

ODYSSEY HOUSE

news

www.odysseyhouseinc.org

Saving lives, rebuilding families, restoring communities

Fall 2004



Odyssey House 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 TC program for senior citizens.

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New Playground Gives Kids in Treatment Room to Grow — And Play



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Meeting Community Needs: Odyssey House Opens Outpatient Services

Agency officials, community leaders, guests and staff of Odyssey House gathered in the South Bronx this summer to celebrate the opening of a new outpatient treatment center.

Located in the bustling Hunt's Point neighborhood, Odyssey House Outpatient Services is a community-based program that will serve men and women making strides to renew their lives and make their own contributions to society.

Odyssey House's new outpatient program offers comprehensive services for people who are in transition from residential treatment as well as

those who require community-based support. Program components include: individual, group, and family treatment; health education; parenting classes; anger management; bi-lingual services; and vocational and educational aid.

The men and women enrolled in the new services—some 100 a week currently, with as many as 500 a month expected eventually to take advantage of Odyssey House's treatment services at the center—are working toward recovery in a program dedicated to responding to community needs. Predominantly Bronx residents, many program participants have come to Odyssey House for the sup-

port they need to follow the healthiest, most productive path for themselves and their families.

The Outpatient Services program is concerned directly with helping individuals leave the struggles of drug abuse behind. Its mission is also to support the families of drug abusers and help heal the communities they live in by giving clients the tools to obtain a lasting sobriety and become productive, positive members of their own neighborhoods.

"Addiction eats at the heart and soul of a community," said Dr. William A. Gorman, the Commissioner of

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“... ensuring adults with mental illness can live and work in the community”

2004 Odyssey House Artist in Recovery Award

Best-selling author of a harrowing first-person account of his journey from addiction to sobriety, Mr. James Frey, is the recipient of this year's Odyssey House Artist in Recovery Award. This award is presented by Odyssey House in honor of National Recovery Month, a nationwide celebration of drug treatment and prevention.

In *A Million Little Pieces* Mr. Frey painfully confronts the consequences of his addiction to alcohol and crack cocaine, and finds a way to reconstruct his life.

“I wrote about my struggle to become sober,” he told the large crowd of staff, board members, and friends gath-

ered in the Odyssey House Haven art gallery, “because I wanted family members — spouses, children, people who



Mr. James Frey flanked by Ms. Marcy Stein, a friend of Odyssey House, and Ms. Janice Glenn, director of the Odyssey House Haven.

want to get better — to understand that if I can do it so can they.

“In the media,” he continued, “I never saw anything realistic about the drug culture and addiction, and how to get better. Drugs are not cool, people die, go to prison, it's not easy. I am deeply moved by this award and for a chance to speak to so many people who understand and support recovery.”

Mr. Frey is the second artist to receive this award from Odyssey House. Last year's recipient was Mr. Danny Simmons, whose painting “Urban Nights” is on permanent display at the Haven Gallery.

A Million Little Pieces, is published by Nan A. Talese/Doubleday.

Sharing the Same Mission

Helping people rebuild their lives and giving them the support they need to become independent citizens is a central theme in the Odyssey House mission.

We are fortunate to share this mission with many others whose life's work is to put people first. One such person who recently visited our East Harlem programs was Commissioner Sharon Carpinello, head of the New York State Office of Mental Health.

Dr. Carpinello met with residents in treatment for mental illness and substance abuse problems, and shared with them her vision on giving parents what they most want for their children: “having them home, happy, successful in school—and ensuring adults with mental illness can live and work in the community.”



Family Center preschoolers share classroom time with the Commissioner.

Leadership Alliance Promotes Safe Streets



Joining forces to keep the streets safe and promoting a healthful environment, Dr. Peter Provet, president of Odyssey House, signs a community policy to clamp down on loitering and illegal narcotics transactions in East Harlem with (left to right): Ms. Addie Corradi, Beth Israel Methadone Maintenance Treatment Program; Mr. Robert Morganthau, Manhattan District Attorney; and NYC Councilman Philip Reed.

