

# ODYSSEY HOUSE

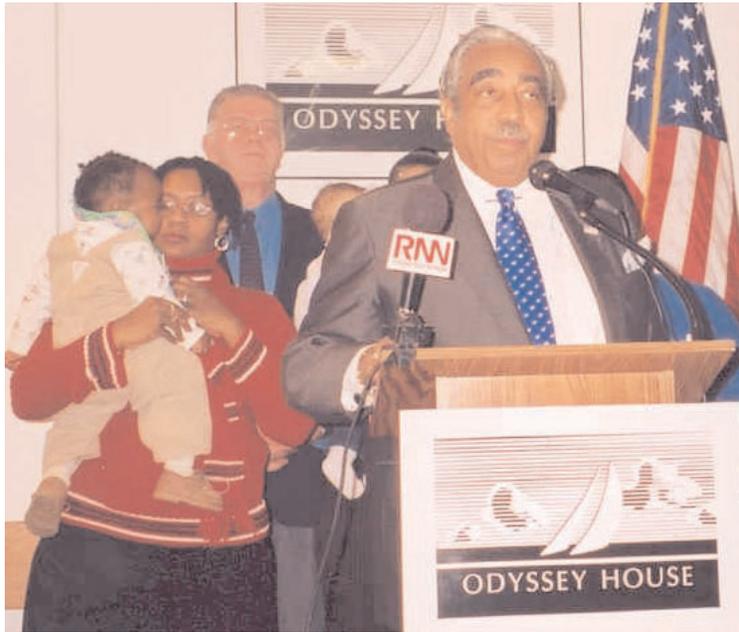
## news

www.odysseyhouseinc.org

Saving lives, rebuilding families, restoring communities

Winter 2005

## National Leaders Support Relapse Prevention Strategy



Sharing the stage with Congressman Rangel, residents from Odyssey House family, teen, and senior citizen programs pledge their commitment to recovery.

**Relapse is a predictable part of the recovery process. In treatment, residents learn to view relapse as a single event, not a reason to abandon the rehabilitative process. That was the message of national leaders at a recent Odyssey House press conference that focused on relapse prevention strategies and guidelines for maintaining recovery.**

John Walters, Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy — the nation's "Drug Czar" — and Congressman Charles Rangel joined Dr. Peter Provet, President of Odyssey House, and residents in recovery at the press event on November 30th at the Odyssey House Family Center of Excellence in East Harlem.

Treatment centers with specialized programs, like

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Martha Salgado and her son Louis Kroon, a teen in treatment at the Odyssey House Leadership Center, participated in the press event.

## Marathon Runners Race for Recovery



Ready to pound the pavements, team Odyssey House all set for the big race.

### And they're off!

Odyssey House clients, staff members, and supporters ran in the 35th annual New York City Marathon. A number of residents in treatment also volunteered to distribute water and cheer the runners on.

Former client, program graduate, and current staff member Andre Matthews (kneeling front row) participated in the marathon for the 4th year in a row.

"I learned how I could use running as part of my recovery process at Odyssey House," he says. "Completing my first marathon made me realize that I can achieve my goals if I really put my mind to it. It not only helped me strengthen my body, but I am stronger as a person now, and I believe I can accomplish anything. I have been drug-free for six years. Running and treatment at Odyssey House have given me my life back."

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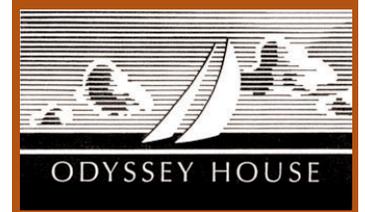
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## In Memoriam, Richard Fogarty



**A longtime Board member of Odyssey House and Odyssey Foundation, Richard Fogarty will be deeply missed for his kindness, humility, and friendship.**

“Rich was an unfailing supporter and champion of the men, women, and children in treatment for substance abuse and mental illness,” says George Rosenfeld, Chairman of the Odyssey House Board of Trustees. “His style of leadership, forging strength, clear vision, compassion and empathy was felt by all those he touched at Odyssey House.”

During his career, Mr. Fogarty became a leader in the beverage industry after working in various management positions with

Schaefer Beer, McKesson-Robins and Labatt-USA, where he served as President and CEO for several years. Upon his retirement in 1996, he was active in community affairs and served as a member of Norwalk Grassroots Tennis Board, The Board of Advisors of Fairfield University Graduate School of Business and as Head Coach of the Darien High School Junior Varsity Tennis Team.

