

ODYSSEY HOUSE

news

www.odysseyhouseinc.org

Saving lives, rebuilding families, restoring communities

Fall 2005



The Odyssey House Art Project's latest exhibit features a series of handmade masks. See page 2.

Boost in Housing Services Helps Residents and Families in Recovery

New Initiative Will Provide Treatment and Housing Services for Homeless People in Recovery from Substance Abuse

Odyssey House has been awarded a \$2 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to develop its "Pathways to Housing Initiative."

This competitive, five-year, federal grant will allow Odyssey House to extend its outreach into the shelter system, enroll homeless persons with substance abuse problems (particularly single mothers with small children) into residential or outpatient substance abuse treatment, and provide assistance with housing placement.

"One of the most difficult transitions homeless substance abusers make is returning to in-

dependent living," said Dr. Peter Provett, President of Odyssey House. "Odyssey House clients often have great difficulty finding appropriate low-cost housing and do not want to jeopardize their recovery by returning to the same environment that they lived in prior to treatment."

New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) recognizes substance abuse as a significant problem among its homeless population. Approximately 22 percent or 1,833 adult shelter beds are designated as substance abuse beds.

Housing Help Aids Treatment Success

Lashawn Moore spent over a year at a homeless shelter in Harlem before coming to the Odyssey House Family Center of Excellence

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Art World Turns Out to Support Treatment

Benefit Auction Raises Awareness and Funds

Odyssey House hosted its first benefit art auction on June 27th at Sotheby's. The event included both a live and silent auction of contemporary art and raised \$125,000 for the men, women, and children in treatment at Odyssey House programs.

"I was pleased to serve as a co-chair of Odyssey House's first arts-related fundraising project," said Andrew McKelvey, Chairman and CEO of Monster Worldwide. "Since being introduced to the organization, I have been deeply impressed by its extensive programs that support personal rehabilitation, renewal, and family restoration."

McKelvey and event co-chairs, the artist William Wegman, his wife Christine Burgin, and gallery owner Joan Washburn, hosted the benefit with auction Chairman and Odyssey House Board Chairman George Rosenfeld.



Art enthusiasts: Judy Auchincloss, benefit committee member, and Joan Washburn, event co-chair.

The co-chairs were joined by a benefit committee of artists and art collectors whose compassionate support of substance abuse and mental health treatment services helped promote the sale among art buyers. The members of this committee included: Judy Auchincloss,

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Haven Gallery Showcases Client Work

“Fresh.”

“Surprising.”

“Thought provoking.”

These are just a few of the terms used to describe UnMasked — a series of handmade masks created by members of the Odyssey House Art Project.

UnMasked - which is the group's second exhibition - embodies the spirit of 'outsider art' and challenges perceptions of mental illness.

Exhibit Received with Enthusiasm

Lloyd Sederer, M.D., New York City's Executive Deputy Commissioner of Mental Hygiene, attended the opening reception for the exhibit's premiere held at the Odyssey House Haven Gallery on May 12th, and was moved by the masks.

“These masks are extraordinary because they clearly reflect human emotion and expression among a group that is often misunderstood and stigmatized,” he said. “The creation of art allows participants to express and experience their inner feelings in a healthy way. We encourage other programs to develop initiatives similar to the Odyssey House Art Project.”

Therapeutic Value of Expressive Arts

The Odyssey House Art Project is made up of individuals who are coping with mental illness, substance abuse, and homelessness. Jerald Frampton, director of the Odyssey House expressive arts program and a Guggenheim fellow, works with residents who often remain fragile after years of moving among shelters, hospitals, and jails.

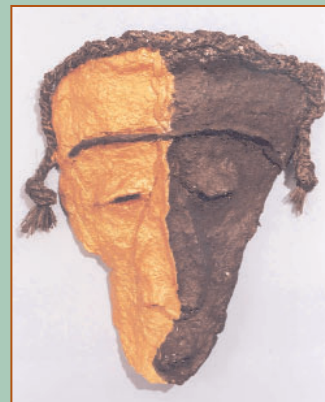
“Some of the people that produced the most exciting work were individuals that came into treatment seemingly the least functional,” Frampton said. “People have told me it ‘made me feel like I was a person...like I was part of something’.”

