

ODYSSEY HOUSE

news

www.odysseyhouseinc.org

Saving lives, rebuilding families, restoring communities

Spring 2006

New Center Offers Fresh Approach to Treating Teens

The paint is dry, the furniture is assembled, and the classrooms are stocked with school supplies. In the next few weeks the first residents of Odyssey House's teen center will be moving in to a brand new building designed just for them.

In a bold new approach to treating troubled teens, Odyssey House is opening an innovative treatment center for youth with substance abuse and related problems, such as emotional or behavioral disorders, who can best be helped in small group environment.

Treatment services offered at the 16-bed center include:

- intensive individual case management,

- individual therapy and counseling, family therapy,
- onsite high school, and
- access to inter-agency medical services, vocational counseling and job development, sports and recreational programs.

The program is built around the therapeutic community (TC) model, one of the most successful treatment regimens for long-term substance abusers who need extensive rehabilitation. The TC utilizes a peer-driven, hierarchical structure of work

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New start for troubled teens: Center will focus on treating adolescents in a small group environment.



GIANTS MAKE A PLAY FOR BOOKS



Linebacker Antonio Pierce reads with Family Center youngsters.

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Client Referrals, Admissions Reach Record High

The admissions department is the frontline of treatment. Every day a dedicated team of outreach and intake specialists get the word out about the range of treatment options available at Odyssey House and motivate people to get serious about recovery.

In the last two years referrals have increased by 43 percent and admissions by 22 percent. Jamie Berman, direc-

tor of admissions, credits these increases to her team's success in reaching special populations – such as women with children and senior citizens – who can be overlooked by traditional treatment programs more used to helping single adults.

Emphasis on Outreach

Using a range of communication methods from site visits, mailings, and telephone calls, outreach workers educate

people about the agency's services for families, teens, seniors, and homeless individuals.

"We focus on setting and achieving certain target outreach goals each month," Ms. Berman said. "We believe that the more people we reach the better."

She said that good relationships with a variety of referral sources and an interview admission process that runs smoothly have also contributed to the high numbers.

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ODYSSEY HOUSE

Marathon Team Sets the Pace

Training and participating in the New York City Marathon is an important motivational tool for many Odyssey House residents. For 41-year-old Renee Shepard running helped her return to a state of physical and mental well-being she says she lost during her battle with addiction.

The first female resident to run in the New York City Marathon, Renee joined 19 Odyssey House clients, staff members, and supporters in completing the 2005 New York City Marathon.

Today, Renee considers running an important part of her treatment process.

"I feel good when I run," she said. "As time goes by I become stronger both physically and mentally. It's like a form of mental therapy — the adrenaline rush and release of endorphins help with my feelings of depression and leaves me with a sense of accomplishment."

Team member Elijah Campbell, a 21-year-old in treatment at the Odyssey House Leadership Center, agreed. He said that crossing the finish line during the marathon was an amazing experience.

Support for runners

John Tavalacci, chief operating officer at Odyssey House, spearheaded the marathon team's fundraising efforts. All 20 runners on the team completed the race and raised over \$15,000 in donations.

"Physical well-being has a positive impact on the recovery process," Mr. Tavalacci said. "Recreational activities, like running, help residents stay fit, develop self confidence by achieving personal goals, and feel like they are a part of something larger."



The Odyssey House marathon team from left to right: (top) William Walsh, Curtis Jenkins, and Eddie Bryant, (bottom) Elijah Campbell and Renee Shepard.

Achilles Track Club Provides Marathon Team with Skills for Positive Change

Odyssey House and the Achilles Track Club have teamed up for the past five years to help Odyssey House residents train for the New York City Marathon.

Every week leading up to race day, the Odyssey House marathon team followed a structured health and fitness regimen and ran with Odyssey House staff, Achilles volunteers, and supporters in pre-Marathon charity races.

This year they also participated in *Skills for a Positive Change*, a new group therapy program designed to establish a connection between running a marathon and managing life. Nell Hanks, a mental health counselor and volunteer with the Achilles Track Club, developed the program.

"I don't think any of us could have completed the marathon without Nell's guidance and enthusiastic support," said team member William Walsh, a 26-year-old in treatment at Odyssey House.



From left to right: Achilles Track Club Vice President Mary Bryant, Founder Dick Traum and volunteer Nell Hanks, with Odyssey House Chief Operating Officer John Tavalacci.

We Are Family: ElderCare Program Receives Families for a Day

More than 75 family members and friends joined residents at the Odyssey House ElderCare program for a day filled with information about Odyssey House programs and services, family reunifications, poetry and dance performances, singing, and a luncheon.

