health snacks and gifts along with information on diet and exercise.

And since no street fair is complete without music and hotdogs, Odyssey House is grateful to DJ Carlton England for keeping the beat going by generously donating his services and Liffey Van Lines for sponsoring the free concession stands.

## Groundbreaking Brings Community Together



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New York State Senator Bill Perkins thanked Odyssey House for “being part of the community,” and for bringing new development to East Harlem. “I grew up in this neighborhood, and it is wonderful to come back and see all these positive changes,” he said.

This sentiment was echoed by New York City Councilwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito, who called Odyssey House “an integral part of the community,” and said she was pleased to be involved in a project that would “provide critically needed services.” She added, “It is important to be involved with institutions that give so much back to the community.”

The tenants of the new building will be men and women who have completed treatment for mental illness and substance abuse problems, and are able, with

minimal support, to live in community-based housing. Odyssey House is committed to meeting the needs of the community; as such, preferential housing will be given to men and women from the immediate community, notably East Harlem and Greater Harlem. The building has a staff contingent of 16 full-time employees, including clinical case managers, administrators, food services workers and maintenance workers.

The new facility, located on East 123rd Street, will be a handsome, mod-

ern building that blends in with its neighbors and is in keeping with Harlem’s fine architectural heritage. The architects from Urban Architectural Initiatives have designed the building to bring in as much natural light as possible. Each floor will have a glass-fronted lounge, and the rear of the building has a two-story glass atrium that looks out onto a sunken courtyard leading to a common garden with a large, tree-shaded open space.



**Digging in:** NYC Councilwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito and State Senator Bill Perkins (center right) join Odyssey House board members, staff and supporters.

## Recollections: Art Show Captures Childhood Memories

The 2007 exhibit by members of the Odyssey House Art Project opens this fall at the Haven Art Gallery. This is the fourth show by individuals in treatment coping with mental illness, substance abuse and homelessness. This year’s group of artists used a variety of media, including paintings, decoupage and papier-mâché, to capture their “memories of childhood.”

Odyssey House has an active and vibrant expressive arts program. Creating art helps residents find new ways to access feelings and a new medium to express these feelings. Many residents, who were socially and culturally isolated by their addiction and mental illness, are encouraged to become engaged in the creative process. The show is free and runs through January 2008.

*“One time when I was a child, my father rescued me from a bad situation. From that time on, I thought of him as my ‘knight in shining armor.’”*

David R.



**Basketball,** by Robert N.



**Knight in Shining Armor,** by David R.



**GI Joe Action Photograph,** by Angelo R.

# Mayor Proclaims Sept. 23 “Odyssey



WCBS-TV Reporter Kirstin Cole announces Mayoral Proclamation with Odyssey House President Peter Provet.



Philadelphia Life Insurance Companies Director of Corporate Development Susie Maguire (center right), with members of Team PHLY.

## Celebrating Nation

On September 23rd, more than 1,500 people attended the 2nd Annual “Run for Your Life” 5K race at Icahn Stadium, a National Recovery Month event in support of men and women in recovery from substance abuse problems.

This year also featured a corporate challenge, sponsored by Philadelphia Insurance Companies, and included teams from NASDAQ, ChemRx and Urban Architectural Initiatives, among many others. The event was emceed by WCBS-TV correspondent Kirstin Cole with former New York Knicks star shooting guard John Starks. Participants included individuals in treatment, their families and friends, and supporters of recovery services, including entrants from all the major NYC treatment programs, including Daytop, Samaritan Village, Phoenix House, PSI and others.

### Business leaders team up to support recovery

Thank you to our sponsors who reached out to members of the business community and helped make “Run for the Your



*“We truly believe in your mission that fitness and a healthy lifestyle are key ingredients to living a successful and happy life.”*

Susie Maguire, Philadelphia Life Insurance Companies

Thanks to our sponsors:



We want you to know®



# House Day in the City of New York”



From left: Odyssey House Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer John Tavolacci and former NY Knicks player John Starks, congratulate top female runners.