Odyssey House recognizes the added value that the creation of art brings to the treatment and recovery process. Participants use art as a means of communicating their inner turmoil and battle with addiction and want others to understand and respond to their work — a gratifying experience for all involved.



Profile of artist

After extensive research on African ceremonial masks, group member Troy B. decided to replicate a mask that reflects the two sides of the spirit. While in treatment at Odyssey House, he is learning how to manage his schizophrenia, depression, and addiction problems. Individuals with mental illness often struggle with identity and have difficulty reading the expressions on the faces of others.



“I was surprised that I had artistic ability, but I have learned a lot,” Troy said. “Creating art has allowed me to release a lot of stress and get over my depression.”



Lucky is a resident in treatment at the Odyssey House ElderCare program. His mask is a self-portrait.



Some of the exhibit's youngest visitors are intrigued by the mask, “Emerald Goddess.”

Left: Members of the Odyssey House Art Project creating some of the masks that were featured in the exhibit.

Broad Support for Art Benefit

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Clarissa Dalrymple, Tanja Grunert, Klaus Kertess, Robin Renzi, Kate Rothko M.D., and Linda Yablonsky.

Artists Give to Treatment

Among the 60 works of art generously donated to the auction by artists and galleries were works by William Wegman, Lynda Bengalis, Louise Bourgeois, Marcel Dzama, Louise Lawler, Sol LeWitt, Robert Motherwell, Michal Rovner, Pat Steir, and Ike Ude. Their contributions spanned an impressive range of contemporary art forms including paintings, photographs, and sculptures. (A full list of artists with brief biographies and images of their art, are available online at: www.odysseyhouseinc.org.)

Mayor Sends Support

Invited guest Mayor Michael Bloomberg sent a letter of congratulations thanking Odyssey House for its “unwavering support of our City’s most vulnerable residents and families” and citing the “high quality and essential substance abuse and mental health services that have improved the qual-

ity of life for people who are suffering from addictions.”

Helping Hand for Teens

A highlight of the evening was a speech by Christina Cerezo, a teen in treatment at the Odyssey House Leadership Center, who spoke to the audience of nearly 300 guests about how treatment helped her and others overcome substance abuse and related life problems.

“I have been in treatment for almost one year now and I have grown so much as a person during this time,” Cerezo said. “The Teen Leadership Center provided a supportive community where I got the individualized support, treatment, and attention I needed.”

Cerezo happily announced that as part of her treatment program, she completed training as a legal case manager and was offered a full-time position with a law firm in the Bronx.

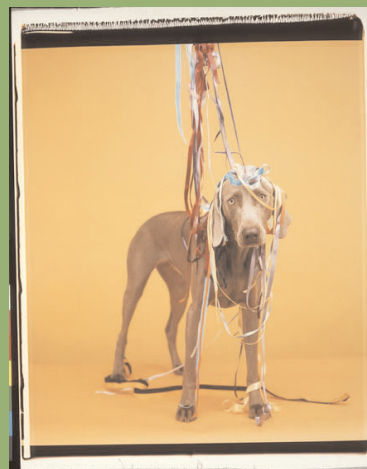
She reminded attendees that their support would help other troubled teens develop into mature, drug-free, young adults.



George Rosenfeld, Chairman of the Odyssey House Boards of Trustees, with residents Darielle Baker and Christina Cerezo.

“I was excited to support Odyssey House’s first benefit auction and to work with great contemporary artists in making this event a huge success. The quality and range of works for sale were truly remarkable and reflected on the real generosity of the art world, and most importantly, on Odyssey House’s reputation for saving the lives of thousands of men and women struggling with drug addiction and mental illness. The artists and art buyers who turned out showed that they also believe in giving people a second chance.”

— William Wegman



Wegman’s “Party Girl” helped kickstart the live auction.

