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Saving Lives, Reducing Risks

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Run with Team Odyssey

OFFICIAL CHARITY PARTNER

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Odyssey House

Where recovery gets real



Mother's Day Celebration 2022 awardees with Odyssey House President Dr. Peter Provet. From left, Dr. Chinazo Cunningham, Commissioner, NYS Office of Addiction Services & Supports; Dr. Sonia Lopez, Director of Addiction Medicine, Damian Family Care Centers; Janice Glenn-Slaughter, VP, Director of Mental Health and Housing Services, Odyssey House; and Akiko Kyei-Aboagye, Principal, Urban Architectural Initiatives. See pages 4-5 for more.

Today's Treatment Models Use All the Tools in the Toolbox

At Odyssey House, we support the self-help model of care across our residential, outpatient, supportive housing, and recovery services. For 55 years, we have provided a continuum of services that engage, stabilize, and prepare people to rejoin society as functional parents, spouses, workers, and citizens. While we are proud of this legacy and its contribution to the health and well-being of thousands of Americans, we are equally proud of the innovative enhancements to the evidence-based treatment models we incorporate into our program services.

Integrated service model

Recent enhancements in our treatment services build on the foundational approach that people with chronic substance use disorders need long-term support that addresses addiction in conjunction with other

challenges. These include mental and physical health problems, poverty, homelessness, and discrimination. It's an approach that sees the individual as a whole person with interrelated challenges and circumstances that require multiple services.

Examples of our whole-person approach are woven throughout our services and start in our admissions unit. It does not matter how the person is referred, through the courts, detox centers, homeless shelters, family, or harm reduction services, our process of engagement and developing a treatment plan starts immediately.

The urgency of opioid treatment

Last year, 2,300 New Yorkers died from a drug-related overdose, and across the country, overdoses claimed the lives of more than 100,000 people. Each of those deaths was preventable and a tragic loss and waste of

Continued on page 3

Save the date! Run for Your Life 2022 Returns this Fall



Saturday, September 17, 2022 • Icahn Stadium @ Randall's Island, NYC • 9-11 am

After switching to a virtual-only event for the past two years, we're excited to announce that our 17th Annual Run for Your Life will be held in person on Saturday, September 17th! Please join us on Randall's Island for a fun-filled, family-friendly event.

Register & donate @ odysseyhousenyc.org

Not in NYC? No problem! Register for our virtual run, and you can run anywhere, anytime in September for Recovery Month.

Grants Enhance Services for Vulnerable Populations

Expanding opioid overdose prevention program capacity in NYC

Odyssey House was one of several opioid overdose prevention programs awarded a six-year contract to expand naloxone distribution capacity in East Harlem and Hunts Point through enhanced outreach efforts. The grant from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), provides \$82,000 per year, for a total of \$492,000, towards these efforts.

Under the broader goal of reducing the number of opioid-related deaths in NYC, this project aims to: expand overdose education and naloxone dispensing (OEND); administer naloxone to those at risk of an opioid overdose (including people who use both opioid and non-opioid drugs that could be mixed with fentanyl), and to their families, friends, and loved ones; increase the availability of naloxone to individuals and communities most affected by opioid overdose; increase the availability of naloxone to communities with limited access to City-funded naloxone; and, offer OEND at no cost to individuals in a culturally and linguistically competent manner.

Peer group support for Covid-19 vaccination efforts

The New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) awarded Odyssey House \$200,000 in one-time funding to promote Covid-19 vaccination in OMH congregate care settings.

Congregate residential settings are relatively high-risk environments for potential outbreaks, and misinformation about Covid-19 vaccines has been a significant barrier to curbing viral transmission. Peer-to-peer education, however, has been shown to be an effective medium for improving awareness of risks and encouraging vaccination.

This grant will allow us to hire a full-time outreach coordinator as well as two full-time and one part-time peer engagement specialists to deliver vaccine education services in Odyssey House-operated facilities and increase the vaccination rate in our programs. Grant staff will deliver informational presentations to staff and residents, provide educational materials, and connect residents and staff members to vaccine providers.

Improving telehealth infrastructure

Odyssey House received \$55,436 in one-time funding from the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) to improve our telehealth infrastructure. Telehealth services provided a lifeline to vulnerable individuals during the height of the pandemic and continue to be essential for those who have barriers to accessing care in person.

