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**Odyssey House President Dr. Peter Provet (back row, center) and NYS OASAS Commissioner Arlene Gonzalez-Sanchez (front row, center) announce the street outreach initiative at the Manor Family Center in East Harlem.**

**George Rosenfeld Center for Recovery**

A multi-generational behavioral health treatment center for women, children, and older adults



(See page 3)

**Expanding Recovery Services**

New community-based center opening in the Bronx this spring



(See page 3)

## Connecting More New Yorkers to Care

Odyssey House is one of two addiction treatment providers awarded more than \$190,000 in funding to support a new peer engagement initiative in East Harlem. This initiative, developed by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) will focus on reducing street drug use, lowering potential for overdoses and other drug-related emergencies, and addressing community concerns about drug abuse, including the use of synthetics, heroin, and Rx opioids. Two peer engagement specialists, one from Odyssey House and the other from the second provider, Mount Sinai Behavioral Health System, will conduct the outreach.

Dr. Peter Provet, President of Odyssey House, said, “When a community works together to fight drug abuse, individual lives are saved and everyone’s lives are improved. Local partners armed with local knowledge who share a commitment to the neighborhood they live and work in are an

essential part of the glue that keeps families together, the streets safe, and businesses and neighborhoods thriving. I am proud to partner with NYS OASAS and Mount Sinai Behavioral Health System on this essential street outreach initiative that extends awareness of treatment services to people in need throughout East Harlem. This initiative is a big step forward in protecting the health of New Yorkers struggling with addiction.”

**Guiding individuals in crisis into treatment**

Peer engagement specialists, who are knowledgeable about the alcohol and substance use disorder treatment system, will work with Emergency Department personnel in the hospitals serving the area to help establish connections to addiction treatment and other supports after an opioid overdose reversal or after discharge from another substance use-related ED visit.



**Odyssey House®**

Where recovery gets real

*Continued on next page*



Addressing the crowd at the press conference, Mark Fowler talked about his outreach efforts and thanked Commissioner Gonzalez-Sanchez and Dr. Provet for “giving [him] the opportunity to make a difference.”

“Connection to addiction-focused care is always critical, but is particularly so after an alcohol or drug-related crisis,” said NYS OASAS Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez. “Connecting a person to treatment after an overdose reversal is crucial to getting them started on the path to recovery, and can help prevent relapse and lower the risk for a potential subsequent overdose. These peer professionals can be the warm hand that individuals need to guide them into treatment so that they can get the help they need and hopefully join the millions of Americans who are living a healthy life in recovery.”

As part of a press conference to announce this collaborative program, Odyssey

House’s peer engagement specialist, Mark Fowler, described his experience within the recovery community and how he plans to conduct outreach to connect individuals in East Harlem with treatment services.

“I come to my role with decades of experience understanding – and experiencing – the devastating effects of substance abuse, mental illness, and homelessness.

“I know these streets. I know the emergency rooms, police precincts, churches, and bodegas. I know where drug addicts, the homeless, and mentally ill people try to hide – and sometimes fade away. My job is to do whatever I can to help these people connect to services, help save them from themselves, and contribute to a kinder, healthier city,” Mr. Fowler said.

In addition to conducting street outreach, the peer engagement specialists will give presentations to local organizations, soup kitchens, and religious centers to help increase knowledge about substance use disorder treatment and support services that are available in the community. They will also track referrals to those services, and collect other pertinent data to assess the efficacy of the project. NYS OASAS will oversee the initiative. ●

## Dressing for Success



Job searching can be a challenge for our clients for many reasons, one of which is a lack of proper interview attire. To solve that problem, Outpatient Services in the Bronx offers a weekly “pop up shop” where clients can get interview clothes, donated by friends and colleagues, free of charge. “We want to empower our clients to achieve success in their personal and professional lives, and having appropriate business clothing for job interviews gives them the confidence they need to help them thrive in work and in life,” said Mary Callahan, Senior Manager, Director of Outpatient Services.

Since opening in December, the pop up shop has evolved into more than just business attire and now includes items such as accessories and children’s clothes. Besides fulfilling a basic need, the shop has also increased attendance to Friday groups. If you’d like to donate clothing, please contact [outpatient@odysseyhousenyc.org](mailto:outpatient@odysseyhousenyc.org). ●

## Top 10 Things to Know About Addiction

In the midst of a devastating opioid epidemic, Dr. Peter Provet offers 10 fundamental points to anchor efforts to address this growing national tragedy. Below is an abbreviated version; visit our website at [bit.ly/addictionprimer](http://bit.ly/addictionprimer) to read the full text.

