

ODYSSEY HOUSE

news

www.odysseyhouseinc.org

Saving lives, rebuilding families, restoring communities

Spring 2007

Giving Girls a Better Future

Opening Day for Teen Girls Program Focuses on Success

Calling it “an innovative program that OASAS is enormously proud to support” Commissioner Karen Carpenter-Palumbo of the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) recently joined young women in treatment and agency supporters and representatives in declaring the new Odyssey House girls-only residential program officially open for business.

The Bronx Lafayette Avenue program offers exclusive girls-only treatment for up to 16 young women with substance abuse and other emotional/behavioral problems. This new gender-specific treatment approach helps teen girls get back on track with their schooling and other life goals.

In one of her first official ceremonies as the new OASAS Commissioner, Ms. Carpenter-Palumbo said she and Governor Eliot Spitzer were pleased to support the new girls program be-



Commissioner Carpenter-Palumbo and Dr. Provet join young women in treatment at the opening of the new program.

cause they “believe that everyone in New York State should be provided with a solid foundation in life, and at Odyssey House’s Lafayette Avenue program, these young women are being given

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New Dental Clinic Opens at Family Center

In an exciting expansion of our comprehensive healthcare services, residents in treatment can now get their dental needs met at a brand new on-site clinic located at the Odyssey House Family Center of Excellence in East Harlem.

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Celebrating 40 Years of Strength in Community

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Odyssey House. Since 1967, Odyssey House has provided innovative services and a chance for a new, drug-free life to thousands of teenagers, men and women of all ages, and entire families.

Dr. Peter Provet, president of Odyssey House, charts the progress the agency has made in providing over four decades of prevention and treatment services:

“In the 1960s, we enhanced the therapeutic community model to treat heroin addiction. In the 1970s we began reaching out to drug-abusing pregnant women and mothers of young children. In the 1980s we expanded our programs

to meet the challenge of a crack cocaine epidemic. In the 1990s we designed special programs for the mentally ill and for a growing number of elderly substance abusers.

“In the new millennium we have provided shelter and treatment to homeless addicts, many with special needs. We will remain at the forefront of substance abuse treatment in the years ahead.”

Spring Health Fair

In recognition of this milestone, Odyssey House is hosting a number of community-based celebrations including a health fair, art show, and family fun run.

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New Board Members Bring Business Know-How



Mr. Herman Laret

Two new members with wide-ranging experience in finance and marketing have joined the boards of Odyssey House and Odyssey Foundation: Herman Laret and Mark Mozeson.

Mr. Laret has an extensive background in financial services and is managing director of Credit Suisse. Before embarking on a career in business, Mr. Laret studied medicine at Leiden University in The Netherlands where he earned a doctorate degree.

Mark H. Mozeson is a co-founder and Integrated Services Practice Leader at Archstone Consulting. Mr. Mozeson has 24 years of industry and management consulting experience specializing in Life Sciences. A former partner at Deloitte Consulting, where he was a leader within the Life Sciences Practice, Mr. Mozeson is a serial marathoner, tournament backgammon player, and aspiring writer.



Mr. Mark Mozeson

Celebrating 40 Years of Strength in Community

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The first event, a spring health fair, will be held on Sunday afternoon on May 20th in East Harlem along East 121st Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues.

Janice Glenn, program director at the Odyssey House Haven and one of the health fair organizers, said the level of interest in participating in the fair shown by local medical, social services, and public safety organizations “speaks to a deep commitment we all share in helping families access health and wellness services.”

Further information on the health fair is available at: www.info@odysseyhouseinc.org, or by calling Odyssey House Admissions at: 212-987-5100.

