

In The Press



Cosmopolitan, January 2010



Campbelltown Macarthur Advertiser, Wednesday, December 9, 2009



Odyssey Recognition

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

- Mr Robert Albert AO
- Australian Youth & Health Foundation
- Mr Robert Barry
- Mr Mike Betar
- Sir Ron Brierley
- Christopher Cuffe Foundation
- Mr Mark Donnelly
- Epirus Pty Ltd - Paul Binsted
- Mr Philip Garling
- James N Kirby Foundation
- Liangrove Foundation
- Ms Martha Morrow
- Nexia Court & Co
- Ms Audrey Page
- Ms Beverley Price
- Mr Grahame Pratt
- QBE Insurance Group
- Tria Investment Partners
- Ms Helen Waters
- Wilson Foundation

Diary Dates

For further information on any of these events, please contact marketing on (02) 9820 9999 or email marketing@odysseyhouse.com.au

- Odyssey House Women's Lunch 20 May
- Milton Luger Forum 22 June
- Real Men Cook Luncheon August

Newsletter



Officially signing the MOU. (Back row L-R) DAWN workers Mandy and Paige, Odyssey House After Care Counsellors Hong and Alicia, Mutual clients Susan and Cara. (Front row) Deb Loades Manager DAWN and James Pitts CEO Odyssey House.

At Long Last

The Drug and Alcohol Women's Network (DAWN) has been working with Odyssey for the past twenty five years providing medium term supported housing assistance for women in recovery from alcohol and other drugs (and their children) from Odyssey House programs.

for each others work. With different objectives within each organisation now formalised, we will have better outcomes for our mutual clients in the future" said James Pitts, CEO of Odyssey House.

The main purpose of this MOU is to ensure that each service achieves the best outcomes for Odyssey and DAWN clients by providing a strong positive support network, continuity of care and improve the outcomes for mutual clients.

It has been a long relationship that is being officially recognised with the signing of 'Memorandum of Understanding' between DAWN and the Odyssey House After Care Program.

DAWN Manager Deb Loades joined DAWN housing in 1987, and has seen first hand the continued growth and positive outcomes of this partnership. "DAWN already had a relationship with Odyssey when I first started, this relationship has really grown and developed over this time" said Deb.

"We have enjoyed a long and productive relationship with DAWN; we have a mutual respect

for each others work. With different objectives within each organisation now formalised, we will have better outcomes for our mutual clients in the future" said James Pitts, CEO of Odyssey House.

The main purpose of this MOU is to ensure that each service achieves the best outcomes for Odyssey and DAWN clients by providing a strong positive support network, continuity of care and improve the outcomes for mutual clients.

Cara has experienced first hand the benefits of this relationship "Odyssey House After Care was able to assist and put me in touch with DAWN. With their support I now have some stability and a safe place for my daughter and I to make a home and stay in recovery" says Cara.

We look forward to a long and positive partnership with DAWN and many more happy stories.



Odyssey House NSW is now on Facebook. Join us for the latest news and hot events!

WISH LIST

UV Sunsafe Shirts & Hats

'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

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.

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 message from the Chairman



Cathy Doyle

A warm welcome to you all for 2010.

For Odyssey in 2010, we will continue to meet and support those who are not in a happy or healthy space - those who really need guidance, help and support to transform their lives and become a functioning contributor to society...that's why we exist.

The Board and management of Odyssey face, as we all do, a tougher climate to raise funds for the important work Odyssey does. We will continue to ask for and appreciate your continued support and generosity...James and his team can't do their work without your generosity.

The year has flown ahead with a number of key events held already. Thank you to Paul and Ros Espie who graciously donated their beautiful home and gardens for the first 'Odyssey by the Bay' cocktail event.

Our annual Rugby Dinner was held on the 5th March at the Four Seasons Hotel, where amongst fine food, wine and company guests were entertained by some of Rugby's best raconteurs. An enjoyable evening was had by all.