- 1 Treatment works. But there isn’t enough of it. Only 10 percent of Americans with substance use problems are able to get the appropriate treatment they need to stop using drugs and maintain a drug-free lifestyle.
- 2 Addiction does not discriminate. Substance abuse is a health problem that destroys the lives of men and women, young and old, from all ethnic backgrounds and communities.
- 3 Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the US. In all, opioid overdose deaths claim the lives of 80 Americans a day.
- 4 The tragedy is that a great many of these lives can be saved through the use of naloxone – a lifesaving, easy to administer drug, proven to reverse opioid overdose deaths that costs as little as \$75 or less.
- 5 While the human cost of addiction can be devastating, the financial burden on all Americans is staggering. The US spends more than \$700 billion annually in costs related to health care, lost work productivity, and crime.
- 6 The cost of treatment for substance use disorders pales in comparison to the costs of abuse. Publicly funded, residential treatment costs \$62 a day; in-hospital opioid detox starts at \$1,000 a day. In 2012, New York City paid \$460 a day to feed, house, and guard each inmate, the majority nonviolent drug offenders.
- 7 Funding for treatment has not kept up with demand. The 21st Century CURES Act should help address this funding gap.
- 8 As demand for treatment increases we are faced with a growing workforce crisis in the addictions field: A report warned that the field would need to fill more than 330,000 jobs to keep pace with demand.
- 9 Addiction is a brain disease to be treated, not a criminal justice issue to be punished.
- 10 As more laws decriminalizing or legalizing marijuana use are enacted across the country, keeping marijuana out of the hands of youth, and ensuring prevention and treatment programs are ready to help those in need, are everyone’s responsibility.

# Getting Ready for Opening Day



The finishing touches are being applied for the opening of a new treatment center for women, families, and older adults. The George Rosenfeld Center for Recovery (GRCR) is set to open later this spring following an extensive multi-million dollar renovation.

The project reclaimed and enhanced an original historic structure, built in 1915 as a hospital for psychiatric patients, to create a modern family treatment center with nurseries, daycare and preschool classrooms, a medical clinic and fitness center, family and adult suites, and resident dining facilities and lounges.

In keeping with treatment services offered throughout the Odyssey House system, residential care at the GRCR embraces a holistic continuum of evidence-based behavioral health care. Individually developed treatment plans incorporate a range of services including medication-assisted treatment; counseling; group therapy; case management; educational, vocational, and peer-supported recovery and housing programs.

The 231-bed residential complex is located on Wards Island, within a 480-acre city park that, conjoined with Randall's Island, lies in the East River, between East Harlem, the South Bronx, and Astoria, Queens. ●

## Expanding Recovery Services in the Bronx

This spring, Odyssey House will be expanding its recovery services in the Bronx with the opening of a new Recovery Community and Outreach Center (RCOC), providing a community-based, non-clinical setting that is safe, welcoming, and alcohol/drug-free. The center will promote long-term recovery through skill building, recreation, wellness education, employment readiness, civic restoration opportunities, and other social activities.

Dr. Peter Provet, president of Odyssey House, said, "We're pleased to build on the success of our Bronx-based services and provide individuals and families on the road to recovery with the services they need, where they need them most – in their own community."

In partnership with Argus Community, the RCOC will be located at the Davidson Community Center, which has been providing prevention services for kids,

GED classes, and a food pantry in the Bronx since the 1960s. A Coordinator of Recovery Services, a Volunteer Coordinator, and two Recovery Coaches will be on staff to work with the clients in developing wellness plans that highlight goals in the four domains of recovery: health, home, purpose, and community.

### Outreach center connects community

Recovery center staff will help individuals and families navigate the addiction treatment system and secure insurance coverage. The center will provide an opportunity for individuals and families to connect with peers who are going through similar challenges so that they can benefit from shared experiences and commitment to common goals for recovery. Clients will have access to a computer lab for resume writing and computer skills training. Clients at the RCOC will also have access to the Davidson Community Center resources through our partnership with Argus Community.

Odyssey House is one of five sites selected by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, each of which will receive \$350,000 annually over five years to provide health, wellness, and other critical support to individuals and families who are recovering from a substance use disorder. These model recovery centers are a key piece of Governor Cuomo's aggressive, multi-pronged approach to addressing substance use disorders in New York State.

"Addiction devastates the lives of too many New Yorkers and their families, but recovery from addiction is attainable with the right support," Governor Cuomo said. "New Yorkers in every part of the state will now have the recovery-focused resources and supports they need to make their recovery possible, bringing us another step closer to a stronger and healthier New York for all." ●



In commemoration of our 50th anniversary, each month we have been sharing a story that highlights one of our programs or treatment populations. Here are excerpts from the third quarter of our yearlong celebration.

## Recovery Stories



Hamilton

### “I was given a second chance.”

“Six months ago, if you had told me I’d be going to college, I would have called you a liar.” When Hamilton, 24, came to Odyssey House, he was homeless and doing anything he could to get more heroin. But after a near-fatal overdose, he made a decision to turn his life around.

