

Odyssey House *news*

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In this issue:

- Leadership from the Field:
"Hopes and Fears" 2016.....Pg. 2
- Grant Renewal Enhances
Vocational Services for Women..Pg. 3
- Celebrating our 10th Annual
Run for Your Life!..... Pg.4-5
- Fighting for RecoveryPg. 6
- Arts at Odyssey HousePg. 6-7
- Adolescent Outpatient Program
Receives Funding Extension Pg.7

Run for Your Life 2015



Celebrating 10 years of Run for Your Life

(See center spread)

Arts at Odyssey House



ElderCare partners with MoMA

(see page 6)



Enhancing Community Services

New Mixed-Use Housing Development to Break Ground in Harlem This Spring

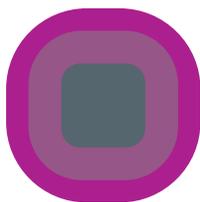
Two abandoned buildings on East 126th Street and Park Avenue will soon be home to 21 New Yorkers who qualify for special needs, low-income housing. Empty for more than 20 years, the buildings are brownstones that date back to the 1890s.

Once the construction is complete next year, the buildings will provide a mix of 15 permanent supportive housing units for special needs, single adults, and six apartments for single low-income tenants. All tenants will have access to 24-hour, 7-days-a-week front desk coverage and on-site building maintenance. The supportive housing tenants will receive case management services, vocational training, recreational activities, and

access to medical and psychiatric services through community-based providers.

Dr. Peter Provet, president of Odyssey House, said this is the fourth new housing project for the organization that "commits to providing individuals with mental illness safe and affordable housing as a cornerstone to recovery. Working with our partners at the state, city, and local level, we are excited to start construction on homes for vulnerable New Yorkers who, with minimal support, can live independent lives.

"When representatives of the Reverend William James HDFC, the nonprofit owners of the property, approached us to develop



Odyssey House
Where recovery lives

Continued on next page



The brownstones have been boarded up for more than two decades.



The landscaped backyard will provide tenants with a communal outdoor space to relax. The skylights shown in the grassy area will illuminate the lower-level exercise room.



the buildings because of our longstanding commitment to providing social services to Harlem residents, we jumped at the chance to restore this formerly grand building and create safe, new homes for low-income New Yorkers.”

This is the first mixed-use housing project for Odyssey House and the only such development currently slated for construction in Manhattan supported by the New York State Office of Mental Health (NYSOMH), utilizing low-income tax credits for individuals earning less

than 65 percent of area median income (approximately \$15,000 for East Harlem). The need for low-income and supportive housing are major development initiatives of both New York State and New York City political leaders who have made homelessness and affordable housing priority issues.

Being able to obtain stable access to good housing is, according to NYSOMH, “a fundamental problem for many people with mental illness because of their low incomes, the limited supply and rising costs of low-

income housing, and discrimination. To reduce stigma and provide opportunities for recovery, it is preferable that individuals with mental illness live in mixed-use settings.”

Odyssey House is working to create developments that redress this imbalance in resources experienced by our most vulnerable citizens and provide them with options to live in safe and secure community-based housing. ●

Leadership from the Field: “Hopes and Fears” 2016

Odyssey House President & CEO Dr. Peter Provet



Published January 11, 2016

The escalating opioid epidemic among middle-class Americans drew unusual attention last year to our field across a wide public sphere of elected officials, leaders of medical and scientific communities, members of criminal justice and law enforcement agencies, and the mainstream media.

While this attention is welcome, we need to make sure the urgent need for treatment is reflected in the stabilization and expansion of services for vulnerable populations. As

states (including New York, with high-need, disadvantaged populations) look to contain costs under Medicaid managed care, we must work hard to ensure that the federal block grant is maintained, the IMD [Institutions for Mental Diseases] exclusion is eliminated and parity under the ACA [Affordable Care Act] is fully enforced. Without these essential provisions built into federal and state budgets and policies, nonprofit organizations that provide the bulk of safety net services will find it harder and harder to meet the increased demands for care.

At Odyssey House, we have been preparing for the impact of managed care for quite some time and have established new systems to both contain costs and streamline care.

These include: electronic health record keeping and linkages with hospital and other community-based providers; evidence-based practices and medication-assisted treatment; and extended outpatient and housing support services.