Odyssey Foundation is grateful to Mr. Fogarty’s family and friends for their generosity in support of men and women in treatment. Their contributions — in remembrance of Mr. Fogarty’s dedication to our programs — will help us continue to provide life-saving services to troubled families.

## A Bright Future Ahead for Odyssey House Graduates

**Gil Graciano concedes that if someone told him he would be a drug counselor later in life, he would have laughed. A lifetime addict, Graciano abused heroin for 37 years before entering the Odyssey House ElderCare program for treatment in August 2001.**

Gil Graciano completed the program in a graduation ceremony on December 4, 2005 at the Odyssey House Manor facility. He plans on working as a credentialed substance abuse counselor.

“In treatment we learn that you can’t keep it unless you give it away,” Graciano said.

“What better way to give it away than by working in a therapeutic center like Odyssey House.”

Graciano was one of 30 former residents that participated in the facility graduation. While addressing the audience, Graciano noted that the ElderCare program works to disprove two well known adages “Once a junkie, always a junkie” and “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.”

“As a former knucklehead, I am living proof that neither of those statements are true,” Graciano quipped.

Kim Birkett graduated from the Odyssey House Family Center program. Birkett entered treatment in December 2000 after abusing crack for 25 years, and losing her newborn son to the child welfare system.

“Before the birth of my son I didn’t care about anyone or anything except getting high,” Birkett said. “I had to clean up my life and enter treatment in order to get him back.



**Proud to wear a cap and gown. Proud graduate Gil Graciano, an intake counselor in the Odyssey House admissions department, now helps others get on the road to recovery.**

She credits the Family Center program for helping to alter the course of her life. She has learned how to think differently, manage stressful situations, recognize when she might be at risk of getting high again, and practice being a better mother to her son.

“I never thought I needed Odyssey House, but my time here has taught me that there is life after drugs and it is an excellent life,” Birkett said.

Birkett landed a job as the office manager of a nonprofit program that provides services to ex-convicts with substance abuse problems.

## Odyssey Runners Raise \$8,000

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Over the past decade Odyssey House has utilized running and physical well-being as part of our enhanced substance abuse treatment model – healthy bodies, healthy lives – and the marathon is an important motivational tool.

“Many of the elements that are involved in training for a marathon are very similar to what takes place during the treatment process,” John Tavalacci, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Odyssey House, explains. “There is a tremendous emphasis on structure, discipline, and repetition in both activities.”

A number of Odyssey House staff members and clients have participated in the NYC marathon over the last few years, however this year marked the organization’s first effort to raise funds to help clients participate in the marathon. Odyssey House received \$8,000 in donations from staff, client’s family members, and supporters. Although Odyssey House is funded by state and city agencies, “extracurricular” activities like running are afforded little financial support. With the continued support of friends we can involve more clients in these activities in the future.

Participation in community activities is important for individuals whose former lifestyles isolated them from family and neighbors.

Tavalacci notes that addicts are often stereotyped as people that take from the community. “At Odyssey House we encourage clients to become better citizens and better people. Involvement in these types of activities is the way it happens,” he says.



**Odyssey House staff and residents volunteered to distribute water and cheer the runners on.**

## Getting Ready for Spring

**In the fall of 2004 Odyssey House volunteers partnered with community members to clean up and revitalize Marcus Garvey Park in Harlem. A group of 15 residents helped beautify the park by planting over 2,000 daffodils throughout the grounds.**

Volunteer Michelle Whitney, a resident in treatment at the Odyssey House Family Center, feels that this type of community service work helps individuals in therapeutic centers appreciate their neighborhoods and the environment.

Odyssey House resident Samuel Smalls agrees. “We have to do something positive

for the community and be more responsible for what is around us,” he said.

Volunteer work is a positive activity that allows residents to interact with the others, give back to the community, and develop a sense of pride.

“It’s important to take an active and positive role in the community,” said James Parks, a resident in treatment at Odyssey House. “This is our park and we helped to beautify it for the children and families in the neighborhood...it gives you a sense of ownership.”

