

In The Press

Sydney Morning Herald - 11th January 2007



Court victory for Odyssey

Odyssey House has become the first non-government body to run a drug treatment referral program at a Sydney court. Staff will assess about 150 defendants each year at Sydney's Waverley Court as part of the Magistrates Early Referral into Treatment program. The 12-week program aims to help people overcome drug problems during their bail. Services may include withdrawal management, medication, residential rehabilitation, mental health services and outreach programs.

MX
- 24th November 2006



Sydney Morning Herald
- 20th February 2007

Odyssey House fundraiser
A dozen Rugby World Cup-winning Wallabies will be the star attractions at a fundraiser for Odyssey House, one of Australia's largest drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres. The dinner will have a French-inspired menu by Marc Miron of the Four Seasons Hotel, Sydney. There should also be spirited bidding for an \$80,000 2007 Rugby World Cup package, which includes flights to Paris, tickets to the third and fourth play-offs, and the final. **Fri, February 23, \$300 a head. Bookings 1300 300 661.**

Strengthening bonds
Better relationships in Every Family, a program for residents and their families at the Sydney Rehabilitation Centre, Odyssey House, improves a drug-dependent person's chances of recovery, according to James Pitts, the chief executive officer of Odyssey House.

"Seventy per cent of Odyssey's graduates are still drug free one year later - most are those who have completed the 12-week course with their families."

The six-week program, commenced in last year's National Drug and Alcohol Awards, makes a difference because families gain a better understanding of dependence, better communication skills and learn that trust, often a casualty of living with someone with an addiction, can be rebuilt. He says, "Families and drug users need help to resolve their problems, otherwise the user finishes treatment and goes home to the same unresolved issues. For someone who's using drugs, just knowing they have support can help them recover but if they don't have that support, it's easier to feel they have nothing to lose by continuing."

"While there are some families who have been part of the problem, this isn't true of most."
Tony Thringham

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Sydney Morning Herald
- 15th February 2007

Sydney Morning Herald
- 17th January 2007

Odyssey Recognition

Support that Odyssey House has recently received from the following donors is greatly appreciated.

- Australian Youth & Health Foundation
- Commonwealth Bank of Australia - Golf Event
- Challenger Financial Service
- Corinthian Industries
- Stuart Grimshaw
- David Groves
- Chris Grubb
- Michael Hawker
- Henry H Roth Charitable Foundation
- Liangrove Foundation
- Marcus O'Connor
- Peter Philips
- Sellers Group
- Thyne Reid Foundation
- United Way, Sydney

ISSUE NUMBER 1
2007



'A Calm in the Sea of Addiction'

Newsletter



What a night! James Pitts and the Odyssey House choir

RUGBY DINNER Kicks a Winning Goal

For the fifth consecutive year the Odyssey House Rugby Dinner was a resounding success. Over 450 guests were in attendance and the event was ably hosted by media personality and corporate executive, Sally Loane.

Entertainment was provided by premier operatic trio Tenor Australis who inspired the crowd with their rendition of *Clancy of the Overflow* and the rugby anthem *World In Union*.

Not to be over shadowed, and perhaps the inspirational performance of the night, was the Odyssey House choir who sang *I Hope You Had The Time Of Your Life*.

Just when it appeared the evening's proceedings were at their zenith, Sally interviewed Odyssey House graduate Alex, and his mother Kerren.

Alex inspired the guests as he told of how he has overcome

his drug problem, which began at age nine. Kerren spoke of the difficulty she had as a parent having to let go and allow Alex to complete his Odyssey House journey.

The impact of their combined testimonial was visible throughout the crowd, with many guests brought to tears.

Winning Rugby World Cup participants from the 1991 Wallabies Nick Farr-Jones, Simon Poidevin and David Wilson and the 1999 Wallabies Richard Harry, Ewan McKenzie, David Giffen and Jason Little were all interviewed by Sally. Their particular brand of humour, jibes, quick wit and repartee kept the crowd well entertained!

To cap off an amazingly successful night was the announcement we had raised \$140,000! We thank all who attended for such a tremendous effort.

We especially wish to thank Qantas, Visa Australia and the Australian Rugby Union for jointly sponsoring the Ultimate Rugby World Cup Experience prize.