With this funding, we will expand access to care for people with a substance use disorder who benefit from a hybrid of in-person and telehealth treatment and those unable to receive treatment on-site. Funds will be directed to our ambulatory care and recovery support services, providing resources to enhance mobile data capacity and ensure the availability of hardware and devices. This grant will permit our clients to have more readily accessible treatment and recovery support services provided by our Bronx-based Outpatient Clinic, Davidson Recovery Center, Peer Engagement Specialist, and Family Support Navigator staff. ●

human potential. The toll is shocking: over 500,000 deaths attributed to opioids since the mid-1990s.

Integrating harm reduction

Treatment agencies were, and continue to be, on the front lines of this epidemic. As early as 2015, we began training staff and clients to use naloxone to reverse a suspected opioid overdose. We embraced this life-saving harm reduction approach and incorporated it into our treatment model along with medication-assisted treatments (MATs) such as methadone, buprenorphine, and Vivitrol, primary medical services, the education and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, relapse prevention techniques, and other harm reduction methodologies.

All dormitory floors in our residential centers, communal areas, staff lounges, and medical centers have naloxone kits prominently displayed and easily accessible, as do our admissions and administrative offices, supportive housing, and outpatient and recovery centers. Executive staff and members of the Boards of Trustees have also been trained on its administration.

Clients entering treatment receive training on identifying signs of potential overdose, safely and quickly administering naloxone, and reaching out to EMS or other first responders to further assist in the critical situation of a suspected overdose. Clients are provided with overdose reversal kits when they leave the treatment environment for work, family, or court visits. Over the last seven years, we have made thousands of naloxone kits available to clients and staff in residential and outpatient treatment.

On-site health services

We offer clients in our residential and outpatient programs access to MATs and primary medical and behavioral health services. It's an integrated approach that follows every client from initial engagement via street outreach or an admissions referral to placement in an appropriate program following a detailed medical and psycho-social assessment.

The operation of co-located Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) on-site at our two primary residential treatment centers in East Harlem allows us to quickly diagnose any medical or psychiatric issues

impacting a client's ability to engage fully in substance use disorder services. The professional clinical staff works closely with the physicians and other medical personnel in the clinics as partners who cooperate as a person-centered team focused on a client's whole treatment experience.

Power of positive peers

Extending recovery into the community through a network of peer supporters helps people in early recovery navigate the challenges of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This support system is especially crucial for individuals who abuse opioids who, because addiction is a chronically relapsing disorder, are at heightened risk of overdose if they should misuse.

To give clients the best chance of maintaining their recovery, Odyssey House developed a peer navigator system that:

- trains people in recovery to be mentors for participants served by our Outpatient Clinic in the South Bronx; and,
- provides community support services for older adults.

These community-based initiatives align with our residential treatment approach, emphasizing self-help, MAT compliance (where indicated), health and wellness education, and resources, including harm reduction protocols. ●

This is an abridged version of an article published in Behavioral Health News, Spring 2022. Visit odysseyhousenyc.org/news to read the full-length article.



A member of our Outreach team teaching NYC Public Advocate Jumaane Williams (left) how to reverse an overdose by administering naloxone, a harm reduction tool that has saved countless lives.

Together We Can Save Lives



As the overdose crisis continues to worsen, we must take a pragmatic, evidence-based approach to save lives, reduce risk, and remove barriers to effective interventions. This requires that we provide care and services that respect the health and dignity of people who use drugs.

The New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) has instituted a multi-pronged approach to addressing the overdose epidemic and created a nation-leading continuum of addiction care with prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction services.

Working closely with OASAS, Odyssey House uses a variety of tools and strategies to provide high-quality treatment and recovery support services including:

- evidence-based treatment practices;
- a network of peer mentors for people in early recovery;
- medication-assisted treatment; and,
- overdose reversal training for staff, clients, and the community.

Additional Resources:

- US Department of Health and Human Services Overdose Prevention Strategy
- NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports

Mother's Day Celebration Supports Women and Families in Recovery



Odyssey House client Alexis M. spoke about her experience in our women and children program on Wards Island.



Sponsors like Precision Pharmacy were vital to our event's fundraising success.

“Women are about a third of the patients who are treated in OASAS and a lot of the reasons women don’t come into treatment have to do with taking care of their children. So having programs like this is critical.” – Dr. Chinazo Cunningham, Commissioner, NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports



Odyssey House Board of Trustees Chair Richard C. O'Connor with Board Member Prisca Salazar-Rodriguez.

On Wednesday, May 4th, Odyssey House held its annual Mother's Day Celebration—in person for the first time in two years—to recognize women in leadership whose commitment to recovery strengthens families throughout NYC. The event



Bridget Brennan, NYC Special Narcotics Prosecutor, and Rhonda Ferdinand, Special Assistant District Attorney for Drug Prevention and Policy, at the breakfast.

raised more than \$70,000 for women and families in recovery.