Odyssey House is a founding member of the 125th Street Alliance, an organization of local business and community leaders who work on addressing quality of life issues in Upper Manhattan.

Bronx-based Outpatient Services

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the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), at the opening ceremony. “But treatment programs like Odyssey House that help heal men and women whose lives have been damaged by drugs, protect the heart and soul of a community—one person and one family at a time.”

“Every single individual ought to have a set of conditions in which they can excel,”

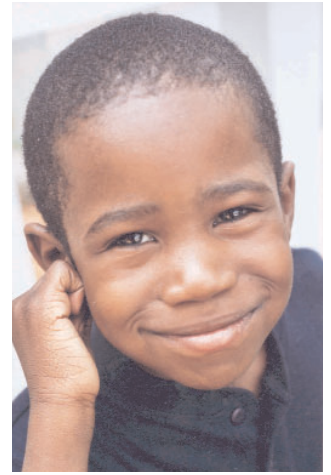
said Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion, Jr., who joined Commissioner Gorman in opening the new program.

“By creating programs like this, by giving people a hand up, we are building a resilient community. Odyssey House is saying to people, no matter what you’ve been dealt in life, ‘We believe in you.’”

Dr. Peter Provet, Odyssey House president, echoed the Borough President and Commissioner’s words. “We be-

lieve in outcomes, not just promises. Research data conclusively shows that comprehensive treatment not only works in keeping individuals drug-free, it also helps them find and keep a job, maintain a healthy home, and be involved in community life.”

For further information on Odyssey House Outpatient Services call: 718-860-2994.



Opening day, Odyssey House Outpatient Services, July 14, 2004

Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion, Jr. (center) with Odyssey House client and child, board members, and officers.

“By creating programs like this, by giving a hand up, we are building a resilient community.”

World Asthma Day Honored at Odyssey House

Treating and preventing asthma attacks among the children and adults who are in treatment at Odyssey House is one of the medical team’s top priorities. In an effort to help residents who suffer from asthma, or take care of a child with asthma, the medical staff recently participated in World Asthma Day, an international effort by health agencies around the globe to raise awareness of asthma through health screenings, educational materials, and presentations on the latest available medical treatments.

Funded by a \$1,000 grant from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Odyssey House nurse practitioners and counselors held an “open house” for parents and children from the Family Center, as well as adults from Odyssey House’s residential programs.



Odyssey House Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Rebecca Crespi talks with a family center resident and her daughter about how to prevent and treat childhood asthma.

Special Report on Saving Older Addicts: Seniors Share Their Stories

When we worry about the terrible price drugs can exact on our friends and families, we tend to think of young people: a teenage daughter being offered Ecstasy at a dance, a son in eighth grade hanging out with friends who smoke marijuana.

But drug abuse problems are not linked to age, or race, or class — drugs will take away the life of anyone who gives them half a chance. And in fact, for older men and women in the grip of drug addiction, recovery is a challenging process that often requires a confrontation with a lifetime of habits and behaviors.

Mildred Simmons and Tyrone Thompson came to Odyssey House's ElderCare Program along very different paths, but the hard work they're both doing now is very similar. Odyssey House's drug abuse services for elders is the first of its kind in the country, an innovative treatment approach designed specifically for men and women 55 and older.

The ElderCare program is residential treatment that offers such advantages as a supportive community that understands older drug abusers, therapeutic services specifically tailored to elders' needs, and assistance with housing and vocational issues.

Mildred Simmons is 65, a mother and grandmother who worked her whole life, including decades as a supervisor in a factory that made baby clothes. Born in Washington, D.C. to a teacher and a career Navy man, she moved to Brooklyn 45 years ago for her first real job, in a bank. "I was a weekend drinker," she said, and over 45 years of drinking she never thought she had a problem. But after retiring, she said, she began drinking more and more until she ended up in the hospital. It was then she realized how dependent she had been on alcohol, and with the encouragement and support of her family, she entered Odyssey House.