Born to heroin-addicted parents, Hamilton started using marijuana and drinking at age 12. “I always felt different from the other kids growing up and was searching for an escape from my reality,” he says.

He was 18 when he tried heroin for the first time. “From that day until the day I entered Odyssey House, it completely controlled my life. Everything I did was to get more heroin.” After being arrested in New Hampshire, his father bailed him out under one condition: that he get help. Hamilton agreed but didn’t take it too seriously. Before entering treatment, he went out to get high one last time, overdosed, and was revived by naloxone.

After his near death experience, Hamilton realized he’d been given another chance and decided to commit to treatment. He struggled in the beginning, but after a few weeks of attending group meetings and one-on-one sessions with his counselor, he began to understand the depth of his drug problem. “The staff at Odyssey House believed in me until I could believe in myself,” he says.

Seeing the positive effects of recovery in his life motivates Hamilton to push himself further. He earned his high school equivalency diploma and enrolled in the Borough of Manhattan Community College. He plans to study human services. “I was given a second chance and I feel it’s my duty to help kids like me get their second chance. Without Odyssey House, none of this would be possible and I am forever grateful.” ●



Marjorie

### Giving thanks every day

Almost four years ago, at the age of 50, Marjorie had a major psychotic breakdown, leading to hospitalization and a diagnosis of schizophrenia. On top of that she was also struggling to maintain a fragile sobriety. For over 30 years, Marjorie had found solace in illegal drugs as a way to cope with her traumatic childhood. Realizing her situation was critical, she knew if she was going to save her life it was now or never. She grabbed hold of that chance.

After several relapses and treatment attempts, Marjorie started on the road to recovery in 2013 when she was admitted to the Odyssey House Harbor, a transitional mental health housing program. During her time at the Harbor, Marjorie improved her physical and mental well-being and began to regain her confidence. She made such progress in following her treatment that she was offered permanent housing at Odyssey House Tinton Avenue the following year.

Since moving into Tinton Avenue in 2014, Marjorie has been a conscientious tenant and neighbor. She handles her responsibilities as a tenant with respect and enthusiasm; participates in group activities; and provides helpful insights to her fellow tenants.

When asked what she wants to do with her life, Marjorie is clear: she hopes to become a peer counselor and put her experience and professional training to work to the benefit of others who, like her, have struggled against enormous odds to lead independent lives.

In her pursuit to become a peer counselor, Marjorie completed training in overdose prevention and recovery coaching at our outpatient services and established a peer support network at Tinton Avenue. She also graduated from the Resource Training Center as a Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor Trainee (CASAC-T).

Living in a secure and safe community surrounded by people who support her recovery is something Marjorie gives thanks for every day. ●



Jacqueline

## Breaking the cycle of addiction, one family at a time

Moms battling drug and alcohol addiction often face a tough choice: taking care of themselves or taking care of their children. In mid-2016, Jacqueline, 36, pregnant with her third child, nearly had to make that choice.

Like other parents in our program, Jacqueline is learning to create a nurturing relationship with her son while addressing a wide array of issues, including managing emotional stress, tackling medical and mental health issues, and identifying safe and secure housing.

While Jacqueline engages in clinical services, our Early Educational Center focuses on assisting children like her son in reaching their full developmental potential in five on-site, licensed daycare and preschool classrooms, serving children from two months to six years of age. “The teachers are wonderful,” says Jacqueline. “They’re great with the kids and very hands-on. It’s reassuring to know that my son is safe and in good hands while I’m in group sessions.”

Being in treatment with her son keeps Jacqueline focused on her recovery. “Having my son with me is so motivating. I’m not sure I could do it without him – thinking about him all the time would be too distracting,” she says. “But here I can work through my issues and work towards my goals, so I can be the best mother I can be. I wasn’t able to raise my two older kids, and I don’t want to lose the chance to raise him too.” ●

For the full stories, visit our website at [odysseyhousenyc.org/category/50th-anniversary](http://odysseyhousenyc.org/category/50th-anniversary).

## Bringing holiday cheer to ElderCare

A fourth grade class in Queens shared their holiday spirit with our ElderCare program. As part of a lesson on kindness, teacher April Scott and her students created and delivered holiday cards for our clients. Ms. Scott explains: “We decided to create holiday cards for those who may not be able to be with their families during this time. My students really wanted to embody the idea of giving rather than focus on what they would be receiving for the holidays.” Many thanks to Ms. Scott and her fourth-grade elves for their wonderful cards and generous spirits! Check out more photos on Facebook.



## Celebrating our eleventh annual

# Run For Your Life



Thank you to Team T-Mobile and all of our sponsors for their generous support!