Odyssey House President Dr. Peter Provet addressed the attendees and reflected on the importance of our mission.

“For treatment agencies, like Odyssey House, and our partners in prevention, recovery, and harm reduction that are on the front lines of combatting the opioid overdose epidemic, I believe our efforts are making a difference in reducing overdose deaths and helping those ready to engage in treatment and recovery find the services they need to not just survive—but thrive.”

The attendees then heard from Alexis, a mother in treatment with her seven-month-old twins at the George Rosenfeld Center for Recovery. “My journey at Odyssey House started when my babies were just eight days old, and it has been life-changing. It hasn’t been an easy journey, but I’m glad I stuck it out because now my babies and I get to live happily and drug-free every day.”

Dr. Chinazo Cunningham, Commissioner of the NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS),

was honored with the Leadership Award for her accomplishments in the field of substance use disorder treatment. Dr. Cunningham has only been the Commissioner since January 2022 but she has already made an impact with her expansive vision for the future of addiction services in New York.

Dr. Sonia Lopez, Director of Addiction Medicine, Damian Family Care Centers, received the Public Service Award. Dr. Lopez has worked in the addiction field for more than 30 years and was instrumental

in helping us keep clients and staff as safe as possible from Covid-19.

The Community Service Award was given to Akiko Kyei-Aboagye, Principal, Urban Architectural Initiatives. Balancing client needs with her lifelong interest in urban design and real-world sustainable building, Akiko was the lead architect for our 65-apartment supportive housing building on Tinton Avenue in the Bronx. For this project, she took an abandoned lot, turned it into new homes for people living with mental illness, and helped

revitalize the neighborhood.

Our final honoree was Odyssey House's own Janice Glenn-Slaughter, Vice President, Director of Mental Health and Housing Services, who received the Special Recognition Award. Janice understands how essential supportive housing is for the health and well-being of people living with chronic medical, mental health, and substance use disorders. Nothing works without housing: a place to call home, safety, and security. It's a basic human need and right. ●

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Before our Mother's Day Celebration, Commissioner Cunningham, MD, toured the George Rosenfeld Center for Recovery, visiting our classrooms, art room, and more.

A terrific tweet from the Commissioner:



After hearing about Odyssey House for decades, I finally got to visit them and see their exemplary programs that treat addiction and the whole person and family. It's all so impressive. Thank you for all you do @OdysseyHouseNY



bronx.news12.com
Odyssey House Family Center offers substance abuse treatment, child care ser...
News 12 spoke to one mother on Wednesday who transformed her life through the Odyssey House.

Run the 2022 TCS New York City Marathon with Team Odyssey!



Charity runner Eric Ratzlaff raised more than \$4,000 for Odyssey Foundation in 2021.

We are excited to announce that Odyssey House has been selected as an official charity partner of the 2022 TCS New York

City Marathon for the fourth consecutive year! We are thrilled to again 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 provides you with guaranteed entry. It also allows you to change lives and give back to your community in exchange for raising a total 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'll help your fundraising with access to an easy-to-build, online crowdfunding page that you

can use to track your progress.

Your entry package includes an Odyssey House racing jersey, an invitation to our annual pre-marathon team dinner, and twice-weekly training opportunities with Team Odyssey. If you are interested in running with us on November 6, 2022, please contact Carolyn Abrams at cabrams@odysseyhousenyc.org. ●

Marathoners Make their Miles Count for Recovery

After more than a year of pandemic stress and uncertainty, Team Odyssey made a triumphant return to the TCS NYC Marathon on November 7, 2021. Each team member, consisting of clients, staff, alumni, and volunteers, completed the demanding 26.2-mile course. It was an uplifting day for our runners, symbolizing renewed hope, inspiration, and perseverance—not just for themselves but for New York City.

Odyssey House graduate Alexis D. thanked everybody for their support at the finish line: "I can't explain this feeling! The support was so real; it was amazing. I couldn't have done it without people yelling my name and cheering for Odyssey House."

Our team was joined by five charity runners from all over the US to run with us and fundraise for Odyssey Foundation. With their help, Team Odyssey raised more than \$32,000 to benefit the men, women, and families in our care. ●

Artists in Recovery Recognized

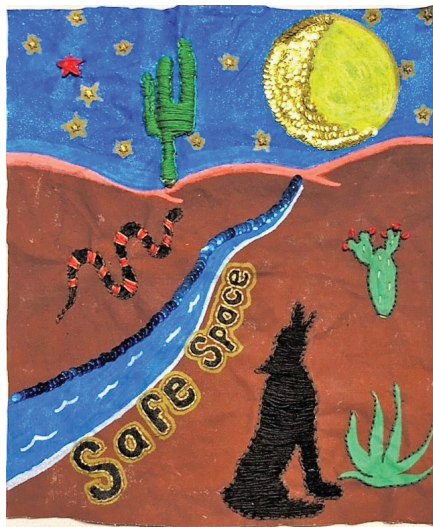


"Fight Your Demons" by Cory S.

