

ODYSSEY HOUSE

news

www.odysseyhouseinc.org

Saving lives, rebuilding families, restoring communities

Spring 2008

Odyssey House Goes Tobacco-Free

In an effort to enhance the health and wellness of our residents and staff, all Odyssey House programs will become smoke-free as of July 24, 2008. Residents, as well as staff members who wish to quit, will receive education and support on tobacco independence, including nicotine replacement therapy, at little to no cost.

The policy is in concert with a new guideline from the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) requiring all substance abuse prevention and treatment programs that are funded or certified by OASAS to become tobacco-free starting this summer.

Odyssey House is an enthusiastic supporter of the policy, which is part of the organization's integrated wellness initiative. "This regulation fits into our culture of promoting health and well-being," said Dr. Frank Dominelli, director of health care and admissions.

Steps to stopping smoking

Odyssey House has taken several steps to prepare for the shift in regulatory policy and its clinical implications. All staff members attended an informational

seminar led by Dr. Steven Kipnis, medical director of OASAS, entitled "Tobacco Myths and Myth-Understandings," and an internal consumer advisory council has been working on integrating the policy into existing services, in preparation for the July kick off.

Milton Slaughter, an admissions supervisor, is spearheading efforts to educate his colleagues on the new policy and garner their support. He is responsible for providing posters, pamphlets, DVDs and other materials about tobacco independence to staff and residents. A lifelong smoker, he became involved in the tobacco-free initiative through the encouragement of Dr. Dominelli, who saw it as an opportunity to help Mr. Slaughter quit smoking.

Continued on page 3

Got Milk?



An Odyssey House preschooler enjoys a cup of milk. For more information on nutrition and other wellness initiatives, see center spread.

... SAVE THE DATE ... SAVE THE DATE ... SAVE THE DATE ...

Run for Your Life

**Sunday,
Sept. 28**

See page 5 for details



Inside this issue:

- Foundation Funds Laptops for Grads p. 2
- Preschool Services Receive a Boost from City Contract p. 3
- Treatment Services Embrace Total Wellness p. 4 & 5
- New Contract Will Expand Supportive Housing Services p. 6
- Lights, Camera, Action! p. 6



ODYSSEY HOUSE

Foundation Funds Laptops for Grads

The first young women to graduate from Odyssey House's Lafayette Avenue program are the proud owners of new laptop computers given to them as commencement gifts through a grant from the Elizabeth and Baretts O. Benjamin Charitable Foundation.

Two of the graduates, Kristina S. and Melina E., recently attended a presentation ceremony at the girls-only center and spoke about how life has changed for them since completing treatment and how they aim to use the computers for their future educational and professional endeavors.

For Kristina, treatment was the fresh start she was looking for. "Odyssey

House gave me confidence and strength. I got my life back on track and started to think and act positively."

Today, Kristina is working full-time for a performance management firm on Wall Street and is a part-time student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice where she is studying psychology and criminal justice.

While the Lafayette Avenue program is focused on teen girls, a small number of adult female residents also live at the center

where they perform an essential function as role models helping the teens transition from adolescence to young adulthood. One such role model is Melina, a program graduate and member of the 2007 Odyssey House New York City Marathon Team.

When the girls program first opened, Melina saw an opportunity to give back what she was learning in treatment as an adult resident and volunteered to help establish the new center. She said being in treatment with the teens, helping them overcome

obstacles and learn new skills, taught her how to tackle challenges in her own life.

"If I can overcome my addiction, if I can run a marathon, I know I can handle any challenge that comes my way," she said. "Once you've beaten your addiction, you realize that you can accomplish anything."

Since completing the program in April 2007, Melina has been working as a legal assistant in a Manhattan law firm. She recently had her annual review with the firm's senior partner, where she received high marks for her work performance, and got a raise. Though she is proud of her professional accomplishments, she says it is regaining custody of her eight-year-old daughter that makes her happiest.

Melina said she is grateful to the foundation for their generous gift and excited to have a computer of her own. "I'm going to keep learning and see where it goes from there," she said. "I have a bright future ahead of me, and so does my daughter."

The Lafayette Avenue program offers treatment for young women with substance abuse and other emotional/behavioral problems. Opened in spring 2007, this gender-specific treatment approach helps teen girls get back on track with their schooling and other life goals.



Melina E. and Kristina S. show off their new laptops.

Teen Girls Active in Local Arts, Education & Community Programs

The girls in the Lafayette Avenue program participate in numerous activities outside of Odyssey House designed to help them develop their academic, career and leadership skills and build relationships within their community. Some of the organizations in which they are involved include:

- Voices UnBroken, a community-based organization that provides creative writing workshops in a variety of transitional and alternative settings. Last winter's workshops culminated in a full-length collaborative play and several poems that were published in the organization's quarterly newsletter. The play, "Coming



Clean," will be performed by the girls at the Bronx Academy of Arts & Dance this spring.