The big winner on the night, in addition to Odyssey House, was Michael Walters of Edgar Dunn and Co who won the all expenses paid trip to Paris flying Qantas Business Class, with accommodation at the Sofitel Paris, two tickets to the semi finals and finals of the Rugby World Cup and \$10,000 spending money!

Wish List

Can you help Odyssey House residents by providing any of these?

- Shade cloth
- White paint
- Children's books
- Two bicycles
- A color printer.

YES! I would like to help Odyssey House assist residents to live a drug free life.

Please find enclosed my donation of: (please circle) **\$50.00** **\$100.00** **\$500.00** or \$_____

Enclosed is my cheque / money order made payable to the Odyssey House McGrath Foundation or charge my credit card.

Bankcard Visa Mastercard Amex Diners Club

Card number: _____ / _____ / _____ Expiry Date: _____

Name on card: _____ Title: (Dr/ Mr/ Mrs/ Ms/ Miss): _____

Signature: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Facsimile: _____

I would like to pledge \$_____ per month to be deducted from my Credit Card until revoked in writing by me or Odyssey House.

DONATIONS OVER \$2.00 ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

For more information on Odyssey House, visit www.odysseyhouse.org.au

Telephone: (02) 9820 9999 ~ Facsimile: (02) 9820 1796

Please return this coupon and your donation to:
Odyssey House McGrath Foundation, PO Box 459, Campbelltown, NSW, 2560.



'A Calm in the Sea of Addiction'

PO Box 459
Campbelltown NSW 2560

Telephone: (02) 9820 9999
Facsimile: (02) 9820 1796

www.odysseyhouse.org.au



Eric R. Dodd

2007 will be a particularly busy time for Board members as we continue our appeals to various corporate leaders, organisations and generous individuals to raise vital funds for the operation of Odyssey House.

It is also the year we celebrate our 30th anniversary. It seems extraordinary that during this time, tens of thousands of Australian lives have been saved. It is something we should all feel proud of, particularly the hard working and dedicated staff and the residents themselves.

The main goal of the Board for 2007 is to continue to financially support the programs at Odyssey House, to enable yet more people with alcohol, drug and gambling problems to seek help regarding their problem behaviors.

The Board is looking forward to meeting these challenges throughout the year and we will keep you posted on our progress.

Our fundraising year started with an incredible 'bang' with the recent Odyssey House rugby dinner raising over \$140,000. Most importantly, it showcased the tremendous work of James Pitts and the team at Odyssey House.

Sally Loane, who has compared the event for the past five years, conducted an intriguing, emotional and informative interview with a recent graduate who is now gainfully employed in the Sydney investment banking community. This, in particular, was a great example of what Odyssey can produce.

This annual event continues to be one of the most sought after corporate evenings and has continued to gain in strength over the past five years.

After 30 years of dedication to so many people in need, the needs of Odyssey House continue to grow. Please help by filling in the donation form on the back of this newsletter and giving generously to our worthwhile cause.

Eric R. Dodd
Chairman

Odyssey Staff RETREATS

Each year in February as many of the Odyssey House staff as possible go away for a three day retreat. The retreat allows staff to interact without having to worry about their normal duties.

Goals of the retreat are:

- Review departmental and organisational goals from the past year
- Establish new goals for the coming year
- Participate in relevant training
- And to have fun!

The process of reviewing last year's goals is a tangible way to demonstrate how much we accomplish as an organisation. It also re-enforces the staff's resolve to remain committed to our mission.

Training workshops were held on psycho stimulants, the writing of policies and procedures, formulation of a psycho educational intervention model for residents who have experienced child sexual abuse



and an interactive experience called the *Therapeutic Community Game*, which gave staff an experience of what it is like to be a resident at Odyssey House.

The most important part of the retreat is that it allows staff to spend time together. It highlighted the Odyssey House adage, "The longer we are together, the happier we will be!"

"Art washes from the soul the dust of everyday life." Picasso

Clara Hali is an award winning sculpturer who also works as the art and craft teacher at the Progressive Learning Centre, Odyssey House.

Clara was recently awarded a highly commended at the University of Western Sydney Acquisitive Sculpture Award and

Exhibition for her sculpture *Tribanga III* in bronze, aluminium and sandstone.

"This sculpture represents the search for unity and wholeness in a fractured society," said Clara.

Congratulations Clara!