Our annual Recovery Month event, the *Run for Your Life* 5K Run & Recovery Walk, celebrated its 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary on September 24, 2016. More than 1,000 people came out to Icahn Stadium to show their support for men and women in treatment for substance use and mental health disorders. Once again emceed by WPIX reporter Jay Dow, the event featured fitness competitions, Zumba lessons, children's races and activities, and wellness and recovery areas that provided nutritionist consultations and education on our peer mentoring programs.

In a message of support, NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio said: "All New Yorkers deserve to lead fulfilling lives, and my administration is working to broaden access to resources and opportunities that provide paths to brighter futures for those in need. Investing in the mental health of our residents is critical to this mission... Organizations such as Odyssey House are valuable partners, and since 1967, it has been a beacon of hope for so many individuals and families struggling with substance abuse, suffering from mental illness, and those living with HIV/AIDS. Through a variety of rehabilitation and treatment programs, education and job skills training, supportive housing options,

and health care services, Odyssey House is touching the lives of many in our city and beyond. This annual event ensures that this organization can continue to connect people to invaluable services, and Chirlane and I applaud all those in attendance for supporting our efforts to forge a path to a healthier tomorrow for our residents."

Participants included clients from other NYC-based treatment agencies, friends and family of people in recovery, as well as representatives from the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) and our corporate partners. Check out our Flickr page to see more photos! ●

## Reaching Recovery Goals Through Running



Kyle, center, celebrates his achievement with his running mates at a post-marathon party.



Ryan takes a break at the Mile 19 water station during the NYC Marathon.

For more than a decade, our Run for Your Life team has trained more than 300 clients to run the NYC Marathon. It's a daunting challenge, one that mirrors the challenges they face in their recovery. In 2016, our team of 41 clients, alumni, staff, and supporters trained for months, reached their goals, and crossed the finish line at the NYC Marathon. Here, two clients explain why they run, and how running strengthens their recovery.

### The feeling of accomplishment

Though Kyle, 30, had been athletic his entire life, he never imagined he'd be running the NYC Marathon. That all changed when he came to Odyssey House.



Odyssey House Board Chairman Richard O'Connor (back row, second from left) presented the top runners with trophies.



Emcee Jay Dow (tan blazer) and NYS Assemblyman Robert J. Rodriguez (blue hat) joined the runners to kick off the 5K.

Children participated in a variety of activities, field games, and arts and crafts projects.

Shortly after entering treatment, Kyle joined our Run for Your Life team and quickly found that he loves long distance running. “The feeling of accomplishment after a run – you can’t beat that,” he says. Kyle also discovered that it was benefiting more than just his physical health. “I have a history of anxiety and difficulty dealing with stress, and running helps me relax and cope in a healthier way.”

Training with the team has been a positive, motivating experience, keeping Kyle engaged in both running and treatment. In addition to marking his own successes, Kyle enjoys watching his teammates strive towards their goals. “It’s remarkable

watching people progress as they commit to the program,” he says.

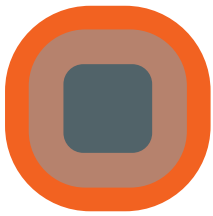
**A symbol of her commitment to recovery**

Three years ago, Ryan ran her first NYC Marathon with the Run for Your Life team. In November 2016, she ran her second. Returning to Odyssey House after a relapse earlier this year, Ryan is determined to make this time count. She saw the marathon as a symbol of her commitment to recovery and hopes her accomplishment will inspire others to challenge themselves.

The marathon team has been an integral part of Ryan’s recovery. “Running has given

me the inner strength and self-esteem I need to be my best self. Training for the marathon has made me realize that I need to set goals for myself; reaching my running goals has inspired me to reach for greater opportunities in life,” she says.

So far this has translated into enrollment in a CASAC-T (Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor Trainee) program as a path to a career in social work and recreation therapy. “Run for Your Life has motivated me to stay connected and to be a positive mentor to others after treatment.” ●



Odyssey House®

Where recovery gets real

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## On the Horizon



**Save the date:**  
Join us on Saturday,  
September 9, 2017  
for our 12th Annual  
*Run for Your Life!*

Visit our blog for more news and  
updates from Odyssey House!

[odysseyhousenyc.org/news](http://odysseyhousenyc.org/news)



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Pick up the April issue of *Runner's World* for a special report on running and addiction, featuring John Tavalacci, EVP, Chief Operating Officer, and our Run for Your Life team!

## It is the mission of Odyssey House:

To provide comprehensive and innovative services to the broadest range of metro New York's population who:

- Abuse drugs
- Abuse alcohol
- Suffer from mental illness

To provide high quality, holistic treatment impacting all major life spheres: psychological, physical, social, family, educational and spiritual.

To support personal rehabilitation, renewal and family restoration.

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