"I decided I didn't need the whiskey," she said, "I decided what I needed was to see my grandkids get grown." But often it is not so easy as just deciding. It takes time to recover from more than four decades of substance abuse. Mildred came to Odyssey House in March to get her life together, and is grateful for the experience. Her health has im-

proved, and she has new plans and goals that don't include alcohol. She intends to keep busy once she has completed treatment, both with volunteer work and with her family. "I want to make a contribution," she said.

Tyrone Thompson, who is 56, is dealing with 37 years of drug dependence. "I went looking for it," he said, "asked for it—and got it." Like so many teens, he was just curious. To a curious teen, it seemed like everyone was having a good time with drugs, but before he knew it, he was using heroin heavily. "In the 70s," he said, "I tried cocaine, and then freebase cocaine and that led me straight to jail." Tyrone managed to hold jobs in the electronics industry and earn a B.A. in psychology, but the call of drugs was too much for him. He turned to crack, and landed back in jail.

"I had resolved myself to the fact that I was going to do this for the rest of my life," he said, "that I was a drug addict for life." He had no hope, and no intention of looking for it. "When you drugged up," he said, "you don't see anything. Only the man with the drugs." All his passions fell aside: "I'm a movie buff," he said, "I draw, I paint, I love jazz—but all I could see or hear was drugs." Things changed at Odyssey House. "I started to see again at Odyssey House,"

Tyrone said. When he completes his treatment, Tyrone intends to use what he's learned to help others as a drug abuse counselor, for which he will begin training in the fall.

Sitting in a circle, a group of Mildred's and Tyrone's at the Odyssey House facility on 121st Street in Manhattan, all had hard, clear views of their past with no excuses, but each had optimistic and determined plans for the future. Charles, at 73, only started smoking crack in his 50s after losing his business.

"Odyssey House has brought me back my family," he said. "And this is a family here." Shirley, who also struggled with crack, added, "It's so important I stay connected—I'm going to stay connected." Dave, whose problem with pills brought him to Odyssey House, noted, "It's 90 percent behaviors and attitudes—that's what has to be relearned, and you can't do that on your own. That's what all these men and women are doing, and the chance they're getting is the chance of a lifetime."



Tyrone stands tall with the support of his Odyssey House family, (seated left to right) Charles, Mildred, and Dave.

*“Odyssey House
has brought me
back my family”*

New Playground Gives Kids Room to Grow — And Play

Guests and staff of Odyssey House were treated to a beautiful day for the dedication of a new children's playground at the Odyssey House MABON Family Center of Excellence, New York City's first ever parent and child residential treatment facility.

The construction of a new playground at the Ward's Island Center is largely thanks to the efforts of Ms. Mary Lasser, Trustee for the Elizabeth and Baretts O. Benjamin Foundation, whose gift of \$25,000 made the refurbishment possible.

Standing in front of the new play area with Ms. Lasser, members of the Board of Trustees of Odyssey House, and some of the young families in treatment at the Center, Odyssey House President Dr. Peter Provet said, "This is an extraordinary example of the very best of philanthropy, and the spirit of the Therapeutic Community." He noted the efforts of the residents of the MABON Family Center who contributed to the construction and landscaping of their own new playground.

Speaking of the diversity of Odyssey House, which treats adults, teens, elders, parents, homeless, mentally ill, and HIV-positive drug abusers, Provet added, "Children represent the heart of our agency."

The destruction drug addiction wreaks is rarely limited just to the men and women and teens who are abusing drugs themselves. Often, drugs destroy the fabric of entire families. With that in mind, Odyssey House opened the doors to this first family treatment center in New York in 1973, allowing parents recovering from drug abuse to make the journey to health with their young children living with them. Today, there are 210 slots for

parents and children at Odyssey House, including 75 at the MABON Center.