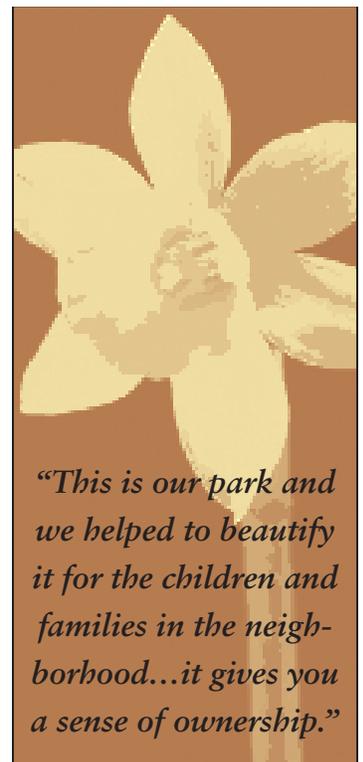
Odyssey House residents participate in a number of community service activities

throughout the New York City area. In the past year, residents have run in the New York City marathon, volunteered at treatment centers, and participated in street health fairs.

The volunteers that helped revitalize Marcus Garvey Park plan to visit in the spring and see the daffodils bloom.

All unanimously agree that if asked to volunteer again they will be more than willing to lend a helping hand.

“I would most definitely volunteer again without a second thought,” Parks said. “When I leave treatment, I’m going to look for more opportunities to do so.”



*“This is our park and we helped to beautify it for the children and families in the neighborhood...it gives you a sense of ownership.”*

# ODYSSEY HOUSE FOCUS ON

## Leadership Center Teaches Teens to Succeed



Cesar Sepulveda (center) helps Leadership Center teens, Christine and Sammy, move beyond drug addiction and develop into mature young adults.

Treatment programs that provide services specially targeted to adolescents are essential in reducing teen substance abuse. The Odyssey House Leadership Center provides troubled youth with the individualized support, treatment, and attention they need to grow into healthy young adults.

“We have a first-rate team at the Leadership Center,” Cesar Sepulveda, program director, said. “The counselors, teachers, and support staff really care about the teens – and their families – and understand the hard work involved in getting a kid back on a positive track.”

Successful teen drug treatment facilities are sensitive to the developmental needs of adolescents. The Leadership Center offers teens a wide range of programs and services including: an

on-site Board of Education high school and GED classes; vocational/educational training and placement; an onsite medical clinic; group therapy and family therapy; health seminars; and recreational activities.

“Teenage substance abusers respond well to treatment programs that offer a range of activities in an ordered environment. At the 60-bed Leadership Center our goal is to help youngsters at risk of falling through the cracks learn to manage their lives and develop into mature, drug-free, young adults,” Sepulveda said.

### **Studies Show Teen-Focused Treatment Works**

A 2004 study by the RAND Corporation’s Drug Policy Research Center found that teens in drug treatment programs were more likely to curb their drug use and have better psychological health than their peers who received other probation services such as camps, detention, or long-term placements that were not focused on treating substance abuse. The study indicates that the teens that participated in treatment programs developed coping skills that continue to help them after they left the program.



Professional counseling staff encourage youngsters to share their problems in group therapy sessions.

## Teen Drug Abuse Still A Cause for Concern

Teenagers are more susceptible to the harmful effects of drug abuse because they are still experiencing physical and psychological growth and development.

The latest National Household Survey on Drug Abuse suggests that the earlier

in life that people initiate drug use, the more likely they are to develop a drug problem. In addition to an increased risk of developing serious health-related problems, teen drug abuse can also lead to academic difficulties, poor peer and family relationships, and

an increase in antisocial behavior including criminal activity and risky sexual behaviors.

Also of concern are the findings of the latest Monitoring the Future Survey that shows levels of use are still unacceptably high among

certain youth populations. According to this 2004 study, half of the 50,000 students surveyed tried an illicit drug in their lifetime. The number of teens that use marijuana and inhalants is also rising.

# N TEENS AND TREATMENT

## Odyssey House Teen Shares His Story

Louis Kroon is a 16-year-old adolescent in treatment at the Odyssey House Teen Leadership Center. Louis entered treatment in December 2003 and has been sober for a year. He began abusing marijuana at the age of 12.

“I lived a pretty good life until I was 13 years old. That’s when I started living life backward,” Louis explained. “I became addicted to drugs and money. At the age of 15 I dropped out of high school to sell drugs and get high.”

Louis decided to seek treatment when he realized his life was on a downward spiral and that the criminal activity associated with his substance abuse could lead to a life of incarceration.

“I knew I needed to make a change. Treatment was a big step for me, but it was well worth it,” he said.