Two members of the Odyssey House Art Project were recognized at the 17th Annual Recovery Fine Arts Festival for their artwork. Cory S. placed third in the painting category for his artwork, "Fight Your Demons," and Albert S. placed third in the mixed media category for his piece, "Safe Space." Both Cory and Albert graduated from the Odyssey House Manor in late 2021.

Cory is a prolific painter, finishing multiple canvases before he completed treatment. His painting is a deeply personal one: "When things were going bad for me, I would walk the streets for hours. I actually would see the demons I have in my paintings."

Albert grew up in Canada and is a member of the Cree Indian Nation. "I have always been creative, and I work



"Safe Space" by Albert S.

in any media, whatever is available. My image is made with fabric and thread. It shows the coyote in his safe space, a desert landscape."

The festival showcases the artistic achievement of individuals in recovery from addiction. The Recovery Fine Arts Festival is sponsored by the NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) and Friends of Recovery New York (FOR-NY) each year during September in conjunction with National Recovery Month. ●



Coach Andre Matthews (right) with Team Odyssey finishers Jackie K. and Alexis D.

Citizen Scientists Hit the Streets



Tenants from the Odyssey House Haven housing program worked with our Wellness Coordinator, Tara Mardigan (far right), to collect data for the NYC Health Department.

On a beautiful day in May, volunteers who live at supportive housing building Odyssey House Haven participated in the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene's (DOHMH) Semi-Annual Pedestrian and Bicyclist Manual Count.

The manual count aims to estimate the volume of Central and East Harlem residents who use active-friendly sites for daily exercise and enables the DOHMH to improve existing sites for pedestrians and bicyclists, and establish safety policies to encourage outdoor physical activities.

The volunteers were trained and supported by DOHMH staff, then they hit the streets to count pedestrians and bicyclists on East 121st Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues. It was a rewarding experience for the tenants, who enjoyed giving back to their community. As one said, "Our voices will be heard. That's pretty cool." ●

Therapeutic Healing Through Sound



The clients gave visiting artist Derek Weagle enthusiastic feedback about the emotional and physical effects of the sound bath.

Clients at the George Rosenfeld Center for Recovery were treated to a one-of-a-kind meditative experience known as a sound bath. Musician Derek Weagle "bathed" the clients in sound, produced by instruments such as gongs, singing bowls, percussion, chimes, rattles, tuning forks, and the human voice.

Derek Weagle, who came to Odyssey House through a visiting artist program organized by Expressive Art Manager Chad Porter, sees a sound bath as a healing experience, giving participants an increased sense of well-being and expanded awareness.

Approximately three dozen clients participated in the sound bath and were surprised by how the calming nature of the event affected them. Nickie, a client in our women and children's program, said, "I didn't know what to expect, but it was powerful. I feel calmer and more present."

For Frank T., a client in our ElderCare program, the sound bath was genuinely therapeutic. "I had a bad day yesterday, and I've been in my head ever since. This has started the healing process for me." ●

Author Donates Prize Money to Odyssey Foundation



Odyssey Foundation received a surprising boost when bestselling author Patrick Radden Keefe generously donated the \$13,000 he received as a Financial Times/McKinsey Business Book of the Year Award 2021 nominee. Mr. Keefe's investigative book "Empire of Pain" chronicles the opioid addiction crisis, focusing on the Sackler family and their company, Purdue Pharma.

The causes of the opioid epidemic are understood, in part, to have been fueled by the aggressive marketing and misleading promotional information about OxyContin's potent addictive properties by Purdue Pharma and other pharmaceutical companies and distributors of synthetic opioids. Their drive for profits laid waste to communities already suffering from economic decline and societal challenges, undermined legislative efforts to control ballooning prescriptions, and paved the way for illicit and cheaper opioids, including heroin and fentanyl, to find new markets. ●



Odyssey House

Where recovery gets real

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odysseyhousenyc.org
212-361-1600

GET REAL ABOUT RECOVERY

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We can help. Residential, outpatient, and housing services available immediately.



It is the mission of Odyssey House:

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

odysseyhousenyc.org/news



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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.