Federal Funding for “Pathways to Housing Initiative”

Continued from page 1

to treat an addiction problem. Moore and her children have been in and out of the shelter system over the last four years.

“Odyssey House is doing the right thing by offering housing services as part of the treatment program — particularly for women with children,” Moore said. “It’s difficult for a single mother to

maintain recovery when she is worried about where her family is going to live after leaving treatment. Too many of us end up back in the shelter system or on the street.”

Odyssey House understands the importance of housing counselors to advocate on behalf of clients returning to the community. The

counselors, supported by this award, will work with clients in treatment to secure appropriate housing.

“A major reason clients leave treatment before completion is their inability to obtain affordable housing,” Dr. Provet said. “The combination of housing and ongoing treatment services made

possible by the ‘Pathways to Housing Initiative’ and our partnerships with DHS and other housing agencies, will improve client retention, recovery, and homeless recidivism rates. We expect that clients will remain in treatment longer if they can obtain practical assistance to locate affordable housing.”

Odyssey House Addresses Mental Health

Innovative Treatment Approach Provides Intensive Services for Special Population



Barbara Cohn, Executive Deputy Commissioner of New York State Office of Mental Health, flanked by Dr. Peter Provet, President and CEO of Odyssey House, and John Tavalacci, COO.

The cornerstone of Odyssey House's mental health services is the 60-bed Odyssey Behavioral Health Care Residence (OBHCR). This unique program provides a range of therapeutic and life skill services to help homeless individuals, who are coping with mental illness and chemical addiction, rejoin society as independent citizens.

Residents at OBHCR participate in family therapy, educational classes, and vocational training, all bolstered by intensive substance abuse and mental health treatment. The residential center, which is certified and funded by New York State Office of Mental Health, is located in East Harlem and admits men and women from local hospitals and psychiatric centers.

"Our focus on family programs and vocational/educational services helps residents successfully reintegrate into society," says John Tavalacci, Chief Operating Officer, and head of clinical services at Odyssey House.

Challenging Conventional Treatment

Individuals with both substance abuse and mental health disorders often have difficulty seeking and receiving treatment services. Separately, these disorders are often as treatable as other chronic illnesses; however the clinical reality of treating both disorders at the same time challenges traditional mental health and substance abuse service and treatment systems.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 7 to 10 million individuals in the United States are affected by co-occurring disorders. If one of the disorders goes un-

treated, both usually get worse and additional complications may arise — including serious medical problems, suicide, criminal activity, unemployment, homelessness, and separation from families and communities.

Range of Services Supports Recovery

Odyssey House's treatment professionals quickly address these issues with a range of services including: on-site primary and psychiatric medical services; educational and vocational training; intensive case management; and cultural/recreational activities.

Treatment services for this population focus on equipping residents with the skills they need to manage their mental illness outside an institutional setting without abusing drugs. Residents receive training in basic life skills including: budgeting/shopping, banking/money management, and medication compliance.

Since the program's inception, 200 men and women graduates have attained lasting sobriety, moved on to appropriate living situations, gone back to school or work, and have been reunited with their families.

Tavalacci credits the program's success with the facility's staffing ratio which allows for close interaction of residents and staff.

"The program's purpose is to stabilize socially isolated individuals in preparation for community living," Tavalacci said. "Our residents need individual, specialized care to attain that goal."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you are interested in learning more about programs and services for mentally ill and chemically addicted individuals please contact:

Odyssey Behavioral Health Care Residence (OBHCR)
212-987-5151
www.odysseyhouseinc.org

OBHCR provides enhanced therapeutic community services to formerly homeless individuals who are coping with severe and persistent mental illness and chemical dependency.

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)
National – 800-950-NAMI
NYC Metro – 212-684-3264
www.nami.org

NAMI offers information on the diagnosis, symptoms and treatment of severe mental illness and offers practical information and coping tips for consumers and their families.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

One Resident's Journey to Health and Healing

After 15 years as a nun, Marianne M. severed all ties with her religious order, left the safety of the convent, and dropped out of sight. She was suffering from undiagnosed severe depression and alcoholism. Marianne spent the next 13 years cycling between the street, homeless shelters, and rehabilitation centers. Her last stop was the Odyssey Behavioral Health Care Residence (OBHCR) in East Harlem, where she and other mentally ill chemical abusers start their journey back to health.