While engaging in their own treatment, through such program features as counseling, vocational training, medical care, and relapse prevention planning, the adults residents of the MABON

Family Center are also learning how to be better parents, both through parenting skills classes and such simple activities as extended recreational time with their children. In addition, the Center offers licensed daycare for infants and preschoolers and on-site pediatricians and nurses.

Strength from private/public partnerships

Ms. Lasser's contribution to Odyssey House is part of the essential private-public partnership the organization relies on to transform people's lives. Whereas state and federal funding provides for much of Odyssey House's programming, without the generosity of philanthropists such as Ms. Lasser and the Elizabeth and Baretts O. Benjamin Foundation, the organization could not make the improvements necessary to ensure that the men, women, and teens struggling to escape the grip of drug addiction have the best opportunity to renew their lives and rejoin society as productive, healthy citizens.

As John Tavolacci, Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer, put it at the dedication ceremony, "Treatment allows recovering drug abusers to appreciate their loved ones, their opportunities, and find the courage to take advantage of those opportunities. Believing in people who are struggling to change their lives takes courage. Thank you Ms. Lasser for your courage."



Celebrating Success at Adult Education School

Residents in treatment for substance abuse problems can take advantage of a range of educational and vocational services that help them prepare for new careers.

Run in conjunction with New York City Board of Education, Odyssey House offers a range of adult education classes that include: GED prep and testing, computer skills training, and adult literacy.

All adult school classes are conducted on-site at Odyssey House's treatment centers. Residents are assessed for their educational and vocational needs as soon as they enter treatment, and classes and

training curriculum are built in to their individual treatment plans.

Sunita Manjrekar, director of vocational and educational services, says she places a high priority on holding regular graduation ceremonies for residents who complete course requirements. "Our goal is to help each resident be — and feel — successful. Some people come into treatment feeling they have nothing to offer, or that they're too old to study.

We help them overcome those fears and then, on graduation day, we all celebrate together."



New Outpatient Program Expands Services for Seniors

Odyssey House ElderCare Outpatient Program addresses the 'hidden epidemic' of drug and alcohol abuse among older Americans.

This innovative program is made possible by a \$200,000 grant from The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation.

Latest U.S. census report data predict people 65 years and older will, for the next 25 years, be the country's fastest growing age group. Within this population are unprecedented numbers of individuals in need of substance abuse services, a group so overlooked and underserved that researchers call it a "hidden epidemic."

In New York State alone, the number of people 60 years of age and older admitted to treatment programs is growing by 20 percent a year. Keeping up with the demand for services is a challenge for communities throughout New York. In 2000, only 13,500 elders received treatment for drug abuse, a small proportion of the 630,000 older New Yorkers (approximately 17 percent of New York's elderly population of 3.7 million people) who have an alcohol or drug problem.

Efforts to meet these needs, however, are underway. The latest, and one of the most innovative, is Odyssey House's ElderCare Outpatient Program. Located in a high-need section of the South Bronx, this new program fills two important community goals:

- increasing access to substance abuse treatment for older individuals who are currently underserved, and

- providing a continuum of care for seniors who are transitioning from the Odyssey House ElderCare residential program in East Harlem.

Because many elderly people are at risk of being cut off from their communities as they age, the treatment focus

partnership we are able to offer a neglected and overlooked population of aging New Yorkers a new level of service in substance abuse treatment."

For his part, Mr. Marvin A. Kaufman, Chairman of the Samuels Foundation, said his board is delighted to be able

created the first-ever residential treatment program dedicated to meeting the needs of older substance abusers.

Since it was established with the help of an innovative private supporter, the Rosenback Foundation, in tandem with New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, the Odyssey House ElderCare residential program has grown from 40 beds to more than 70 and has provided comprehensive substance abuse and mental health treatment, vocational, educational, and housing services to more than 250 older addicts.