- Law Enforcement Explorers, a community service, career-oriented program designed to educate young men and women, ages 14-20, about law enforcement. They work with officers from the 41st precinct and are taught the importance of higher education, self discipline and respect for authority while they actively participate in community service projects and other Explorer events.
- South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation YouthBuild Transformation Academy serves out-of-school youth, ages 16-24, with on-the-job construction trades training and GED preparation courses. YouthBuild not only helps prepare clients for quality employment, but also teaches valuable life skills through promoting team-work and providing a dependable support base.

Tackling Nicotine Addiction with Education and Support



Milton Slaughter (bottom left) and residents who have quit smoking.

Continued from page 1

“It’s a strategy that seems to be working,” says Mr. Slaughter. “I smoked a pack-and-a-half every day for more than 30 years. I made up my mind to stop when I got involved in this initiative and haven’t had a cigarette since.”

Smoking and substance abuse

The new regulation from OASAS makes New York the first state to require all substance abuse prevention and treat-

ment programs to be tobacco-free. “This is a very bold initiative that is really changing the face of drug treatment in New York,” said Dr. Kipnis.

Smoking is a particular problem for those with substance abuse problems. Studies have shown that as many as 92 percent of those struggling with chemical or alcohol addiction also smoke, compared with 19 percent of the general population in New York state.

“For years in the treatment of addiction it was thought that treating tobacco dependence would put unfair pressure on the patient working toward recovery,” said OASAS Commissioner Karen Carpenter-Palumbo. “We now know that’s not true. Including tobacco dependence while treating other addictions actually leads to higher recovery success rates. We need to focus on the overall wellness of our patients and not ignore this deadly addiction.”

Web Resources

NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services Tobacco Independence

- <http://www.oasas.state.ny.us/tobacco>

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

- <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/>

US Department of Health & Human Services Office on Women’s Health

- <http://www.4women.gov/quitsmoking/>

National Networks for Tobacco Control and Prevention

- <http://www.tobaccopreventionnetworks.org/>

Tobacco Control Research Branch of the National Cancer Institute

- <http://www.smokefree.gov/>

New York State Quit Site

- <http://www.nysmokefree.com>

Preschool Services Receive a Boost from City Contract

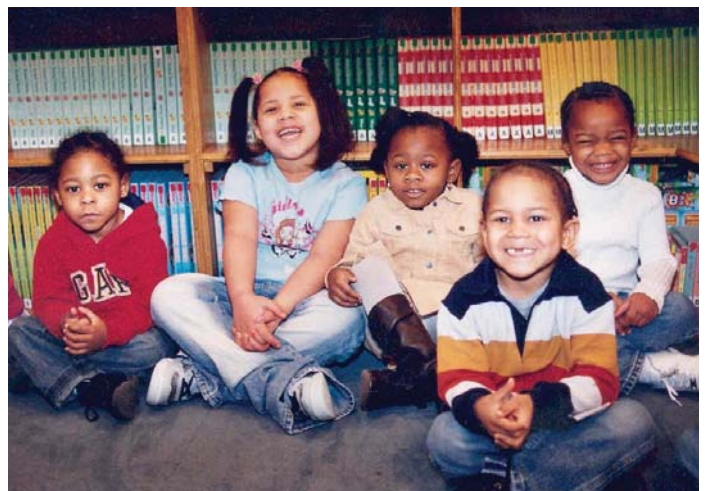
Preschool services received a boost this year with a grant from the NYC Department of Education to enhance early childhood learning at Odyssey House.

Odyssey House is the first residential treatment program to be awarded a competitive contract from the City as part of New York State’s Universal Prekindergarten Program. The additional resources, \$105,000 over three years, will allow our team of licensed preschool teachers to focus on what educators term the four learning domains: social-emotional, physical, creative, and cognitive development that includes language, literacy, pre-writing and mathematics.

The award also recognizes the high quality of Odyssey House’s childcare services and our partnership in working to achieve New York State’s ultimate goal of creating Centers of Excellence for prekindergarten services.

Studies have shown high-quality preschool programs provide one of the best foundations young children need to become successful learners. This is especially important for children, such as those enrolled in the Odyssey House Family Center, whose parents have struggled to provide for their children because of substance abuse and other problems.

More than 75 children from newborn to school-age live at the Odyssey House Family Center of Excellence while their parents are in treatment. The children are cared for in age appropriate settings dedicated to their development needs. Of these youngsters, currently one classroom – up to 15 students – is exclusively devoted to preparing four-year-olds for kindergarten.



Children in preschool at the Odyssey House Family Center receive high-quality early education in a nurturing and safe environment.