Odyssey House 40th Anniversary Health Fair

Date: Sunday, May 20, 2007 Time: 12pm-5pm

Location: East 121st Street (bet. 2nd & 3rd Ave.)
Rain Date: Sunday, June 3, 2007

Free health screenings
Giveaways
Refreshments
Raffle
Music
Entertainment for children & families

More information and tickets: www.40years.org
For more information, call 212-987-5100
Email: info@odysseyhouseinc.org

40 YEARS
ODYSSEY HOUSE
Celebrating 40 Years of Strength in Community



Save the date! “Run for Your Life” 5K Family Fun Run, September 23rd. Proceeds benefit men, women, and children in recovery. Join us at Icahn Stadium for the 2nd Annual Recovery Month Event. More at: www.odysseyhouseinc.org



Residents Give Back to Community



Key members of the Manhattan District Attorney’s office community affairs team Calvin Solomon (far left), director, and Maria de la Rosa (center), deputy director, present Odyssey House residents with certificates of appreciation for their volunteer efforts.

Odyssey House residents recently volunteered at a community safety forum sponsored by the Manhattan District Attorney’s office. Residents are actively involved in participating in community events.

“It’s important for us to show that we’ve progressed in our recovery and that we’re willing to give back to the community in any positive way we can,” said Raynee Davis, a resident in treatment at Odyssey House.

Maria de la Rosa, deputy director of community affairs in the Manhattan District Attorney’s office, applauds their efforts.

“It’s difficult to be successful in recovery and re-enter society again,” she said. “Odyssey House does a great job in helping individuals to rebuild their lives again.”

HBO Captures Challenge and Success of Odyssey Marathoners



HBO Real Sports correspondent Mary Carrillo (center) and her TV production team celebrate with Odyssey House Chief Operating Officer John Tavalacci (second from left), and members of the agency's marathon running group.

In an achievement Odyssey House Chief Operating Officer and running team leader John Tavalacci calls "a huge accomplishment for men and women in recovery," 16 Odyssey House residents and five staff completed the grueling 2006 New York City Marathon. And in an agency-wide effort, dozens of residents and volunteers turned out at the Odyssey House-managed Mile 19 Water Station in East Harlem to cheer the runners on and cool them down for the final push to the finish in Central Park.

HBO Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel profiled the Odyssey House marathon team. The 10-minute segment offered a behind the scenes look into the many months of training, challenging personal lives, and ultimate success of these runners who beat the odds and changed their lives.

Odyssey House resident Mark Williams, a central character in the Real Sports segment, credits his participation in the Odyssey House marathon team with helping him through the treatment process.

"Honestly...I can attribute my entire recovery to the treatment programs and running," Mr. Williams said.

New Program Gets Teen Girls Back on Track

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the tools to succeed in becoming self-sufficient, independent members of society."

Addressing a large gathering of community leaders, Odyssey House board members, staff, and family members, the Commissioner went on to praise the teen girls for "their bravery and commitment to change." She added that "During the course of their treatment, these young women are receiving an education, not just in school but in life. Most importantly, they are building a foundation for a better future for themselves, their families and their loved ones."

Teen girls taking more risks

According to a 2006 report by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), teenage girls are trying marijuana, alcohol and cigarettes at higher rates than boys.

Although there is no single reason why girls are smoking, drinking and abusing drugs more, experts agree that today's girls live in an increasingly stressful environment.

"Research shows that girls

are more likely than boys to become dependent on drugs, and the earlier girls begin using drugs, the more likely their consequent problems will be severe," said Dr. Provett, President of Odyssey House.

"...these young women are receiving an education not just in school, but in life."

Girls-only services

Odyssey House opened Lafayette Avenue in response to an increase in the number of adolescent girls with substance abuse and related behavioral/mental health problems. Based on the enhanced therapeutic community treatment model, adolescent girls live and learn in a peer-driven environment that provides a family-like structure and support.

The girls-only center is staffed by a multi-disciplinary team of counselors, teachers, and healthcare personnel who give residents the individualized support and attention

they need to grow into healthy young women. Treatment services focus on nurturing areas in a teenage girl's life that are often impacted by substance abuse including: school, mental health, self-esteem, family and other relationships.

"This program helped me get back on track and think

positively. My counselors helped me understand that there is a life outside of addiction and helped me realize how much potential I have," said Kristina Sellers, a resident in treatment at Lafayette Avenue. "I feel like I am understood, treated with respect, and I am growing up."

Computer Gift Rewards Commitment



With the support of a private grant from the Elizabeth and Baretts O. Benjamin Charitable Foundation, each teen girl who completes treatment (9-12 months of residential treatment including vocational and educational training) will receive a laptop computer as a graduation gift.

