

Odyssey House *news*

odysseyhousenyc.org

In this issue:

- Graduates prepare for the futurePg. 2
- Improving tenants' well-being.....Pg. 3
- Recovery Center calendar.....Pg. 3
- Grants expand services agency-wide.....Pg. 4
- Run for Your Life.....Pg. 6
- Celebrating women in recovery.....Pg. 7
- Resident Named "Tenant of the Year".....Pg. 7



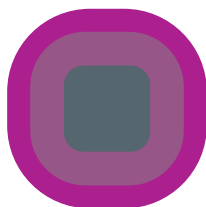
Odyssey House Executive Honored by NASW

(See page 2)



Join the Odyssey House Marathon Team!

(See page 6)



Odyssey House

Where recovery gets real

Healthy Mothers, Healthy Families

Services for Pregnant and Postpartum Women Get a Boost

Moms battling drug and alcohol addiction often face a tough choice: taking care of themselves or taking care of their children. The Odyssey House Family Center of Excellence was created so women do not have to make that choice.

Here, mothers, and expectant mothers, with substance use disorders live with their young children and babies in a community-based treatment center that allows them to address the issues that often accompany substance use disorders and interfere with family life.

Now, thanks to a \$2.6 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), services for these women are expanding with the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Families (HMHF) program.

HMHF will enhance our current continuum of care to provide evidence-based substance use disorder treatment and recovery supports to 200 pregnant and postpartum women, and their families, over five years. The program will benefit

women, age 18 and over, who are pregnant or postpartum, and their minor children who have limited access to quality health services in East Harlem and South Bronx.

Dr. Peter Provet, president and CEO of Odyssey House, said this new funding is a “significant investment in the depth and range of services we offer women in our Family Center program. Our mission is to support the whole family by helping mothers achieve a sustained recovery, teaching them the life skills they need to maintain a healthy and nurturing home, and supporting them in the development of strong family and community connections. This grant gives us the resources to do more: more family therapy, more family reunification, and more community outreach.”

Key objectives of HMHF are to increase healthy pregnancies and improve birth outcomes; decrease the misuse of prescription drugs, alcohol, and other harmful drugs among pregnant and postpartum women; decrease involvement in and exposure to crime, violence, sexual

Odyssey House Graduates Prepare for the Future



Resident speaker Phillip H. had inspiring words for his fellow graduates.

A few years ago, Phillip's addiction became so strong he found his life spiraling out of control. "I knew I needed a long-term treatment program, but I wasn't ready," he said.

In March 2016, he woke up on his 33rd birthday, reflected on his life and all that he had not accomplished because of his addiction, and realized he was ready. Two months later, he began treatment at Odyssey House, and slowly but surely found himself on the road to recovery.

At our most recent commencement ceremony, Phillip addressed his fellow graduates, reminding them that self-forgiveness is an important part of

recovery. "You must be true to yourself and not ashamed of who you are and what you have done in your past. Your future is all that matters," he said.

Phillip was one of approximately two dozen men and women who returned to Odyssey House to commemorate a significant milestone in their recovery: graduation.

Also returning to Odyssey House, after more than 20 years, was Sheila Howell. An alumna of our Family Center, Sheila reminded our graduates that completing treatment is just the first step of the recovery process – the real test is using everything you learned in the real world.

"This is the beginning for you now. This is the real test, when you walk out of these doors. Things are going to happen to you, but remember: staying clean must come first."

After completing treatment, Sheila went back to school and earned a degree in accounting, and works for a private construction firm. Her three kids,

"If you don't give up and stay focused, you can accomplish anything. Get the education and the tools you need to make it."

– Phillip H., Odyssey House Family Re-Entry graduate



Keynote speakers Doug Knight and Sheila Howell (right) with Victoria Robinson, program director of the George Rosenfeld Center for Recovery.

including the son who was in treatment with her, are thriving.

The ceremony also included a keynote speech by Douglas Knight, Director of Alternative Sentencing at the Queens County District Attorney's Office. In his address to the graduates, their families, staff, and supporters, Mr. Knight asked everyone to reflect on who they are.

"There are two types of people in this world: those who watch things happen, and those who make things happen. I challenge every one of you here today, to ask yourself: which one of those do you want to be?" ●

Odyssey House Executive Honored by NASW



John Tavolacci, center, accepting the Emerald Award.

The NYC Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-NYC)

presented Odyssey House EVP/Chief Operating Officer John Tavolacci with the Emerald Award at their 12th Annual Leadership Dinner. NASW-NYC, through its annual Leadership Awards, recognizes social workers who demonstrate exemplary leadership qualities and a unique commitment to the improvement of social and human conditions.