## nal Recovery Month

Life” a very successful event. Champion Sponsor Jody Silva Falk, vice president, ChemRx Pharmacy, told the cheering crowd that her company was “proud of the small role we play in people’s recovery and being at an event like today with so many children and families united in the belief of recovery is something that fills our hearts. We support the hard work of everyone at Odyssey House and congratulate all the winners here today who are striving for a better life.”

Her sentiments were echoed by Susie Maguire, director of corporate development, Philadelphia Insurance Companies, who said she was inspired and excited to be associated with Odyssey House and was looking forward to the 2008 race. “We truly believe in your mission that fitness and a healthy lifestyle are key ingredients to living a successful and happy life. We look forward to developing our partnership and lots of success for next year’s ‘Run for Your Life.’”



Family fun — ChemRx President Jerry Silva (left), with his daughter Jody Silva Falk, vice president (holding her daughter), and members of their team.

*“We support the hard work of everyone at Odyssey House and congratulate all the winners here today who are striving for a better life.”*

Jody Silva Falk, vice president, ChemRx Pharmacy



# New Outpatient Program Targets At-Risk Teens

Odyssey House has been awarded a \$253,000 grant from New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) to provide outpatient substance abuse treatment for adolescents who are at risk of placement in the child welfare or other juvenile systems.

The grant will enable Odyssey House to expand its treatment capabilities beyond its existing programs and ensure that New York adolescents and their families will have a variety of treatment options available to them. The increased funding will allow Odyssey House to hire two additional adolescent counselors; provide for off-site visits (home, foster care, and school); and encourage greater family involvement in teen treatment plans.

Odyssey House has been treating teens and young adults with drug and alcohol abuse problems since its inception, more than forty years ago. The agency currently operates two gender-specific residential programs: The Leadership Center (in the East Village), a teen boys program and Lafayette Avenue (in the South Bronx), a newly-opened teen girls program.

Odyssey House received the largest single award for a therapeutic community, and one of the largest overall awards in the State. It is one of 14 treatment programs that were awarded a total of \$2 million in funding for adolescent pilot programs, which are expected to reach nearly 1,000 youths and their families

across New York over the coming year. These funds are being provided to OASAS-certified, not-for-profit, adolescent outpatient chemical dependence treatment programs that use evidence-based treatment services. Programs will provide services that combine individual, group and home visits using an enriched staff to patient ratio of 1 to 15 that will include staff with adolescent treatment and family therapy expertise. The programs will also be working with family court, schools, mental health, probation and other organizations that provide services to youth in the community.

The treatment of adolescents is a complex matter that must take into account a variety of issues related to adolescent development, such as physical and emotional maturation, brain development, life experiences, family history, physical and mental health-related issues, and educational and

vocational needs. Chemical use can intensify the feelings and behaviors of the adolescent and delay full behavioral and emotional development.

Dr. Peter Provet, president of Odyssey House, said, "Teen substance abusers face unique challenges in confronting their emotional and drug-related behaviors. With this grant, we hope to address those challenges and not only help adolescents achieve lasting sobriety, but also improve academic performance, enhance family functioning and reduce involvement with the juvenile justice system."

*"Teen substance abusers face unique challenges"*

Dr. Peter Provet  
President of Odyssey House

# Agency Leader Joins Governor's Panel

Odyssey House Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer John Tavolacci has been appointed to Governor Spitzer's Advisory Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse. Mr. Tavolacci was confirmed by the New York Senate and will join a 26-member council representing treatment providers, consumers and consumer advocates, mental health

associations and insurance companies. The Advisory Council is charged with providing guidance and advice to the Commissioner of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services on the agency's five-year plan; and reviewing regulatory initiatives, applications for capital projects, and new programs being developed in New York State.



**NYNP New York Nonprofit Press**  
October 2007, Volume 6, Issue 9 www.nynp.org

**Odyssey House**  
Forty Years of Believing in Change



**AGENCY OF THE MONTH**

# Odyssey House Named "Agency of the Month" by New York Nonprofit Press

We are pleased to announce that *New York Nonprofit Press* has selected Odyssey House as "Agency of the Month" for October 2007. The profile chronicled Odyssey House's history over the past 40 years, from its roots in the Therapeutic Community movement to its development into a comprehensive treatment services organization, providing residential and outpatient substance abuse treatment;

medical, dental and mental health care; education and vocational counseling; and permanent, supportive housing.