Treatment Services Em



Making Healthier Food Choices

Good nutrition plays an important role in making successful lifestyle changes. To ensure that all Odyssey House residents have access to healthy meals, nutritionist Lisa Yeung works closely with the food service department and the head cooks for each treatment center to plan seasonal menus.

Ms. Leung and the team focus on four priorities when developing the menu: promoting a balanced diet; creating healthier meals that are low in fat, cholesterol and sugar; increasing whole grains, fruits and vegetables; and eating fish twice a week.

Menu planning for Odyssey House residents is especially important as many of our residents enter the program with a number of health issues. Alcohol and drugs can keep the body from



Salad bar at Odyssey House Harbor

properly absorbing and breaking down nutrients and expelling toxins. This leads to a host of health problems, including high cholesterol, diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity.

As a result, they have a special need for foods that are high in nutrients to rebuild damaged tissues, organs and regain appropriate functioning of the various bodily systems. To address these health concerns, she works with the medical department to improve the overall health of our residents.

But changing lifelong eating habits isn't easy. Residents can be resistant to making such a drastic lifestyle change.

"Some people are just not ready to make these dietary substitutions, so we are making changes to the menu slowly. We do acknowledge that making lifestyle changes towards positive living is a gradual process," said Ms. Leung.



Setting Our Sights on a Healthier

At any one time, Odyssey House is home to more than 800 men, women and children. Some are coping with the effects of addiction, mental illness, and homelessness. Others are young mothers who enter treatment with their children, seeking a drug-free life for themselves and a brighter future for their families. Older men and women come into treatment to break a lifetime habit of addiction, while teens are attempting to get back on track and succeed in school and at careers.

For all of these clients, Odyssey House provides a chance to recover from addiction and, along with that, to experience the psychological and physical well-being that comes with total wellness.

Total Wellness Is . . .

Total wellness begins with the innovative services and approaches that Odyssey House has been pioneering for more than 40 years, addressing the needs of teens, seniors, the mentally ill and others.

Small Changes Can Add Up to Bi

- Limit egg consumption to two times per week
- Replace white bread with whole wheat bread
- Change cooking oils to eliminate trans fats
- Bake breaded entrees instead of frying them

Embrace Total Wellness



Recovery for All

Total wellness is also taking responsibility for your health; learning to care for diabetes, hypertension and other chronic illnesses; eating right and appreciating the merits of a well-balanced diet; exercising to relieve stress and simply to feel better; seizing opportunities offered in treatment to quit smoking for good; and feeling free to express yourself creatively.

Total wellness is learning to be a better parent, taking responsibility for your actions, equipping yourself for a fulfilling career, improving your sense of self esteem. In all these many facets, Odyssey House embraces total wellness as key to a full recovery from substance abuse.

The photographs above are of real men, women and children in our treatment programs who are changing their lives with the support of each other, their families and friends, and teams of professional counselors, educators and healthcare providers.

When it comes to describing the everyday miracles happening at Odyssey House, pictures really are worth a thousand words.

g Results

- Cut down on red meat
- Incorporate lean meats, such as chicken
- Use brown rice instead of white rice
- Replace whole milk with reduced fat versions

3rd Annual *Run for Your Life*

September 28, 2008

Please join your Odyssey House friends in celebration of National Recovery Month.

Last year, 2,000 people turned out to support recovery. For many people with substance abuse problems, the health benefits of following a regular physical fitness regimen is becoming a way of life.

At Odyssey House we help all our clients follow a fitness routine that is right for them. For those who want to run a marathon, we offer year-round training and access to sponsored races. Our marathon runners are our elite athletes, but the ElderCare client who runs the 5K; the five-year-old who gives it her all in the children's races; and the mom living with HIV/AIDS who walks 2 miles, are also winners.

We look forward to seeing you in September.

Further information and online registration are available at: www.odysseyhouseinc.org.

New Contract Will Expand Supportive Housing Services

Odyssey House has received a contract from the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) to expand housing services for single men and women who have completed long-term residential treatment.

A shortage of safe and affordable housing is a perennial problem for many New Yorkers, but it is particularly acute for those who are in the early stages of recovery and faced with building a new life after completing long-term treatment.

This competitively-awarded contract will provide homeless adults with access to 25 Odyssey House managed apartments. The contract, worth \$400,000 per year, is renewable on an annual basis.

The supported housing units will consist of 12 two-bedroom apartments and a single one-bedroom apartment. The proposed

scatter-site housing will be located in the Bronx close to our OASAS-certified outpatient chemical dependency clinic. Only single adults at risk of homelessness who complete treatment for a substance abuse disorder and need long-term transitional supportive housing to sustain sobriety will be eligible to apply for housing services.