Mr. Tavolacci is a clinical social worker specializing in addiction treatment with more than 30 years of experience in the addiction field. "It's an honor to be recognized by my colleagues in the social work field," said Mr. Tavolacci.

NASW-NYC represents professional social workers who are working throughout the five boroughs, primarily in public and non-profit organizations. Nationally, NASW is the largest organization representing social workers in the world. The national organization, including NASW-NYC, seeks to develop and promote professional standards for social work practice and advocates for strengthening programs on behalf of social work clients and for policies that support social workers in their professional work. ●

Innovative Class Improves Tenants' Well-Being



For many of us, performing simple movements — sitting, rising from a chair, walking — are instinctive. We don't give them much thought. But for some people, especially those with limited mobility, these routine acts can have a negative effect on their quality of life.

To counteract this negative effect, tenants at the Haven have been taking weekly classes in the Alexander Technique (AT). A holistic self-care practice, AT helps to re-establish the natural balance of the head, neck, and back and promotes ease of movement in all activities of daily life. And, through hands-on guidance, AT helps them align their bodies, with emphasis on the head and its relation to the neck and spine. Its benefits

are wide-ranging, most notably improved stability, balance, and coordination.

The response to the classes has been enthusiastic, and many tenants are experiencing good results. David S., pictured above with instructor Melissa Brown, says, "Since I've been participating in the Alexander Class, I find a big difference in my body. I tend to stay isolated in my room. The class motivates me to get out of my room and socialize. It also motivates me to do more exercise."

Raymond B. has also seen improvement to his overall well-being. "I'm finding that working on my neck helps loosen my whole body. I'm really surprised by how much this is helping me. It's a good stress reliever." ●

Where Community Comes First



At Odyssey House, we embrace a community-based approach to treatment and recovery. Individuals in our programs work together and help each other overcome their drug and alcohol problems, creating an interdependent community of compassionate support.

The Odyssey House Recovery Center in the South Bronx takes community-building one step further. Our open-door policy connects local residents with peers who are going through similar challenges, helps them benefit from shared experiences, and supports common goals for recovery. Trained staff promote long-term recovery through skill building, recreation, wellness education, employment readiness, civic restoration opportunities, and other social activities.

In an area with some of the highest rates of substance abuse, homelessness, and mental illness in the City, we see potential and hope. Creating a safe environment where people feel welcome and supported starts a recovery process that spreads throughout a community.

Here's a sample of the free events happening at our Recovery Center each month:

- **Women's Peer Group:**
Every Monday & Wednesday @ 1 pm
- **Yoga/Meditation:**
Every Monday @ 2 pm
- **Fitness Walk:** *Every Tuesday @ 3 pm*
- **LGBTQIA Support Group:**
Every Friday @ 1 pm
- **Opioid Overdose Prevention Training:**
By request

The Recovery Center is located at 2038 Davidson Avenue, Bronx, NY 10453. For more information on our events, follow us on Facebook @odysseyhousercoverycenter or call 212-361-1694.



MAKE RECOVERY REAL FOR EVERY NEW YORKER

Thanks to supporters like you, Odyssey House has been helping people achieve a healthy and sustained recovery for more than 50 years.

When you donate to our programs, you are helping us pursue our mission of providing the best possible treatment for drug-troubled men, women, and children, and helping them pursue their dreams of living healthy and productive lives.

DONATE ONLINE AT
odysseyhousenyc.org/donate

We are grateful for your support of our efforts and the encouragement that it brings to clients and staff alike.

NEW GRANTS Increase Access to

As treatment programs evolve to support individuals within their communities, Odyssey House has been developing services that complement and extend the efficacy of our residential treatment. Two new grants will help us expand our services.



Meeting a critical need

Odyssey House was one of five providers awarded \$4 million to expand residential addiction treatment services in New York City. With the \$1.23 million grant, Odyssey House will add 20 beds to our Lafayette Avenue facility in the Bronx. Funding for this project is being administered through the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS).

The addition of these beds is part of the State's efforts to provide a full residential continuum of care for people who are in treatment for addiction, and ensure they receive the proper services. OASAS is working with providers and stakeholders to refine and redesign residential services to incorporate three essential elements of treatment: stabilization, rehabilitation, and re-integration. Residential programs may be certified to offer any or all of those elements.