The *New York Nonprofit Press* is distributed monthly to more than 50,000 key staff in 4,000 nonprofit human service agencies throughout the New York metropolitan area.

To read the entire article, visit our website at [www.odysseyhouseinc.org](http://www.odysseyhouseinc.org).

## “A Life in the Community for Everyone”



Dr. Terry Cline with residents from Odyssey House ElderCare and Family Center of Excellence Programs.

The chief of the federal agency charged with ensuring all Americans have access to substance abuse and mental health services recently visited Odyssey House to see for himself how community-based programs are meeting those needs.

As the Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Dr. Terry Cline leads the \$3.3 billion agency responsible for the nation’s substance abuse prevention, addictions treatment, and mental health serv-

ice delivery systems.

The task is enormous. Latest national data (2005) show that more than 22 million Americans, aged 12 or older, are classified with substance abuse or dependence; and nearly 25 million adults, aged 18 or older, live with a

serious mental condition. In New York State alone the numbers are 1.4 million and 1.8 million respectively.

According to SAMHSA, the economic costs of undiagnosed and untreated mental and substance abuse disorders are “staggering,” and the human costs – measured in lost jobs, lost families and lost lives – are “incalculable.”

Dr. Cline was eager to meet some of the people behind these statistics who are now in treatment.

He said listening to their stories and hearing how they are changing their lives, “it is evident that Odyssey House is providing cutting edge, comprehensive and holistic services that are meeting the needs of each individual.”

That Odyssey House provides these services in local communities where people can keep in contact with their families, have access to employment opportunities, and seek appropriate housing is, according to Dr. Cline, in line with the latest research on effective programs. SAMHSA currently funds two housing initiatives at Odyssey House – pretreatment screening for homeless addicts, and housing support for people who have completed treatment.

For Dr. Cline, Odyssey House exemplifies “A Life in the Community for Everyone,” a vision based on the premise that people of all ages, with or at risk for mental or substance use disorders, should have the opportunity for a fulfilling life.



### MISSION

It is the mission of Odyssey House to:

**P**rovide comprehensive and innovative services to the broadest range of metro New York’s population who abuse drugs, abuse alcohol, have mental illness.

**P**rovide high quality, holistic treatment impacting all major life spheres: psychological, physical, social, family, educational, and spiritual.

**S**upport personal rehabilitation, renewal, and family restoration.

Throughout its activities, Odyssey House undertakes to act as a responsible employer and member of the community and to manage the assets of the organization in a professional manner.

### Working Together



Odyssey House President Dr. Peter Provet welcomes Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer to an agency-hosted meeting of The 125th Alliance, a community forum for business and neighborhood leaders in East Harlem.

Give to the “Friends of Odyssey House” campaign online at [www.odysseyhouseinc.org](http://www.odysseyhouseinc.org) or contact us at:

Odyssey Foundation, 95 Pine Street, New York, NY. Tel: 212-361-1609.



95 Pine Street  
 New York, NY 10005  
[www.odysseyhouseinc.org](http://www.odysseyhouseinc.org)  
 Tel: 212-361-1600

## Odyssey House Community-Based Services



Founded in 1967, Odyssey House is an Enhanced Therapeutic Community (TC) providing innovative services and programs for a broad population of drug-troubled individuals and families, including:

- Mothers & children
- Pregnant women
- Adolescents
- Elders (55 years and older)
- Mentally ill chemical abusers (MICA)
- Single adults
- Court mandated clients
- Homeless adults

Odyssey House runs the largest and oldest parent and child residential/outpatient TC program in the country and the only residential/outpatient TC program for senior citizens.

For more information about Odyssey House programs, call 212-987-5100 or visit us online at [www.odysseyhouseinc.org](http://www.odysseyhouseinc.org)