The new units will supplement Odyssey House's existing range of housing services, including the Odyssey House Haven, a 63-unit apartment building in East Harlem that provides permanent, independent housing to formerly homeless men and women with mental and physical disabilities; Family Re-Entry, supervised housing for families re-entering society; and housing assistance for formerly homeless persons enrolled in our programs. All housing programs are designed to support the Odyssey House dedication to continuity of care and after care services.

Lights, Camera, Action!

This spring, residents from the Teen Leadership Center began an eight-week workshop where they will learn all aspects of the filmmaking process. Each student will direct a short film that will capture his journey on the road to becoming a drug-free, productive young adult. The workshop, funded by a grant from the Citi Employee Community Fund, will culminate in a final screening of their short films at an Odyssey House-sponsored film festival.

The focus of the workshop is on teaching filmmaking skills such as developing a concept, identifying key elements, creating a timeline and scheduling interviews. In addition, the participants also learn technical skills including operating a camera and editing footage.

The theme for the participants' short films is "Treatment Works." The films will present a comprehensive portrait of the teens' growth and development during treatment. The final films will be

used to both engage and educate other teens in treatment at Odyssey House. Adolescent girls in the Lafayette Avenue program will have the opportunity to participate in a similar workshop in the fall.

The filmmaking workshop is a part of Odyssey House's commitment to enhancing the educational experience of teens in our residential treatment services and sharing their accomplishments with other community-based groups dedicated to helping teens succeed.



Filmmaker Sandra Ciccone teaches Leadership student the basics of cinematography.

Foundation Awards Odyssey House Grant to Revamp Website

The Odyssey House website is about to get a new look, thanks to a capacity building grant from the Taproot Foundation. Unlike traditional foundations that provide monetary awards, the Taproot Foundation makes grants of high-quality, professional consulting services – free of charge to chosen nonprofits.

Each service grant, which is worth up to \$50,000, is executed by a team of industry professionals who volunteer their time and expertise to help nonprofit organizations achieve their strategic communication goals.

This spring, Odyssey House staff members began working with a team of web design, information technology and market-

ing professionals led by Sedef Onder to create the next generation www.odysseyhouseinc.org.

Over the next several months, Sedef and her team will be working to develop an accessible and valuable website that continues to meet the needs of a range of users interested in supporting men and women in recovery, from program residents to industry experts, legislators and foundations.

The redesigned website will reflect Odyssey House's role as a service provider for people with substance abuse and mental health prob-

lems; an advocacy organization championing the cause of recovery; and a professional research and training center for social service programs.



National Recognition for ElderCare Program

Odyssey House's ElderCare program has received the American Association of Geriatric Psychiatry (AAGP) Award for Diversity, which was created to recognize special service or attention to the mental health care needs of elderly minority or underserved populations. The award brings national awareness to the greater problem of geriatric substance abuse and solidifies Odyssey House as a leader in treating this population.

"We are honored to receive this award from AAGP in recognition of our services to help older Americans overcome substance abuse problems," said Dr. Peter Provet, president of Odyssey House. He added, "Drug addiction and other mental health problems among senior citizens are called a 'silent epidemic' by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. This award brings attention to important social issues that

undermine the health and well-being of millions of individuals and families."

AGGP is a national association dedicated to promoting the mental well-being of older people and improving the care of those with late-in-life mental disorders. The AGGP Award for Diversity honors an individual or organization that demonstrates sensitivity to issues of diversity in aging, has an innovative approach and track record of service to elderly minority or underserved populations. Odyssey House ElderCare Program is proud to be the first recipient of the award.

Specially for seniors

Established in 1997 with ongoing support from the Rosenback Foundation and Odyssey House Board Chairman George Rosenfeld, this unique program offers substance abusers 55 years of age and older specialized long-term residential and outpatient treatment, medical, dental, housing and job placement services.



MISSION

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, have mental illness.

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

Support 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.

Odyssey House Featured in *New York Times*

In early March, Odyssey House's ElderCare program was prominently featured in a *New York Times* front page article on older substance abusers. "New Generation Gap Emerges as Older Addicts Seek Help," by Jane Gross, was a national story that examined the issue around the country and found few programs meeting their needs, despite the increasing number of older substance abusers.

The story was accompanied by a poignant multimedia slide show, focused on the experiences of an ElderCare resident. Visit our website at www.odysseyhouseinc.org to read the article and view the presentation.

The New York Times

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2008

New Generation Gap Emerges As Older Addicts Seek Help

By JANE GROSS



Chilese Barthelomy-Lacotta, a vocational counselor, leading a class of elderly drug addicts at Odyssey House in East Harlem. Experts say older adults can be hard to lure into treatment, but tend to be highly motivated and more likely to complete programs.

Give to the "Friends of Odyssey House" campaign

online at 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
 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