"This funding is critical to expanding treatment services and ensuring New Yorkers struggling with addiction have the resources they need to follow the path to recovery," said Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul, Chair of the Heroin and Opioid Abuse Task Force. "The

additional beds at treatment facilities in the Bronx and Brooklyn will ensure residents in these communities are given the access they need to help better their own lives and the lives of their families."

Housing help for people in recovery

Odyssey Foundation is pleased to announce it is the recipient of a Health and Housing in Recovery Program Partnership grant from Empire BlueCross BlueShield Foundation to help individuals in recovery from substance use disorders secure housing.

This \$98,000 award will allow Odyssey House to hire a housing specialist to work with individuals preparing to leave residential treatment. The specialist will assess individuals' housing needs and address factors contributing to their housing instability including developing essential life skills (budgeting, maintaining a healthy home); applying for entitlements and rent subsidy programs; securing placement in appropriate housing based on needs; providing case management during transition period; and establishing linkages to recovery services in the community.

The importance of stable housing for people in early recovery from drugs and alcohol is well established. But many New Yorkers leaving residential treatment have limited options for safe housing and the majority who are able to secure housing are severely rent-burdened (defined as spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing).

For single adults and women with children exiting Odyssey House residential treatment programs, the situation is urgent. In 2018, between 28-40 percent of adults admitted into residential treatment were either homeless or housing insecure. Over a quarter of these individuals, after successfully completing treatment, either cycle back to institutional living in a community residence or remain homeless

because they cannot find appropriate housing.

Dr. Peter Provet, President and CEO of Odyssey House and Odyssey Foundation, said this grant brings essential resources to a critical stage in the recovery process, the transition from residential treatment to independent community living. "We help people in need overcome drug and alcohol abuse, improve their physical and mental health, and defeat homelessness. Today, faced with life-threatening opioid abuse, services that are proven to save and restore lives are needed more than ever.

"We believe stable housing is an essential foundation for a healthy, independent life and are grateful to Empire BlueCross BlueShield Foundation for their partnership in helping us level the playing field for our clients as they compete for scarce housing in New York City. With this grant, our goal of providing every individual we serve with an opportunity to live life with dignity and respect just got a little bit closer."

"This collaboration illustrates how Empire goes beyond providing access to health care services by supporting innovative programs that help address the barriers to total health, such as homelessness, which have a negative impact on health and quality of life," said Jack Stephenson, Empire BlueCross BlueShield Medicaid President. "We believe this collaboration will improve the lives of our members by providing the necessary supports and helping the individuals find stable housing consistent with our mission to improve lives and communities."

In addition, this award will enable Odyssey House to develop a housing support project that is unique among New York State drug treatment organizations and will serve as a pilot for others providers looking to integrate clients transition to independent housing.

Cutting-Edge Treatments

Outpatient Services Targets Opioid Abuse in the Community

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration awarded Odyssey House a three year, \$1.5 million grant to expand access to life-saving treatment for people with opioid use disorders. The Medication-Assisted Treatment Services will operate out of our outpatient clinic in the Bronx and is expected to serve 150 people over the course of the grant.

Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) is pharmacotherapy used to support treatment and recovery efforts for people seeking to overcome addictive disorders. It combines prescribed medications with counseling and behavioral therapies, monitoring, community-based services, and recovery supports. MAT is designed to assist, *not replace other treatment and recovery efforts*, and supplements psychological, behavioral, and social interventions.

Under this grant, Odyssey House works individually with clients using MAT and recovery coaching to empower individuals in their treatment process and connect them to long-term community supports. Clients have access to buprenorphine (Suboxone, Sublocade) and naltrexone (Vivitrol); telehealth services; and weekly medical, counseling, and peer-based recovery support services. Trained staff connect clients to additional outpatient services, the Recovery Center, and other community resources as appropriate. Opioid overdose reversal training is also available to all clients.

Medication-assisted treatment has been shown to:

- Reduce risk of overdose
- Increase retention in treatment
- Decrease opiate use and other illicit activity among people with substance use disorders
- Increase ability to gain and maintain employment
- Improve birth outcomes among pregnant women who have substance use disorders



GET THE FACTS. GET INFORMED. Call us at 718-860-2994

(Continued from page 1)

Services for Pregnant and Postpartum Women Get a Boost

and physical abuse, and child abuse and neglect; and improve parenting skills, family functioning, economic stability, and quality of life.