The Board will spend 2010 continuing to provide governance and fiduciary oversight and support to Odyssey. We have a full functioning team focussed via a sub committee structure to fulfil our duties. I'd like to thank Valerie Hoogstad and Professor Jan Copeland who have taken up the joint Chair of the Operations Committee - their leadership and experience will be invaluable. Thank you to Jon Fisk who steps down as Chair of this Committee and continues to be a member...his support and insights are very much valued.

I look forward to seeing you all in 2010.

Cathy Doyle
Chairman

Adolescent Drinking - Out of control

Recently, there has been growing concern over the issue of adolescent alcohol use, usually in the form of 'binge drinking', and the problems this creates not just for individuals but for society as a whole.

I think most of us as adults, depending on our age, remember when we were able to drink legally. That age for many was at 21, which coincided with the age at which you were able to vote, sign a contract, get married and so on. The lowering of the drinking age to 18 years was the result, to a large extent, of the war in Vietnam and the large number of young people who lost their lives in this war. Their lament was they could die for their country, but had no right to vote in its policies or drink alcohol legally.

Today young people start

drinking much earlier. In a study of residents in treatment at Odyssey House, 90 per cent nominated alcohol as their first drug of intoxication at between 12-13 years of age. Young people are starting to drink earlier!

Why do we need to get serious about addressing the issue of the harm alcohol causes to our young people? Some statistics may help to highlight the need.

- By 18, 50 per cent of males and females in the 14-24 year old age group are risky drinkers.
- 264 young people aged 15-24 years of age die each year as a result of risky alcohol consumption.*

We know the brain has its most rapid physical development between 12-24 years of age. We know between 19-23 per cent of adolescents engage in binge

drinking and 1 in 5 teenagers between 16-17 years old drink at least weekly. Alcohol as a neurotoxin has an effect upon young brains in the area known as the amygdala, which controls rewards, gratification and risk taking. It also affects the prefrontal cortex which is responsible for planning, logic, and judgement. These facts make for a compelling case for decision makers to do something!

To find out more on the culture of 'Adolescent Alcohol Use' and ways to combat this growing issue, visit 'Odyssey Speaks' www.odysseyhouse.org.au.

*Source: 'Young People and Alcohol - The Role of Cultural Influences' National Centre on Education and Training in Addictions (NCETA).

United we stand

Over the years Odyssey House has grown extensively from a small team of staff to over 80 employees. Once a year we encourage all the staff to break away and unite as a team at our staff retreat.

Odyssey provides a number of services that are based at different locations so this is a great opportunity for us all to be together. The retreat gives staff the opportunity to share their objectives, milestones and goals of each department, and how together we can move forward as a team.

This year CEO James Pitts discussed the 'Evolution of Odyssey' and how the major milestones that occurred overtime have made Odyssey who it is today.

This year's retreat also had a number of guest speakers including Larry Pierce, CEO NADA, who updated Odyssey on the trends of Alcohol and other Drugs (AOD) services.



Our new faces

This was also an opportunity to officially welcome our new staff. Brendan Flynn is the newly appointed Chief Operating Officer. Brendan brings a wealth of experience and a very visible passion to his role.

"Over the past twelve years I developed a passion in working for the Not for Profit sector," said Brendan.

At some stage in our lives we are all affected by someone with addiction. "I have been blown away by some of the abilities our

residents demonstrate once they are on the road to recovery, a testament not only to how drugs and alcohol adversely affect people's lives, but also to the resilience of the human spirit," says Brendan.

Brendan's Odyssey journey has only just begun as he looks forward to maintaining our high level of achievement, being part of some progressive change that will help all our clients, and inspiring and being inspired by Odyssey House staff and residents.

A Road to RECOVERY

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

Tom was only two months old when his family moved from the United Kingdom to Australia. The youngest of three, "I had a traditional family upbringing, playing with my brother and sister, and going on family holidays" said Tom.