In announcing the award at the center's recent opening, Odyssey House Chairman, George Rosenfeld, said "we hope this gift will both encourage young women to stay in treatment and receive the benefits of the program's intensive services, and then when they leave us, will fuel their future educational and vocational endeavors."

Supporting Recovery with

Supporting a healthy recovery is a priority at Odyssey House. Each man, woman, and child in our treatment programs has access to quality medical, dental, and mental health care. This edition of Odyssey House News takes a look at these on-site services, talks to some patients about their health needs and the health professionals who support them.



Doctor in the House

The Odyssey House Family Center of Excellence is one of few Enhanced Therapeutic Communities that allow mothers or fathers to live with their young children while participating in intensive residential treatment. Children living in Odyssey House receive the same level of comprehensive care as their parents, including access to on-site pediatric medical care.

Dorian Phillip is a new mom. She came to the Odyssey House Family Center program when her daughter Elainna was only six days old. She was pleasantly surprised to find out that Odyssey House offered on-site pediatric services.

"I'm glad that Elainna's pediatrician is right here," Ms. Phillip said. "I'm a first time mom so I get nervous about my baby's health, but

the doctor is always available to answer questions and address Elainna's health care needs."

A team of nurse practitioners handle well-baby visits and annual checkups, routine childhood immunizations, hearing and eye exams, nutrition counseling, and asthma check ups. Due to parental alcohol and/or drug abuse, most of the children at Odyssey House are high risk. All children are screened for developmental delays and special needs.

"Our nurse practitioners go over and above the call of duty," said Diane DeCarolis, nursing supervisor. "They teach parenting skills and basic child care workshops. They are also very involved in the treatment process and work closely with the substance abuse social workers and counselors."

Meeting Residents Health and Wellness Needs

Alfred Billing has a long history of battling addiction. He entered the Odyssey House ElderCare program, his first treatment program, at the age of 64. During a visit to one of Odyssey House's on-site medical clinics, Mr. Billing found out that he had hypertension and Hepatitis C.

Many men and women in treatment at Odyssey House need to address medical problems that were largely ignored or neglected while they were abusing drugs.

Odyssey House operates three full-time on-site primary medical care clinics licensed by the New York State Department of Health. On-site clinics provide a continuity of care and limit the time residents spend outside the treatment community seeking medical attention. It has also increased the accessibility to treatment by allowing those with multiple or major medical problems the opportunity to receive substance abuse services.

Medical Director, Dr. Robert Raicht, head of Odyssey House's healthcare system, says onsite medical services make a difference to treatment outcome. "Residents are healthier, better able to focus on recovery goals, and stay in treatment longer."

All residents undergo a physical exam and medical history during their first few weeks of treatment. Each clinic provides individualized patient care managed by a team of doctors and nurses who oversee residents' medical needs throughout their stay in treatment. The medical team routinely deals with health issues that are often linked to drug abuse. These include hypertension, high blood pressure, diabetes, nutrition, Hepatitis B or C, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis. The medical team handled over 53,900 medical visits in 2006 alone.

"Residents are healthier, better able to focus on recovery goals, and stay in treatment longer."

Odyssey House's medical services emphasize health education as well. Medical providers equip residents with knowledge about healthcare treatment and prevention. Once residents re-enter society they are better able to successfully manage their health care needs.

Mr. Billing is grateful for the medical services. "I had a primary care doctor when I was home that didn't do as much for me as my Odyssey House doctor," Mr. Billings said. "Here my doctor devotes herself solely to the care of her patients and she works diligently to provide us with quality care."

Holistic Healthcare Services

Opening of New Dental Clinic Widely Welcomed

Dental care seen as essential service for substance abusers

A large crowd of Odyssey House partners and supporters recently attended an open house ceremony to learn about the up-to-the-minute services available to residents in treatment.

"We are going to bring the full might of the largest dental college in the country to support Odyssey House's dental clinic," said Dr. Mark Wolff, Chair of the Department of Cariology and Comprehensive Care at the NYU College of Dentistry.