### Importance of Family Involvement

Family involvement is a critical component of a teen treatment program. At the Odyssey House Leadership Center, family members are invited to attend weekly support groups. Odyssey House counselors educate the families about drug treatment and the important role they will play in helping their loved one maintain recovery.

Louis’s mother, Martha Salgado, was an active participant in his treatment and recovery. She recalls the pain of watching him spiral down

into drugs and her fear she that if he didn’t get help he would end up in prison or dead.

“Finding out your child is a drug addict is something no parent expects – or should have to go through,” she said.

But despite the heartbreak, Martha says she is grateful to Odyssey House for bringing her family closer together.

“With the support of the counselors we learned to be more honest and open with each other. We’ve all come a long way.”

For his part Louis says he is proud to have earned his mother’s respect. “I am glad we are the best of friends again. She is the only person in my life right now.”

### A Bright Future

Louis secured his GED while in treatment and is currently taking classes at Kingsborough Community College. In order to maintain his sobriety, Louis plans to focus on his education and eventually pursue a career as a music producer/disc jockey.

“To be honest I am not cured of my addiction, but I have no fears of relapse because I am committed to my life in recovery,” Louis said. “I like my life and myself clean and sober. As I have learned, life in recovery works if you work it.”



## Signs of Teen Substance Abuse

These changes often signal that something troubling is going on and may involve alcohol or drugs:

- She’s withdrawn, depressed, tired, or careless about her personal grooming.
- He’s hostile, uncooperative, and frequently breaks curfews.
- Her relationships with family members have deteriorated.
- He’s hanging around with a new group of friends.
- Her grades have slipped, and her school attendance is irregular.
- He’s lost interest in hobbies, sports, and other favorite activities.
- Her eating and sleeping patterns have changed; she’s up at night and sleeps during the day.
- He has a hard time concentrating.
- Her eyes are red-rimmed and her nose is runny – but she doesn’t have allergies or a cold.
- Household money has been disappearing.
- You have found any of the following in your home: pipes, rolling papers, small medicine bottles, eye drops, butane lighters, homemade pipes, or bongos (pipes that use water as a filter) made from soda cans or plastic beverage containers.

Source: Partnership for a Drug Free America

*“When people say miracles don’t exist I tell them to visit a treatment center and see a miracle at work.”*

JOHN WALTERS,  
DIRECTOR  
OF THE WHITE HOUSE  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL  
DRUG CONTROL POLICY

## Treatment Focus on Relapse Prevention

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Odyssey House, are successful in helping substance abusers overcome their addiction and maintain sobriety. Odyssey House staff encourage residents to use a cognitive, decision making approach to avoid relapse and work with the family to combat the potential for relapse and support the recovery process.

At the press conference, Brenda Maldonado, a 23-year-old mother in treatment with her infant daughter at the Odyssey House Family Center, discussed the importance of family involvement in maintaining recovery. She is teaching hers to understand what she is learning in treatment.

### **Treatment Miracles**

As the nation’s “Drug Czar,” John Walters coordinates all aspects of federal drug programs and spending. A true champion of treatment programs, Mr. Walters has allocated over \$3 billion to this cause.

“Substance abuse touches all people, all areas of our so-

ciety, all families have had personal experience with it,” Walters said. “We have to help the larger community understand that some celebration practices can trigger the



**Forging a treatment/prevention partnership. Dr. Peter Provet welcomes Director Walters to Odyssey House.**

pain that is at the root of substance abuse.”

Mr. Walters praised the dedicated staff at treatment centers like Odyssey House for quietly working to make the community better. “When people say miracles don’t exist, then I tell them they need to visit a treatment center and see a miracle at work,” Walters said.

Congressman Rangel, Ranking Member of the powerful Committee on Ways and Means and Chairman of the Congressional Narcotics Abuse and Control Caucus, attested to the success of treatment programs. As a believer in second chances, “Second Chance” Rangel, as he calls himself, knows that there is always an opportunity to recover and make yourself over. He cited the need to encourage those in recovery not to fall back into the nightmare they were living. “The biggest gift you can receive is having someone say thank you for helping me,” Rangel said.