"People still can't believe how I went from one extreme to the other," Marianne said.

Marianne is an inspiration to her peers. When she first arrived two years ago, she walked out after just two days. But she soon returned when she decided she was ready to make significant changes in her life and this was the place to start.

"Odyssey House brought out the good that I didn't think I had left in me," she said.



Marianne credits Odyssey House for her recovery.

Moving on from mental illness

Marianne has been sober for 20 months. She has also learned to manage her depression. She is slowly rebuilding relationships with estranged family and friends.

"I didn't think about my family or friends. All I cared about was where I was going to get my next drink," she said. "They are not going to trust me in one day, one week, or even one month. It will take time to prove myself to them, but it will be worth it."

Marianne plans to work as a substance abuse counselor for teens after finishing treatment, but right now she is actively involved in the Odyssey House expressive arts program. She helps her peers recognize the value of using art as a form of self-expression as well.

A corn mask (see pg. 1) that she created is the centerpiece of the UnMasked exhibit at the Odyssey House Haven Art Gallery.

Outreach and Education: Important Components of Mental Health Services

The Odyssey House mental health outreach team works to educate mentally ill and chemically addicted patients about programs and services available to them in their communities.

"Our job is to get these patients to stop using drugs and learn how to live with mental illness regardless of whether or not they come to Odyssey House for residential treatment" said Virginia Gregory, outreach coordinator.

The team facilitates workshops on topics such as relapse prevention, anger/stress management, coping strategies, and medication management at a number of state and city run psychiatric hospitals and shelters throughout the New York City area.

"All of our workshops are geared toward wellness, so in a small way it prepares people for healthy, productive lives after discharge," Gregory said.

A number of individuals that participate in the outreach workshops eventually enter treatment at the Odyssey Behavioral Health Care Residence (OBHCR) with the majority completing the long-term treatment program.

Graduate Gives Back

Cynthia Brathwaite is one such success story. After suffering an emotional crisis and entering an outpatient clinic, Brathwaite, faced with homelessness, decided to enter residential treatment at OBHCR. After months of intensive work, she completed the program and now works as a



Peer counselor Cynthia Brathwaite (left) helps residents like Carmelita Burke overcome addiction and manage their mental health.

peer counselor with the outreach team.

"I was a peer counselor when I was a resident. I enjoyed it so much that I decided to pursue working as a counselor full time after completing treatment," Brathwaite said.

"Today, I have the honor of working with people in psychiatric hospitals who come to OBHCR for long-term treatment, graduate from the program, and then return to society to lead full lives."



"The best thing to do is to learn and study."

— Hasan Daniel,
resident in treatment
at Odyssey House

Career Exploration is Central to Success

As director of vocational services, Sunita Manjrekar's objective is for all residents to secure gainful employment after completing treatment. To accomplish her goal, Manjrekar helped create on-site educational and vocational services for all Odyssey House programs, including the ElderCare component.

Her efforts have been worthwhile.

The number of residents that have obtained employment has steadily increased; and the Odyssey House Teen Leadership Center recently had a 100 percent success rate with the GED program.

"We involve all residents in educational/vocational services right away. Many lack basic job skills and we want to ensure that they acquire the necessary skills to earn a decent living and become

productive citizens upon re-entry into the community," Manjrekar said.

Every Odyssey House resident is assigned a vocational rehabilitation counselor to

health aide, food service, building maintenance, and plumbing.

Twenty-two year old GED graduate Hasan Daniel has taken full advantage of Odyssey House's educational/vocational services and he encourages other residents to do so as well.

"A lot of the younger residents see me carrying around books and they always ask what I am reading," Daniel said. "I tell them that I am studying because the best thing to do is learn and study - when you are busy, you stay out of

trouble. I suggest that they talk to their vocational counselors and explore their options."