"We thought it would be rewarding for the family members of residents to learn

about the treatment process and how they can support their loved ones recovery," said James Waldron, deputy director of the ElderCare program. "We were surprised and pleased by the tremendous turnout."

Positive familial relationships play an integral part in the recovery process.

"I had a great time introducing my family to my

"There were no strangers that day — we were all one big family"

Odyssey House family," said Janice Jefferson, a 55-year-old in treatment at the ElderCare program. "There were no strangers that day — we were all one big family."

ElderCare residents played an active role in planning the event and provided all of the

entertainment. The room was filled with parents, siblings, children, grandchildren, and even a couple of great grandchildren. Some family members traveled from as far as Virginia to attend the event and visit with their loved one.

NY Giants' Star Scores a Touchdown for Reading

Antonio Pierce, starting linebacker for the New York Giants, called it his post-season highlight — sharing some favorite children's books with the smallest residents of the Family Center in East Harlem.

The star football player's visit was a big hit with the more than 30 preschoolers and toddlers at the center who quietly listened as he read some well-loved stories and then joined in with a lively sing-along. For his part, Mr. Pierce said he was impressed with the enthusiasm of the children who shared their books with him, "it's great to see how even the little two-year-olds already enjoy books. I could tell they get lots of positive encouragement to become early readers."

Encouraging children to develop a love of reading is a goal of *Story Time at Odyssey House* and one which is shared with the Giants' "Read Across America" initiative.

"The children of addicted parents are often overlooked. In their short lives, they have already faced poverty, unstable home situations, and parents with severe drug and alcohol problems — an unpromising start to their futures," said Cecilia Scott, director of the Family Center program. "During their time at Odyssey House, while they are safe and well cared-for, we strive to equip them for the challenges they will face after they leave."

Story time at Odyssey House is part of the Odyssey House children's library and literacy program. The goal of the program is to bring the joy of reading to children in treatment with their

Local Harlem Performer Visits



Miss Mellie Rainbow was the first guest reader during *Story Time at Odyssey House*. She is a vibrant performer and story teller, who helps children connect to their imagination through reading, writing, art, and singing. Her fun and interactive performance helped the children in the Family Center program develop a love of stories.

parents, and get parents excited about the benefits of reading so they will continue to support reading habits and act as role models.

Center Offers Fresh Approach to Treating Teens

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and earned privileges that motivates residents to take responsibility for their actions, discourages anti-social behavior, and fosters a supportive environment where residents feel safe to develop new ways of living.

In the new center this traditional TC approach will be bolstered by enhanced psychiatric treatment, family intervention services, and an investment in education and job skills development to prepare youngsters to move on in their lives.

Turning teens around

Odyssey House President, Peter Provet Ph.D., said the development of a family-like, but service-rich environment for drug involved adolescents

"is an evolutionary step from earlier treatment models that were mostly adult treatment programs with educational services.

"It's very exciting to open a new program designed exclusively for teens. Research supports the efficacy of treating troubled adolescents in a small, highly-structured setting. A close-knit team of specially trained staff who understand adolescent development issues will provide these youngsters with the educational and social skills support they need to get back on track," he said.

Custom construction

Some of the biggest challenges the design team faced were: creating a sense of space

in a building that occupies less than 9,000 sq feet on a busy street in the Hunts Point Section of the South Bronx; ensuring the architectural design was in keeping with a residential city neighborhood; and staying within a tight budget.

Odyssey House chief financial and administrative officer, Durga Vallabhaneni, headed up the project and worked closely with New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services to squeeze out any discretionary costs without compromising the overall quality of the construction.

"It is an agency-wide priority to ensure our buildings look good, are well main-



The state-of-the-art building that houses the new teen treatment program is located in the Hunts Point section of the South Bronx.

tained, and keep our neighbors happy," Mr. Vallabhaneni said. "This new building accomplishes all three."

ODYSSEY HOUSE COMMUNITY-B

Odyssey House offers a continuum of care that assists residents as they transition back into the community. Intensive residential treatment, combined with continuing care services, provide the most successful way to help people with substance abuse problems maintain their recovery. Ongoing support services, such as housing, employment, and legal assistance, begin before a resident leaves residential treatment and are continued in outpatient services.

Before leaving ...