Two honor students from the NYU dental school will

intern at the Odyssey House dental clinic each year, and NYU will also provide assistance in developing research studies that focus on oral health care within the substance abuse treatment population.

Joseph C. Mitchell, president and CEO of the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Inc., gave a \$120,000 grant for an innovative ElderCare dental service.

"It's truly wonderful to work with an organization that provides resources for recovery among an invisible

population," Mr. Mitchell said.

Tackling Dental Phobia

Doris Ellison, a resident in treatment in the Odyssey House ElderCare program, is typical of many substance abusers who neglect their teeth either from fear of going to the dentist, or lack of access to dental care. "Before treatment, I hadn't seen a dentist in ten years," said Ms. Ellison.

Frank Dominelli, vice president and director of health care, said Odyssey House was making dental care a priority because "poor oral health is linked to a higher risk for developing heart disease, diabetes and other serious conditions."



Family Center mom Diana Patterson helps her daughter Ashanti open the new clinic with (left to right): Dr. Mark Wolff; Mr. Joseph Mitchell; Dr. Sylvester Evangelista; and Dr. Peter Provet. The three-year-old had her first dental cleaning at the new clinic.



Director of Odyssey House Dental Clinic, Dr. Sylvester Evangelista, with ElderCare resident Doris Ellison.

Children's Clinic

The clinic also offers pediatric dentistry services and oral health education for children and families in Odyssey House's Family Center programs. As many as 100 children live at Odyssey House while their mother or father is in treatment.

When Mental Illness Affects a Successful Recovery

Odyssey House's holistic approach to substance abuse treatment includes mental health services. All Odyssey House residents undergo a mental health assessment when they first enter the treatment program.

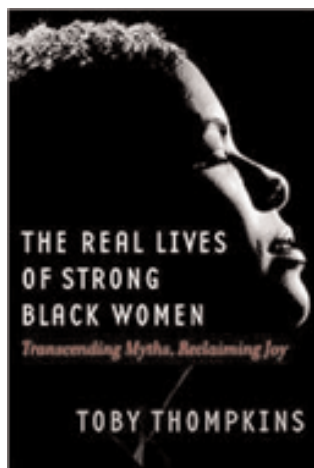
"For a resident to truly embrace the recovery process, he or she must deal with a host of other issues that can affect sobriety including mental health issues," said Dr. Matthew Warner, director of mental health services at Odyssey House. "Substance abusers are often coping with problems like depression, anxiety, attention deficit and post traumatic stress dis-

order. If a condition is left untreated it can trigger a relapse."

Offering a Safe "Harbor"

Residents with mental health problems participate in counseling and group therapy; some are prescribed medication to manage their condition. Residents who are coping with severe and persistent mental and chemical dependency undergo treatment at the Odyssey House Harbor. The Harbor provides intensive substance abuse and mental health education and counseling and offers on-site primary and psychiatric medical services.

"If a condition is left untreated it can trigger a relapse."



Toby Thompkins discussed his national bestselling book with Odyssey House residents during Women's History Month.

Women's History Month Celebrations

Women's History Month is an important occasion at Odyssey House. Many of the women in treatment programs are coping with issues that are often correlated with substance abuse, including low self esteem, anger, sexual trauma and abuse, and a history of domestic violence. In recognition of Women's History Month, Odyssey House hosts events throughout March that are aimed at bolstering self-esteem, encouraging female bonding and providing positive role modeling.

This was the first time that Theresa Ann Fewell, a resident who has been in treatment at Odyssey House for six months, celebrated Women's History Month.

"The events gave me an opportunity to bond with other women and feel the spirit of unity," Ms. Fewell said.

Bringing Broadway Magic

This year's Women's History Month celebration at Odyssey House culminated with a visit from acclaimed singer/performer Elisabeth Withers. Ms. Withers plays Shug Avery in the Broadway mega-hit *The Color Purple*, a role which earned her a Tony Award nomination.

"Having Elisabeth share in our Women's Day Celebration was just perfect," said Harriet Wade, social worker in the Family Center program. "She really cares about the women in our program who are working so hard to improve their lives."