Odyssey House also supports research efforts aimed at understanding the needs of elderly substance abusers and in establishing new evidence-based treatment protocols to meet their life-stage challenges. Recent Odyssey House-sponsored studies looking into the substance abuse histories of the men and women in treatment found significant differences in choice of drugs of abuse, impact on the individual's health and social well-being, and length of use.

Located in the Hunt's Point section of the South Bronx, at 953 Southern Boulevard, the new ElderCare Outpatient Program is easily accessible via public transportation. Client services are offered in English and Spanish.



of the ElderCare Outpatient Program is to encourage isolated older people to develop a social support network among their peers in recovery; provide them with individual and group therapy; and as necessary, visit them in their homes. Counselors trained in geriatric care develop individualized treatment plans incorporating age-related individual and group therapies targeting symptoms of depression and anxiety, bereavement counseling and life planning, and facilitate access to primary medical care.

Dr. Peter Provet, President of Odyssey House, thanked the Samuels Foundation for their support of this valuable initiative. "Through their

to support the ElderCare Outpatient Program. "We firmly believe Odyssey House's patient-based service will directly help the elderly of New York City overcome substance abuse problems."

Track record in treating senior substance abusers

Odyssey House has established a track record in meeting the needs of this overlooked and underserved population. In 1997, the agency

**Further information on the program, and our new community-based Outpatient Services for families and young adults is available by calling: Odyssey House Outpatient Services
718-860-2994, or
online at: www.odysseyhouseinc.org**

A Commitment to Research and Innovation

At Odyssey House we are engaged in several research initiatives that promise to bring immediate and long-term benefits to our residents.

One of the most comprehensive is the National Clinical Trials Network study funded by the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) that is investigating the causes and treatment of drug abuse and dependence.

In collaboration with New York University School of Medicine (NYUSM), Odyssey House is testing the interaction of proven therapeutic community drug-free treatment models with anti-addiction medications. As a drug-free treatment agency Odyssey House's role is vital in helping to ensure drug abuse and mental health treatment

providers are equal partners with medical addiction researchers.

Also in partnership with NYUSM, Odyssey House is conducting a survey funded by the Lilly Foundation to try to understand the link between substance abuse and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). This study will screen for ADHD in 1,000 of our residential clients and then test the efficacy of a non-stimulant ADHD medication (atomoxetine) with volunteers in treatment who are found to have ADHD.

The third study underway at Odyssey House measures the efficacy of a non-invasive crack and cocaine drug test. Called the Fast Patch, this new test can detect the presence of crack or cocaine in an addict's system for up to 21 days.

Current tests are only accurate for up to 72 hours.

Dr. Frank Guida, director of research at Odyssey House, explained that participation in these projects is entirely voluntary and that residents who choose to participate are carefully screened and monitored throughout the length of the study.

"Substance abuse and mental health treatment is a constantly evolving discipline. Every year new treatment and testing techniques are being developed and many of them hold great promise in helping people achieve sobriety and manage their lives.

"Being involved in research," he added, "brings extra resources to the agency, and keeps us abreast of the latest, and best, treatment advances."



"Odyssey House taught me to balance being a parent with being in recovery"

"Friends" Gets Off to Flying Start

Membership campaign supports residents in recovery

Since it was launched this September, more than 400 people have been enrolled in the new "Friends of Odyssey House" campaign. While many of these founding members are closely associated with Odyssey House through

their work for the agency as staff, board members, or funders, others have joined the association because they want to be involved in helping people change their lives.

Their gift of friendship gives residents what they need most—support, encouragement and hope.

If you would like to show your support for children, young mothers, teens or senior citizens, please contact:



Odyssey Foundation
95 Pine Street
NY, NY 10005
Tel: 212-361-1600
Or online at:
www.odysseyhouseinc.org



95 Pine Street
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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 Leadership



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