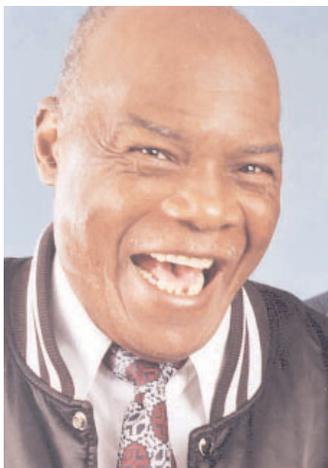
For 63-year-old David Sykes, a resident in the Odyssey House ElderCare program, combating self-defeating attitudes and behaviors and solidifying his plans for the future are helping him avoid relapse. “For me staying sober is an ongoing journey. Some days are good, some days are bad ... it’s just a matter of one day at a time,” he said.

## New York State Funds Long-term Study to Assess ElderCare

Odyssey House will evaluate the effectiveness of the ElderCare Treatment Program through a long term study. The evaluation will follow 150 senior clients from admission into the ElderCare Residential Treatment Program to completion of the ElderCare Outpatient Treatment Program. The study will also include data from one and five-year client follow-up assessments after successful completion of the programs.

The evaluation is designed to determine how successful the program is in helping clients to: remain abstinent for five years; avoid criminal

justice involvement; reduce their depression and anxiety; foster a greater sense of self-esteem; create positive role models; and re-unite them with friends and loved ones. The evaluation will also investigate gender differences in these outcomes, and examine distinctions between elders who have abused drugs and alcohol their entire lives versus those who began using drugs/alcohol late in life because of a loss or trauma. The study is funded by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services.



# Hands on Help for Early Readers

**Thanks to generous donations from friends and supporters, Odyssey House is able to fund a range of learning enrichment programs and activities for children and parents in the Family Center Program.**

The Rosie O'Donnell Foundation recently donated \$7,000 to the Odyssey House Children's Library and Literacy program. The gift will be used to purchase new books for the children's library at the Odyssey House Manor facility. The library, which opened in the fall of 2004, now contains more than 3,500 donated books. It is also the meeting place for a number of Odyssey House literacy programs including an Inter-generational Reading Group, where seniors from the ElderCare program read to preschoolers of parents in treatment, and Mother/Child Book Clubs.

Anita Schenkweiler, a 21-year-old in treatment at the Odyssey House Family Center with her four-year-old daughter Destiny, says that she did not spend enough quality time with her child while abusing drugs.

"My daughter and I are closer since I've been sober," she says. "I read to her in the library everyday and I plan on continuing to read to her even after I finish treatment. Destiny loves Dr. Seuss and I know reading is enhancing her learning skills. She has memorized a lot of the stories and even reads along now."



**Gloria Staley, a senior in treatment in the ElderCare program, reads to a group of preschoolers.**

## **Child-Friendly Computers**

The United Way, the Day Care Council, and IBM recently donated KIDSMART Young Explorer computers to the Odyssey House preschool program. The computers are a valuable addition to the curriculum that provides the children with constructive learning opportunities.

For Cecilia Scott, Director of Odyssey House Family Center, a key goal of the program is to expose the children

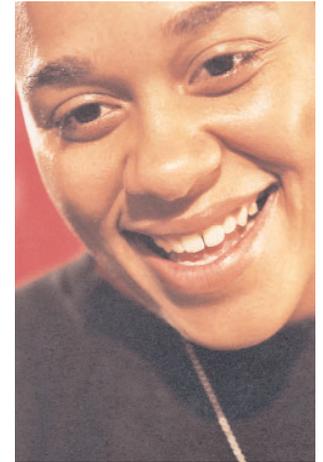


**New KIDSMART computer helps make learning fun for Family Center preschooler.**

to age-appropriate books, early reading instruction, and other educational opportunities.

"Education" she says, "is their best hope for productive, healthy, drug-free lives. Outside of Odyssey House, most children of our clients do not have books and are not read to — a common problem in families struggling with substance abuse, homelessness, and poverty. The time they live with us provides a critical opportunity to prepare them for a lifetime of learning."

Odyssey House hopes to secure funding to further expand early childhood literacy and educational instruction. Development goals for the educational initiative include: conduct pre- and post-literacy tests; purchase audiobooks, software and instructional games; hire a literacy program coordinator; and create a second library at the MABON facility, which houses the Odyssey House Family Re-entry program.



## **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.

**Give to the "Friends of Odyssey House" campaign. Please contact:  
Odyssey Foundation, 95 Pine Street, New York, NY. Tel: 212-361-1609.**



95 Pine Street  
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*and*

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## 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 TC program in the country and the only residential and 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)