With his GED in hand, Daniel is training to be a computer technician. He hopes to attend college and study computer science after he finishes treatment.



Residents participate in a GED graduation ceremony, June 2005.

work on realistic and attainable educational and vocational goals. All residents who do not have a high school diploma are encouraged to get their GED and then focus on training and employment. Some training programs include: computer programming, clerical work, home

New Technology Improves Continuity of Care

A new paperless clinical information system that allows Odyssey House to seamlessly manage the comprehensive services available to all residents has been launched.

Speedy access to treatment records and other data is an essential function for a multi-faceted organization that offers substance abuse treatment, medical care, mental health services, educational/vocational services, and intensive case management.

The custom-designed software includes an electronic clinical record as well as scheduling/appointment management and billing applications. The paperless system eliminates duplication and improves accessibility and confidentiality. Electronic clinical record keeping also makes it easier to review treatment plans and track client progress, making it easier to implement quality improvements.

"The software organizes and integrates many complex pieces of information into an understandable whole with just a click of a button," said Jeff Savoy, director of training, who worked closely with the software designers and Odyssey House staff to ensure a smooth transition.

Staffs at several Odyssey House residential programs and the outpatient program are already using the new technology with the remaining sites due to come online in 2006.

"This new technology will allow us to remain on the cutting edge in providing innovative treatment services to our residents," said Amy Schneider, program director at Odyssey Behavioral Health Care Residence. "Electronic record keeping is the wave of the future."

This initiative was championed by the strategic planning committee of the Odyssey House Board of Trustees.

Guggenheim Foundation Funds Family Outreach

At Odyssey House putting the needs of families first is a priority.

With the support of a \$60,000 grant from The Daniel and Florence Guggenheim Foundation, Odyssey House court outreach staff will have additional resources to make it easier to identify mothers that may be facing incarceration, but would benefit more from a residential treatment program.

"There are many programs that provide alternatives to incarceration, but the Odyssey House initiative is distinctive because it prioritizes women with children and the reunification of families," said Anne H. Lindgren,

Vice President, Board of Directors, The Daniel and Florence Guggenheim Foundation.

The Correctional Association of New York reports that almost 75 percent of New York's female prisoners have children. Additionally, more than 85 percent of New York's women prisoners report having had a substance abuse problem prior to arrest.

Jamie Berman, director of admissions for Odyssey House, works closely with criminal justice officials who she says are becoming more receptive to treatment options for mothers with drug-related offenses related to substance abuse problems.



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.



Darielle Baker with her daughters. Baker has been sober for 14 months and is training to become a medical assistant.

Saving a family

Darielle Baker is in treatment at the Odyssey House family program in East Harlem with her two daughters.

"Both of my parents were addicts and I was forced to grow up too soon with too little guidance," Baker said. "I started using cocaine at the age of 19 to help battle severe depression," she said.

"By the time I was 23 I was using cocaine every day. I was also a young mother. Because of my drug abuse, I ended up incarcerated and having my oldest child taken away from me."

Baker was referred to the Odyssey House Family Center of Excellence.

"I was lucky. I had just found out I was one month pregnant. The judge told me if I went to Odyssey House I could have my baby there and I could get my oldest daughter back. I was relieved. I was happy. And I was determined to make it work," Baker said.

"Reports show that providing for a woman and child in a comprehensive residential treatment program is significantly less expensive than putting the mother in jail and placing a child in foster care," said Berman, who added that another key benefit to placing mothers in treatment is the increased likelihood of keeping a family together by helping mothers retain custody of their children.

History of Treating Women with Children

Odyssey House has been treating women with children in residential programs for over 30 years.

The first parent/child program began in 1973, allowing families to reside together while parents received treatment. Odyssey House now has one of the largest family programs in the state of New York.

In 2004, Odyssey House admitted 128 women with their young children; more than one third from the criminal justice system.

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



95 Pine Street
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 TC program in the country and the only residential and outpatient TC program for senior citizens.

For more information about Odyssey House programs, call 212-987-5100 or visit us online at www.odysseyhouseinc.org