The transition from treatment to independent living is one of the most critical phases for people in the early stages of recovery. To help residents manage this period as smoothly as possible, Odyssey House counselors have developed this completion-readiness checklist:

- ✓ Attend workshops that focus on daily living skills
- ✓ Develop a relapse prevention plan
- ✓ Attend family counseling sessions
- ✓ Be gainfully employed
- ✓ Open a bank account and have \$1000 in savings
- ✓ Find appropriate housing
- ✓ Establish an external support network (AA, NA, or church)
- ✓ Establish leisure time activities
- ✓ Plan to attend outpatient counseling

Outpatient services — flexible and family friendly

Outpatient chemical dependency services offers the best environment for focused, practical advice and peer-group support for people who need a place where they can address day-to-day challenges that threaten their long-term sobriety.

Victor Gonzalez, director of Odyssey House Outpatient Services, says that whether clients are transitioning from residential treatment back into society, or seeking to manage their recovery entirely while remaining in their own home, Odyssey House can offer them the appropriate level of care.

“It doesn’t matter if someone’s been clean six months or six years — we can support their recovery goals with intensive intervention services, or focus on specific individual and family concerns,” he said. “We treat people who have just completed detoxification, have been referred by the criminal justice system or social service agencies, or live in the community and are looking for help in staying clean.”

The Bronx-based center provides specialized alcohol and drug abuse treatment services for families, adoles-



Wanda Shaw meets with her counselor at the Outpatient Program.

cents, and seniors. Services include: individual, group, and family counseling; relapse prevention workshops, health education, and anger management classes; vocational and educational evaluations; and health care services. Clients are also offered the opportunity to join in recreational activities, such as picnics and outings to local amusement parks and cultural events.

Drug Free Lifeline

For Wanda Shaw, the center is an essential lifeline. Since leaving residential treatment a year ago, Ms. Shaw has been a regular participant in the family counseling

groups and brings her children with her when she comes for sessions.

“I really recommend Odyssey House Outpatient Services. The counselors here are wonderful and offer genuine care and concern. It’s like we are one giant family,” she said. “Even when I complete the program I plan on still visiting — I’m not going anywhere.”

Bilingual services are available and program hours include day and evening options. The program recently added buprenorphine therapy and counseling services to its growing number of treatment services.

BASED EXTENDED CARE SERVICES

Helping Hand With Housing

One of the greatest challenges people face in the early stages of recovery is finding safe and secure housing.

Maintaining a healthy home is the number one priority of residents starting out on their own after completion of an intensive treatment experience. But the hurdles in finding an affordable new home in a safe neighborhood can be overwhelming for many residents.

To help them overcome these barriers, Odyssey House offers residents a range of housing services from supervised housing for families re-entering society to transitional housing for homeless individuals.

Supported by a \$2 million grant from the federal government's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Odyssey House is now able to provide assistance with housing placement for homeless persons who are in Odyssey House residential or outpatient treatment programs.

Finding a home

"We've known for some time that people who leave residential treatment without a home to go to are in real danger of being back on the streets and being exposed to illegal drugs. Thanks to SAMHSA we now have additional resources to help alleviate this problem," said Detlef Von Hahn, director of outpatient and housing services.

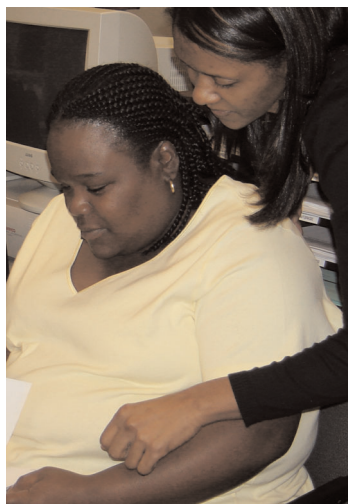
Newly hired counselors that focus solely on housing

issues have helped over 40 homeless residents secure appropriate housing since October 2005.

"It's difficult to find housing in New York City in general. It's even more difficult for Odyssey House residents to find housing because their history of substance abuse is often accompanied by a history of homelessness, a lack of references, a criminal record or bad credit," said Debra Hurd, housing counselor.

Ms. Hurd helped Gwendolyn Hearn, a 42-year-old mother of two, secure a two bedroom apartment for her family in the Bronx. She said with young children to take care of it was really helpful to have someone advocate on her behalf.

"This will be the first time I've maintained an apartment while sober, but I feel ready. I'm ready to move out and re-join society," Ms. Hearn said.



Gwendolyn Hearn worked with housing counselors Jocelyn Feliciano Watson (pictured here) and Debra Hurd to secure a brand new two bedroom apartment in the Bronx.

Odyssey House Helps Families Prepare for Life After Treatment

When 47-year-old Luis Bacenet came to Odyssey House for treatment almost two years ago he knew he wanted to participate in the Family Re-Entry program so he could take care of his 12-year-old son. When his wife passed away and he gained temporary custody of his son, Luis knew this was his chance to be a real dad. He knew the Family Re-Entry program would help prepare him for the challenge.