The enhanced program also includes resources to engage the mother's extended family members and/or significant others in the treatment process. Working with a Family Social Worker, each participant and her family will develop a family service plan, designed to ease the mother's safe return to the community. The plan will include referrals to primary care and psychiatry, access to educational and vocational supports, and services for the entire family unit, when appropriate

Beginning approximately one month prior to the mother's completion in HMHF, the Family Social Worker will begin visiting her family in their place of residence. These home visits will ready the family for the mother's return; allow for review and evaluation of the family service plan and its goals; and provide an opportunity for booster sessions as necessary. After the mother returns home, the visits will continue for approximately one more month and she will receive referrals to community-based recovery supports, Outpatient Services, and/or our Family Re-Entry program while remaining engaged with a Peer Mentor/Recovery Coach.

Family involvement and the continuing care component are what make HMHF unique, and are expected to have the biggest impact, according to Nichole Barrett, the senior family clinician who will be overseeing the program.

The program has begun recruiting participants and expects to provide services to 30 women in its first year. Enrollment will be on a rolling basis, so women who enter treatment later in the year will still have the ability to participate.

Meeting the needs of mothers in recovery

With more than 50 years' experience of providing continuous programming to women and their children, Odyssey House has developed a model of care that is sensitive to the specific needs of an underserved population of mostly single mothers. Evidence shows that programs specifically catering to, and providing targeted services for, pregnant women and mothers lead to longer treatment episodes – up to three times as long as programs without dedicated children's services. Studies also found that women who entered treatment with their infants were less depressed and had higher self-esteem than mothers whose children did not accompany them into treatment. ●

Running Makes a Difference *Support our health and fitness events*



Our annual Recovery Month event, the *Run for Your Life 5K Run & Recovery Walk*, celebrated its 13th anniversary on September 15, 2018. More than 1,000

people came out to Icahn Stadium on Randall's Island to show their support for men and women in treatment for substance use and mental health disorders. WPIX

reporter James Ford emceed the event, keeping the crowd energized and even taking a few Zumba lessons himself. He had a “fabulous time hosting Odyssey House’s Run for Your Life. What a great organization, helping thousands recovery from substance abuse.”

NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services Commissioner Arlene Gonzalez-Sanchez couldn't be at the event, but she sent Edison Alban, director of public information and communications, with a message to the attendees, particularly those in recovery: “Your journey is not easy. Remember that you provide an inspiring example that recovery is possible. Your presence here is very meaningful and motivational. Together we'll continue to make a difference to the lives of people in recovery across the city and the state. Thank you all for your attendance.” ●

Run the 2019 TCS New York City Marathon with Team Odyssey!



OFFICIAL CHARITY PARTNER
**TCS
NEW YORK CITY
MARATHON**

We are excited to announce that Odyssey House has been selected as an official charity partner of the 2019 TCS New York City Marathon!

Though we've had more than 500 runners represent Odyssey House in the marathon over the past 10+ years, this is our first time as a charity partner. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to bolster our team and bring more attention to our mission: helping New Yorkers in need overcome drug and alcohol abuse, improve their physical and mental health, and defeat homelessness.

We'd like to offer you the chance to join the Odyssey House Run for Your Life team at the TCS New York City Marathon in November.

Running for Odyssey House not only provides you with guaranteed entry, it also gives you the opportunity to change lives and give back to your community. For a guaranteed entry, you must commit to raising a minimum of \$3,000 for Odyssey House, which will directly support the men, women, and families in our programs.

That might sound like a lot to raise, but we're here to help! We'll support your fundraising with access to an easy-to-build online Crowdrise page that you can use to track your progress. We can provide you with sample text and team photos for your page if you need it. Once your Crowdrise page is complete, you share the fundraising page link with your family and friends via email and/or your social media networks.

Your entry package includes an Odyssey House racing jersey, an invitation to our annual team dinner on the Friday night before the marathon, and twice-weekly training opportunities with Team Odyssey. If you are interested in running with us on November 3, 2019, please contact cabrams@odysseyhousenyc.org. ●

SAVE THE DATE!
RUN FOR YOUR LIFE 2019
Saturday, September 14



Last year, 72,000 Americans died from opioid overdoses (3,000 New Yorkers alone). This must stop. Join us on September 14th and pledge your support to end this crisis.

Celebrate Recovery Month!
Run for Your Life 2019

**5K Run/Recovery Walk - Icahn
Stadium @ Randall's Island**

Women's History Month Celebrates Resilience



Tara Mardigan, Odyssey House Wellness Coordinator/Nutritionist, presented Tinton Ave tenant Susan W. (right) with an award in appreciation for her help creating favors for the event.

Every year, Odyssey House commemorates Women's History Month with events that are aimed at boosting self-esteem and encouraging female bonding. It's an important event here as many of the women in our programs are coping with low self-esteem and a history of domestic violence or sexual abuse. This year, we celebrated the achievements of women in recovery with a special event for tenants across all of our housing programs.