Changing drug trends

Staff at Odyssey House have always been conscious of the need to alter programming to meet the legitimate needs of our residents.

Trends in the drugs nominated as those "of concern" by residents have indicated this recently. Patterns of drug use have changed as there have been significant increases in patterns of alcohol and psycho-stimulant usage, and increased mental health presentations.

As a consequence, we have introduced programming to

cater to residents who have mental health issues. Staff have undergone training to understand the dynamics of these issues and appropriate interventions to respond to them.

Psycho stimulant usage has increased and staff have undergone a training workshop to assist them in dealing with residents who are effected by this group of drugs.

There has also been a growing recognition of the significant increase in alcohol dependent

residents. As a consequence, we are placing greater emphasis upon developing an alcohol education package.

Lastly, we have initiated a pilot program to allow five residents who are on methadone to undergo rehabilitation while they reduce their methadone dosage.

We expect continued benefits for all residents who are affected by the changes to our programming.



James A. Pitts

The Roman God Janus was characterised by having two faces, one looked forward; the other back. Consequently, the month of January is his namesake. It is the time of year where we look back at our achievements, while keeping a watchful eye on the future.

Last year Odyssey House successfully accommodated residents whose profile had changed due to a greater prevalence of mental health issues.

We were recognised for our efforts in providing interventions for families at the National Drug and Alcohol Awards being runners up in the Excellence in Treatment category for our Better Relationships in Every Family program.

We were also successful in achieving the tender to conduct assessments and referrals for the Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment (MERIT) program at Waverley Court.

Throughout 2006, the program also successfully incorporated intervention for residents wishing to undergo rehabilitation whilst withdrawing from methadone and other pharmacotherapies.

This year we face other challenges as well as opportunities.

We undertook our accreditation review with Quality Management Services (QMS) and await their final report and findings.

We were fortunate to receive funding from the Proceeds of Crime Act of the Federal government and the Thyne Reid Foundation to renovate and upgrade our facilities at the Assessment and Referral Centre.

This year, we celebrate 30 years of continuous service to over tens of thousands of Australians who find themselves adversely affected by drugs, alcohol and gambling.

We have plans for a number of events leading up to our anniversary date of 30th October 2007 to commemorate this historic milestone!

We look forward to the year ahead. We relish the opportunity to yet again meet the challenges before us. In line with our conceptual framework: we face the future unafraid.

James A. Pitts
Chief Executive Officer

A Road to RECOVERY

To demonstrate the real work of Odyssey House, this column features an Odyssey House resident's story.

Aley, as she is known affectionately to all at Odyssey, is 20 years old. She looks, sounds and acts like your typical 20 year old Australian youngster. However, unlike many other young people her age, Aley has had to overcome some significant difficulties in her life.

Aley's parents migrated to Australia from Chile. They both worked hard to secure a place for their children. Aley found her activities as a young child limited due to her father's English language skills and his drinking. The one activity Aley was good at was swimming and from the age of four she showed not only promise, but the potential to be a champion!

Aley's father placed tremendous expectations upon her to win at swimming. More and more of her time was devoted to swimming carnivals at the expense of forming friendships. In most cases Aley did well at the carnivals, finishing first. But when she finished second or third her father wouldn't speak to her for weeks. As Aley said, "It took all of the fun out of it".

At 15 Aley's life was to change significantly and forever. Her environment at home remained chaotic and insecure due to the



increase in her father's drinking. Aley tried to escape by spending as much time away from home as possible. On one of these occasions she was sexually assaulted. Aley tried to cope with the assault as best she could, but eventually started to drink, take pills and engage in violent behaviour.

Amid the chaos, and adding to it, was the discovery her mother had cancer. Aley was 17 at the time and due to the fear she may lose her mother descended into a spiral of further drunkenness. Her father said that if his wife died it would be due to Aley's behaviour. Aley attempted suicide on a few occasions before she was taken to a psychiatric

unit where she was a self described "mess"! Her doctor recommended she contact Odyssey House to assist with her alcohol dependence.

At Odyssey House Aley's confidence began to grow. She was given a job assignment in the kitchen where she had to learn to be responsible. "I didn't even know how to peel a potato!"

Aley learnt how to communicate, negotiate and become responsible.

Aley's goals are to graduate the program, find independent housing (she currently lives in a re-entry house), work in the retail area and go to university next year to enter the field of human services.