My hope as we look to 2016 is that we will not only continue to provide quality care for disadvantaged substance abusers (who often require intensive residential services in order to have a chance at achieving and maintaining a functional life), but that their needs will be addressed in the ongoing national debate on how best to treat addiction and its accompanying social ills. ●

Grant Renewal Enhances Vocational Services for Women

Odyssey House has received renewed support from the Edward & Ellen Roche Relief Foundation for supervised computer training for mothers with children in intensive residential treatment at our Family Center in East Harlem.

Last year, generous start-up funding enabled the purchase of four computers and one printer, creating a needed, on-site computer lab. This grant renewal builds on this achievement to assure the delivery of vital vocational services to Family Center residents. Specifically, it will provide ongoing computer training for up to 50 women.

Job training is an essential component of treatment at Odyssey House. Many of the women we serve have no support system, present with low levels of educational attainment, and are likely to face disadvantages when it comes to finding a job. By equipping participants with essential computer skills while engaged in residential treatment, the project builds skills, confidence, and job readiness for women preparing to complete treatment and re-enter their communities.

Participants will have the chance to pursue hands-on job training, craft resumes and cover letters, and identify a range of potential jobs through online research. Through engagement with dedicated vocational counselors, participants will have the chance to build new relationships and explore new avenues for self-expression and actualization.

Our commitment to helping women become more prepared, marketable, and less afraid, while they are being treated in a caring, supportive environment, continues to demonstrate that, when given the right skills and support, every person has the potential to succeed. ●

Make a Difference Donate to Odyssey House

Thanks to supporters like you, we have been helping people achieve a healthy and sustained recovery for more than 45 years. When you donate to our programs, you are helping us pursue our mission of providing the best possible treatment for individuals and families struggling with substance use disorders, mental illness, and homelessness.

Donate online at odysseyhouseinc.org and help the men and women in our programs rebuild their lives as drug-free, productive citizens.



With the help of her vocational counselor, Rebecca has been able to improve her computer skills, which will help her in her occupational training.

Resident profile:

Rebecca B.

More than 15 years of using prescription drugs left Rebecca, a single mother, unable to properly care for her six-year-old daughter. In October 2014, Rebecca, 38, entered the Odyssey House Family Center. With her daughter in her own parents' care, Rebecca has been able to engage in her treatment plan, work on becoming a better mother, and focus on building skills to improve her employment options. Here is Rebecca's story, written in her own words.

When I came into treatment, I was truly broken. I was somewhat resistant and fearful; I knew I never wanted to pick up another drug, I just didn't know how I would function without them. I quickly realized that my whole way of living and thinking wasn't working. I had to surrender and accept help. I began to work on the guilt and the shame I harbored for all of the negative choices I made and for all the good things I didn't do. I started to see that my counselors had my best interests at heart and I started to trust them. I have learned how to forgive and love myself.

A year later, I am in a great place. I have a positive outlook on life and I am looking forward to starting a career. In January 2016, I began vocational training for my CASAC (Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor). In preparation, I used the Family Center computer lab to improve my writing and computer skills. The Vocational Services Coordinator, Carl Clavier, had me take a baseline typing test, which indicated that my typing skills were 9 words per minute (WPM). I was a little disappointed because I thought I was better than that, but I am committed to improving and so I work every day on my typing. After one month, I can now type 30 WPM. My goal is to type 60 WPM. I am very grateful for the computer lab as it helps me keep in touch with my family and friends, coordinate my vocational activities, and improve my overall computer skills. For the first time in a long time, I'm excited about what the future holds.

Celebrating 10 Years of Running for Recovery



Our annual Recovery Month event, the *Run for Your Life* 5K Run & Recovery Walk, celebrated its 10th anniversary on September 19, 2015. 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. WPIX reporter Jay Dow emceed the event, which featured fitness competitions, zumba lessons, children's races and activities, and wellness and recovery areas that provided nutrition counseling and education on our peer mentoring programs.



We held our first Run for Your Life 5K 10 years ago to highlight the importance of regular exercise as part of a sober lifestyle. Since then, thousands of people have raced for recovery in our annual 5K and the NYC Marathon.

Running for Recovery by the Numbers 2004–2015

Run for Your Life 5K Event

3,100 runners
15,500 kilometers ran
13,000 supporters

Odyssey House NYC Marathon Team

450 runners
1,650 volunteers
20,000 volunteer hours



On November 1, 2015, 41 runners — including clients, graduates, staff, and volunteers — completed the arduous New York City Marathon. Marathon Sunday has always been a special day for our clients, staff and supporters — it is a symbol of the commitment, dedication and perseverance of those in treatment. Thank you to everyone who supported the team along their journey.

NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio, though unable to attend, sent a message of support: “My administration has made it a priority to provide all our residents with access to quality health care, and in these efforts, it is essential that we address every facet of a person’s well-being, including their mental health...Odyssey House is an important ally in this mission, offering care and support to those suffering from mental illness, struggling with substance abuse disorders, or living with HIV/AIDS. Through its holistic counseling and rehabilitation programs, medical services, vocational training, housing assistance, and more, this organization helps individuals and families

improve their lives and regain their dignity. This event will enable Odyssey House to continue in its important work and celebrate the progress that its clients have achieved on the road to good health.”

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. If you were unable to make it, visit our Flickr page to see more photos. ●



Left, emcee Jay Dow and NYS Assemblyman Robert J. Rodriguez kicked off the recovery walk. Above, Odyssey House Board Chairman Richard O'Connor (top row, left) congratulated the 5K winners.

Arts at Odyssey House

Art plays a special role in the treatment process at Odyssey House. Residents are encouraged to express themselves through visual arts and writing, and also enjoy readings, performances, and museum visits. Here is a snapshot of some of the arts-related activities our clients recently participated in.



Lydia displays an art project she worked on in MoMA's art education studio.

Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and Odyssey House Art Department Partner on ElderCare Project

The Odyssey House Art Department has a longstanding relationship with MoMA's Education Services, often bringing our senior, adult, and adolescent clients for guided tours and art-making sessions. The visits serve one of our central goals in the art program, which is to introduce clients (many of whom have never been to a museum before) to our shared cultural heritage.



A MoMA Educator discusses Vincent van Gogh's "The Starry Night" with ElderCare participants during a private visit.

MoMA's art educators invited us to take part in Prime Time, a new initiative offering an array of gallery conversations, film screenings, online courses, and more, designed to enhance cultural participation and provide opportunities for older adults to engage with modern and contemporary art.

The partnership consisted of eight two-hour sessions, which included on-site visits to our programs to introduce and discuss art with our clients, visits to the museum, and art-making sessions in the MoMA Department of Education studio. The sessions engaged the ElderCare clients in lively conversations about what art is, should be, and shouldn't be and questions about interpretation, value, and authenticity.

Participants had the opportunity to see the museum before it opened to the public, allowing them to view the artwork closely without the usual commotion. One special show viewed was "One-Way Ticket: Jacob Lawrence's Migration Series and Other Works." These paintings illustrated various aspects of the "diaspora," or the movement of southern African-Americans to the north in search of a better life for themselves and their children. Jerald Frampton, our expressive arts coordinator, said "Most of the clients found the show deeply moving, and it engendered spirited discussion."

After the tours, clients created artwork in the MoMA education studios related to the artwork they had viewed (e.g., block printing, collage, pencil with watercolor washes). "While the clients worked," he added, "the conversation revolved around concepts and ideas related to what they had viewed, and it was a positive and stimulating experience. After the program ended, many clients were inspired to continue learning and creating art in the Harbor art studio."

Award-winners: Resident Artists Recognized at Arts Festival

Two Odyssey House clients were recognized at the OASAS 12th Annual Recovery Fine Arts Festival for their artwork. Russell M., formerly of the George Rosenfeld Center for Recovery, was selected as the winner of the mixed media category and Susan W., a Tinton Avenue tenant, won the watercolor category.

Russell became involved with the Odyssey House Art Project because "making art helps me to be in tune with myself and my surroundings. It is relaxing and helps me maintain a positive outlook." He completed treatment in September and is now living

Fighting for Recovery

Justin, 27, entered the Odyssey House Leadership Center in August 2015. In addition to substance abuse treatment and counseling, the Leadership Center offers on-site education and vocational training and placement.

Justin had a promising career as a mixed martial arts fighter until a devastating loss and injury threw him off track. His doctor prescribed Percocet to manage the pain but it was more than physical pain he was medicating.

"I didn't have the ability to cope with the loss. I felt too embarrassed to go back to my students after losing."