The theme was "Me, Myself & I: How to elevate self-care to improve your health and wellness." Keynote speaker Tara Mardigan, Odyssey House Wellness Coordinator/Nutritionist, spoke about building resilience and expanding the definition of self-care beyond spa treatments and bubble baths. "Self-care is actively pursuing growth, whether it's personal or professional, which gives you a long-lasting lift. And this is the key to resilience."

The program also included musical performances, an inspirational guest speaker, and poetry readings from tenants. At the end of the event, housing staff presented "Tenant of the Year" awards to a woman from each program who is leading by example and has made significant strides in her life since moving into Odyssey House.

Women's History Month traces its beginnings to the first International Women's Day in 1911. The idea was first put forward at the turn of the 20th century amid rapid world industrialization and economic expansion that led to protests over working conditions. In the US, International Women's Day came to commemorate the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. In 1981, responding to the growing popularity of the event, Congress passed a resolution recognizing Women's History Week and in 1987, Congress expanded the focus to an entire month. ●

"Tenant of the Year": How Stephen Turned His Life Around



Stephen Bates, a resident of Odyssey House Soundview Avenue, was recognized as "Tenant of the Year" by the Supportive Housing Network of New York (SHNNY) at their annual gala. Mr. Bates was recognized for his "tenacity and strength to overcome tremendous hardships and rebuild [his life] in supportive housing." Here is his story.

Everyone who knows Stephen Bates is moved to tears by his story. He struggled with undiagnosed psychiatric issues from a very young age, issues that manifested as severe behavioral problems including stealing and skipping school. One of seven children, he was too much for his single

mother to handle and she sent him to a group home when he was 14. He ran away and continued to act out, burglarizing homes, doing drugs, and stealing from his family. His mother threw him out of the house, and he became homeless. He landed in Spofford Juvenile Jail not long after, the beginning of what would be twenty-two years of imprisonment.

It was during those two decades that Stephen heard from his sister that their mother was gravely ill. Stephen was allowed to leave prison to visit her at the hospital. This visit, and his mother's passing a few days later, changed everything; Stephen "made a promise to my mother, to myself and to God" to turn his life around.

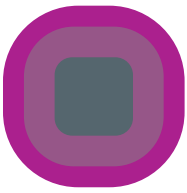
When Stephen was finally released, he was able to start making good on that promise, first seeking out psychiatric treatment from Manhattan Psychiatric Center and later moving into Odyssey House's Soundview Residence in 2014. Says Administrative Assistant and Entitlement Specialist Monica Tracey, "Odyssey House was truly blessed to have been graced with his presence...he is an

amazing individual with a heart of gold."

Since moving to Soundview, Stephen has focused his life on giving back. He volunteers at the Presbyterian Church across the street, pays for food at community gatherings, makes goody bags for local children, acts as DJ at summer barbecues, helps keep up the residence garden, and uses his thirst for knowledge to help residents with advice on a range of issues. Says neighbor Vivian Jackson. "He's a good friend. If I feel upset or depressed sometimes, I go talk to him. And he does cookouts and we all meet to eat, dance and laugh. It's very special."

Not long after moving in, Stephen met the woman whom he has asked to marry him, Lynette Childs, who, showing off her engagement ring states simply: "He makes me the happiest person ever."

Insisting that he does not want to be a "taker," Stephen also got off government assistance and holds down a job as a Home Health Aide. He is proud of his achievements, demonstrating how far he has grown from his younger days of hustling on the streets. ●



120 Wall Street
New York, NY 10005

odysseyhousenyc.org
212-361-1600

Odyssey House

Where recovery gets real



GET REAL ABOUT RECOVERY

If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction, call us at **866-888-7880**.
We can help. Beds are available immediately.

Visit our blog for more news and updates from Odyssey House!

odysseyhousenyc.org/news



Help us spread the word
facebook.com/OdysseyHouse



Follow us at
[@OdysseyHouseNY](https://twitter.com/OdysseyHouseNY)

It is the mission of Odyssey House:

To provide comprehensive and innovative services to the broadest range of metro New York's population who:

- Abuse drugs
- Abuse alcohol
- Suffer from mental illness

To provide high quality, holistic treatment impacting all major life spheres: psychological, physical, social, family, educational and spiritual.

To support personal rehabilitation, renewal and family restoration.

In all of its activities, Odyssey House undertakes to act as a responsible employer and member of the community, and manage the assets of the organization in a professional manner.