Tom managed to sustain decent grades at school, and became very active in drama and music. Though by his senior years he would start skipping school to have parties, take acid, smoke marijuana and consume copious amounts of alcohol.

By the age of 16 Tom had started injecting speed on a daily occurrence. It was at this time that Tom also tried heroin for the first time, it would however be another five years before Tom would try heroin again and it would take over his life.

Tom finished his HSC under the influence of various drugs, and then took a gap year to decide on his future.

Involved with a bad crowd, Tom began selling speed and he himself became very addicted to the drug. After going into a speed psychosis that lasted up to ten days - the next day Tom quit Speed to get his life back on track.

Taking positive steps, Tom entered the JMC Academy to focus on a Film / 3D Animation Diploma. After entering into a



serious relationship with a young woman "I started taking heroin. I struggled to complete my diploma, and became more addicted to the heroin" said Tom.

Tom was finally confronted by friends who contacted his family to help.

"My family lived in Auckland at this time; my mum flew to Sydney and took me back to Auckland. I was locked in my parent's home and underwent a home 'Detox'. It was hard, and at the time I was very angry" said Tom.

Nine months later Tom moved back to Sydney, and over the next three to six months Tom simply plummeted. "I started using heroin, stealing, lying to family and friends - I was spiralling out of control" said Tom.

Over the next three years, Tom was in and out of various detox programs, but he was never really

focused on his recovery. It was when Tom was arrested for 'Indictable supply offence' and was bailed to Odyssey House that things started to change.

"Initially I was just here for court, this changed very quickly. Two weeks later I wanted to be here no matter what was going to happen" said Tom.

While Tom has had a rocky road to recovery, he has completed the Odyssey House Program.

"I have rebuilt many bridges, and reconnected with my family with the assistance of the 'Better Relationships in Every Family (BRIEF) program, best of all I have rebuilt my life" says Tom.

Tom plans to continue his studies at the Australian Film and Television School, and eventually hopes to work in the film industry, and continue to be a positive influence to other people in recovery.

A message from the Chief Executive Officer



James A. Pitts

The Roman God of the New Year, Janus is depicted as having two faces looking in opposite directions. This symbolised vision of the year just past and the one yet to come. Our staff have had an opportunity to do just that over the past month through attendance at the annual Staff Retreat.

We took the opportunity again this year to review the goals we set last year and were all pleased at the tremendous amount of progress made in all departments! We left the Retreat with renewed validation of the organisation's accomplishments, and re-invigorated for this year's challenges.

Two major reports will have a significant bearing on Odyssey House and other organisations within the alcohol and other drugs field. These are the reports from the Health Reform Commission, and the Productivity Commission report. The recommendations from these two reports will determine at a Federal level the possible structure of the alcohol and other drugs field, and who will provide funding for it going into the future. In addition, the New South Wales Health Department will undertake a review of the funding model for the Non-government Organisations alcohol and other drugs programs. We await the recommendations from these initiatives and are confident of our well established place within the alcohol and other drugs field.

There is much for us to do as we enter a New Year. In the past two weeks alone we have had three fundraising projects. They are: "Odyssey by The Bay" a cocktail party at the home of Ros and Paul Espie in Darling Point; the ASX Thompson Reuters Charity Golf Day and Ball held at the Westin Hotel Ballroom; and the annual Odyssey House Rugby Dinner held at the Four Seasons Hotel. An ambitious start to the year but as we say, "The harder we work, the luckier we get!"

Thank you for your support!

James A Pitts, MA
Chief Executive Officer

DRAGON BOATING

Some of the residents of the Odyssey 'Young Adults Group' displayed a natural aptitude for Dragon Boating, as they enjoyed a fabulous day out with the Sandy Point Dragon Boat Club.

The residents developed new skills, and finished the day off with a small race between two of the dragon boats. Our sincere appreciation to the club and its team for making this a great day for all involved!