Luis Bacenet and his son Christopher have been in the Family Re-Entry program for 5 months. Bacenet is a single dad who is learning how to be a good parent and manage a household.

The Family Re-Entry program offers parents in treatment at the Odyssey House Family Center of Excellence support in the transition period from residential treatment to independent living. The program has twenty supportive housing apartments in the Bronx and offers support services that include child care, group and individual counseling, and case management.

Parents attend budget management and independent living self-help groups, advanced parenting and home economics classes, and are encouraged to participate in sober social events run by local community groups.

"This type of support is particularly important for the parents and children in Odyssey House programs," said Concepcion Pacheco, program director. "Many are learning how to be good parents for the first time. They are easily overwhelmed by things that most of us consider routine."

Parents remain in the Family Re-entry program from three months to over a year. Nilamon Santos has been in treatment at Odyssey House for 20 months. She has been in the Family Re-entry program for seven months. During that time she developed parenting and life management skills and began training to become a HIV counselor. She is working on gaining full time custody of her two children.

"It's nice to come home and know that my neighbors are my support system. That is a great asset," Santos said.

Odyssey House Salutes Program Graduates

Graduation is a special event at Odyssey House. All residents that successfully complete the residential treatment program are invited to attend this important occasion where they have an opportunity to share stories about their treatment experience and future plans with family and friends, as well as peers who are still in treatment. In 2005, Odyssey House had over 110 graduates.



*Valedictorian
Tina Hardwell
at the Odyssey
Behavioral Health
Care Residence
graduation*



Graduates eagerly await the start of the ceremony. Fifty former residents attended the Odyssey House MABON facility graduation.



Children from the Odyssey House Family Center of Excellence gave a stellar singing performance at the Manor facility graduation.



Samantha Sobers, a graduate from the Teen Leadership Center, with family members.



Paul Goldreyer, a graduate from the Odyssey Behavioral Health Care Residence, poses with family members who attended the special event.



Samantha Sobers accepts her graduation certificate from Cesar Sepulveda, director of the Teen Leadership Center.

Supporting Innovative Treatment Services

Chairman announces new trustees to Odyssey House and Odyssey Foundation

Calling them “an invaluable source of support for the thousands of men, women, and children who each year rely on our programs to save their lives,” Mr. Rosenfeld said he was pleased to welcome four outstanding individuals to the boards of Odyssey House and Odyssey Foundation.

Joining the agency as trustees of both Odyssey House and Odyssey Foundation are: Adele R. Fader, Grant Miller, and Michael N. Pollet. Andrew J. McKelvey is joining the board of Odyssey Foundation.

Adele R. Fader brings a wealth of community service spanning more than 20 years of involvement in education and literacy programs. In 2005, she was named Outstanding Volunteer of the Year by Westchester Jewish Community Services in recognition of her work at *A Different Start*, a reading program she designed and conducted to help foster an appreciation of reading among very young mothers and pregnant teens.



Grant Miller, senior vice president at the international banking firm Lehman Brothers, says his interest in Odyssey House started “a couple of years ago and grew from a belief that there should be a holistic approach to recovery and rehabilitation. An idea,” Mr. Miller said, “that was cemented after visiting



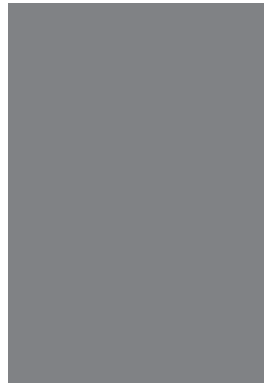
several facilities and seeing firsthand the hard

work, dedication, and optimism of the clients in treatment.” At Lehman Brothers, he is responsible for biotechnology and healthcare services.

As a litigator in the fields of libel, First Amendment and copyright law, Michael N. Pollet has participated in several cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. He was most recently the general counsel to *Consumer Reports*, a monthly magazine with a circulation of more than 4.5 million readers, a position he retired from in 2005. A co-author of several legal books ranging from the U.S. Supreme Court to baseball, Mr. Pollet is also the founder and chief advisory editor of *Media and the Law*, a bi-monthly newsletter.



A successful entrepreneur and businessman, Andrew J. McKelvey, is the founder, chairman and CEO of Monster Worldwide Incorporated, an international \$1 billion internet recruitment and advertising company. He is also a generous supporter of educational and medical institutions and is the founder of Americans for Gun Safety, a non-partisan, not-for-profit and advocacy organization that works to keep guns out the hands of criminals and children.



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.

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 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