It wasn't long before the synthetic opioids gave way to heroin, which had become much easier to get, and much less expensive. What followed was nearly seven years of addiction and relapse in which Justin was mandated to treatment several times, but without success. By his own admission, he wasn't truly ready to deal with his addiction. "It was like a fake attempt at sobriety," he says.

He thought he was destined to be an addict – his father was a heroin addict for much of Justin's adolescence – and he used that belief as an excuse to avoid engaging in treatment.

Since being at Odyssey House, Justin can see a change in the way his loved ones look at him.

in Brooklyn. Susan started to visit the art studio because “it gives me a way to express myself. I always look forward to going to the art room because each time it is a new experience; I am always learning something new.”

The festival showcases the artistic achievement by individuals in recovery from addiction. The Recovery Fine Arts Festival is sponsored by the NYS Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) and Friends of Recovery New York (FOR-NY) each year during September in conjunction with National Recovery Month. ●



“Recovery: Talk About It!” by Russell won in the mixed media category.



“Recovery: Visible, Vocal, Valuable” by Susan won in the watercolor category.

This time is different. Justin entered Odyssey House of his own volition after yet another relapse, too ashamed to go home and face his family.

“I saw how my addiction had stripped me of everything, and I never wanted to go back to that world again.”

“I suddenly understood the impact my using had on the people I love, how selfish I had been. I saw how my addiction had stripped me of everything – and I never wanted to go back to that world again.” He admitted himself to a detox facility shortly after, which referred him to the Odyssey House Leadership Center.

Building on Success: Teen Program Wins Extension



The Seven Challenges, a key component of NY SAINT, has helped Malik make better decisions in his life, including committing to recovery and planning for college.

One of our most successful adolescent outpatient programs, NY SAINT, has received \$350,000 in additional funding from NYS Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) to continue services for one more year.

NY SAINT is a substance abuse treatment program for teens and young adults that uses evidence-based practices that focus on the young person’s interaction with his or her family and community. The program builds social, familial, and educational connections that reinforce positive motivation and drug/alcohol refusal skills. It also develops job finding techniques, which improves teens’ communication and problem-solving skills. NY SAINT is designed to motivate adolescents to commit to change on their own terms, and to support their success in implementing the desired changes.

Now Justin is fully engaged in treatment and is actively working on sustaining his recovery. “I’m open and receptive to change and Odyssey House has done wonders for

me.” Justin has learned how to cope with his emotions and find healthy ways to fill the time when he’d normally be using drugs. It has also reignited his love of helping and teaching others.

“As I’ve progressed, my counselors have given me more responsibility and I began to

The original goal to serve 120 adolescents and their families over the length of the project has been met: to date, Odyssey House has served 121 adolescents. Recruitment has stopped and the additional funds will be used for sustaining quality of care, treatment, and the appropriate follow-up.

Mary Callahan, senior manager, director of outpatient services for Odyssey House, said, “This additional funding allows us to extend our outreach services to the families in our care. The feedback from clients over the last three years has been positive, with many parents saying their children would not have received treatment without this program.”

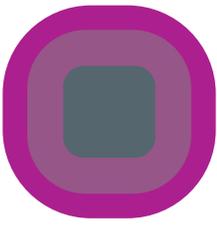
One such client is Malik H., a 16-year-old from Brooklyn who was referred to Odyssey House after getting in trouble for smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol. Though initially resistant to treatment, Malik says he has been able to improve his coping skills, anger and impulse control, and communication skills. Now fully engaged in the process, he recognizes that he would likely still be using drugs if it weren’t for the program and encourages his peers to participate to get the most out of it.

“The groups taught me how to express myself and explore why I was making bad choices in my life,” Malik says. “And my counselor helped me understand that marijuana wasn’t doing anything to help me. There’s more to life than doing drugs.” ●

feel trusted by my peers. That motivates me to engage in the program, because I know it will encourage them to do the same, while strengthening my own recovery.”

Justin has developed a close relationship with his father, who himself has been clean for five years, and has been instrumental in encouraging and educating Justin in his recovery. When he completes the program in the spring, it bolsters him to know he can rely on his father, and the rest of this family, to support his sobriety.

“My life has been on pause for almost seven years. Now I’m only moving forward.” ●



Odyssey House

Where recovery lives

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On the Horizon



*Save the date!
The 11th Annual Run for
Your Life 5K Run &
Recovery Walk will be on
Saturday, September 24, 2016.*

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updates from Odyssey House!
odysseyhouse.blogspot.com*



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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.