Ms. Withers shared the story of her road to success with women and teen girls in treatment at Odyssey House. She commended the women



Broadway actress Elisabeth Withers brings a message of inspiration and hope for Women's Day.

on having the strength to take control of their lives and then delighted everyone with a generous donation of 150 complimentary tickets for the women to see her hit show.

Honoring Strong Women

Toby Thompkins, author of *The Real Lives of Strong Black Women*, also came to Odyssey

House during Women's History Month to discuss the inspiration for his book and generously donate copies for residents in the program.

Other Women's History month activities included a women's encounter group, a domestic violence workshop, yoga classes, and a makeover day.

Author shares her story of addiction and recovery



Kate Holden (center), author of *In My Skin*, spoke with teen girls and women in treatment at Odyssey House. The Australian writer shared the true story of her descent into heroin addiction, and the long battle to reclaim her life. *In My Skin*, which was recently released in the United States, made it to number 3 on the Australian best seller list.

Donating to Darfur

Teens in treatment show they care

Teens in treatment at the Odyssey House Leadership Center recently raised awareness and money for displaced children in Darfur, the war-torn region of Sudan, Africa. Michael Williams, a young resident at the center, said he and the other teens were so moved by the plight of children in Darfur, they decided to pool their limited resources and help make a difference. Along the way, he said, they learned something about themselves.

"We thought we were oppressed because of the type of neighborhoods we are from in the city and the difficult lifestyles we were living. But after learning about Darfur we realized that we really didn't know anything about oppression," Mr. Williams said. "There are children in Darfur who might die if they don't eat in the next 48 hours — we don't have those types of struggles in our lives."

Grassroots Fundraising Campaign

In an effort to positively impact relief efforts, the teens began a fundraising campaign. They set aside 50 percent of their weekly allowance for two months to make a donation to the International Rescue Committee (IRC), who they praised as the "first ones in and the last ones out."

They then asked residents at other Odyssey House treatment centers, family and friends for support. Impressed by the residents' dedication, the Odyssey Foundation matched the funds raised to result in a \$3,700 gift.



Teens in treatment raised \$3,700 to aid children in Darfur. International Rescue Committee Director of Humanitarian Affairs, Gerald Martone (center right), accepts the donation on behalf of the relief organization.

"This remarkable effort demonstrates a maturity and level of altruism by youngsters who many people view as being a drain on society," said Cesar Sepulveda, director of the Leadership Center. "I commend these young men for taking this initiative."

Gerald Martone, the IRC's director of humanitarian affairs, visited the center to personally thank the students and bring them up-to-date on the current situation in Darfur.

"One of the hardest challenges in addressing conflict in Darfur has been the low level of interest by the public. That these young people, in the midst of their own struggles, care enough to reach out to others is heartening," Mr. Martone said.



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.

Power of the Spoken Word

Volunteer Aja-Monet, a poet who has performed in venues across New York City, is leading a poetry writing workshop for the teen boys at the Odyssey House Leadership Center.

The aspiring teen poets are learning to write poems and practice spoken-word performance. The eight-week-long workshop will culminate in a performance at the Nuyorican Poet's Café.



Aja-Monet with guest poet Taylor Mali (center). Mali was one of the original poets to appear on the HBO series "Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry."

Give to the "Friends of Odyssey House" campaign online at www.odysseyhouseinc.org or contact us at:

Odyssey Foundation, 95 Pine Street, New York, NY. Tel: 212-361-1609.



95 Pine Street
New York, NY 10005
www.odysseyhouseinc.org
Tel: 212-361-1600

Odyssey House Community-Based Services



Founded in 1967, Odyssey House is an Enhanced Therapeutic Community (TC) providing innovative services and programs for a broad population of drug-troubled individuals and families, including:

- Mothers & children
- Pregnant women
- Adolescents
- Elders (55 years and older)
- Mentally ill chemical abusers (MICA)
- Single adults
- Court mandated clients
- Homeless adults

Odyssey House runs the largest and oldest parent and child residential/outpatient TC program in the country and the only residential/outpatient TC program for senior citizens.

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