

In this issue:

Odyssey House Leader
Testifies at Senate Hearing
on HeroinPg. 2

New Grant for Peer
Counselors.....Pg. 2

What is Your Spirit
Animal?.....Pg. 4-5

Graduates Look to the
FuturePg. 6

Supportive Housing Program
Celebrates First YearPg. 6

Agency Executive Elected
President of Advocacy
OrganizationPg. 7

Caring for Every Child's
Mental Health.....Pg. 7

Run For Your Life



September 19th see inside

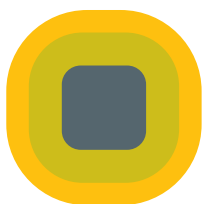
What is Your Spirit Animal?

What is Your Spirit
Animal? opens at the
Haven Art Gallery.
(see center spread)



Graduates Look to the Future

Graduates celebrate
their educational
achievements.
(see page 6)



Odyssey House
Where recovery lives

Investing in Integrated Care Benefits Healthy Recovery

Residents at Odyssey House now have access to an improved medical clinic, located at our Manor Family Center in East Harlem. With nearly double the exam rooms, new patient counseling offices, and expanded pharmacy, administrative, and waiting areas, more residents will receive high quality health services in a welcoming and stigma-free environment.

Upon entering treatment, all residents undergo a thorough medical exam. Staff physicians and nurses, familiar with the special needs of patients with substance use disorders (SUDs), draw up individualized medical plans for each resident. Many residents begin much-needed therapeutic regimens to address such chronic illnesses as hypertension, diabetes, and depression – ailments that commonly accompany SUDs but are often undiagnosed and untreated.

Opportunities for improved services with integrated care

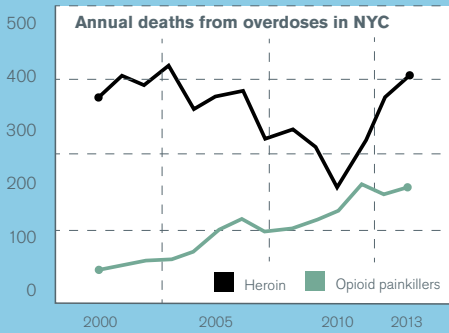
The key component of integrated care – coordination of primary and behavioral health services in a way that is accessible from one place – is not a new concept for many substance

abuse treatment organizations that operate licensed medical and dental services as part of comprehensive residential and outpatient treatment.

Odyssey House realized early on the benefits of bringing primary care into our programs, including integration of medical, psychiatric, pharmacy, prevention, and social work services; reduced use of emergency rooms for non-urgent care; improved management of preventable conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and hypertension; and enhanced treatment outcomes by improving client retention. We opened our first NYS Department of Health-licensed primary medical clinic in 1992. For close to 25 years, our residents have benefited from accessible, on-site facilities that provide coordinated medical, dental, and behavioral health care across a multi-site system of treatment and housing services.

A 2013 report by the Center for Integrated Health Solutions, published jointly by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and Human

Odyssey House Leader Testifies at NYS Senate Hearing on Heroin



Source: New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 2014

Combating Heroin at Odyssey House

100% outpatient services staff trained in opioid overdose prevention techniques, including emergency use of life-saving naloxone injections.

In New York City, deaths from heroin overdoses were higher in 2013 than they have been since 2003. Deaths from overdoses of opioid painkillers such as hydrocodone have also risen.

In the wake of rising heroin deaths – in 2013, there were nearly 90,000 admissions for opioid abuse treatment in New York State, an increase from 64,000 in 2004 – the New York State Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction convened a public hearing at the University of Albany to gauge what action lawmakers need to take to stop the epidemic. After listening to expert testimony from medical professionals and recovering addicts in June, some New York State lawmakers are preparing to do their part to help fight the heroin epidemic.

Odyssey House president and CEO Dr. Peter Provet was among the experts to testify in front of the task force. In the last three years (from 2012 to 2014), the number of people coming into Odyssey House treatment programs reporting opioids as their primary drugs of abuse increased 18%. Dr. Provet described the steps Odyssey House has taken to address the influx of opioid addicts, including training 100% of our outpatient services staff in opioid overdose prevention techniques, such as emergency use of life-saving naloxone injections, with training programs for residential staff in development.

Dr. Provet also spoke about the nature of drug addiction and how effective treatment required a multi-pronged approach:

“We know that drug addiction is a complex illness characterized by intense and, at times, uncontrollable drug craving, along with compulsive drug seeking and use that persist even in the face of devastating consequences. While the path to drug addiction begins with the

voluntary act of taking drugs, over time a person’s ability to choose not to do so becomes compromised, and seeking and consuming the drug becomes compulsive. This behavior results largely from the effects of prolonged drug exposure on brain functioning.

“Medication and behavioral therapy, especially when combined, are important elements of an overall therapeutic process that often begins with detoxification, followed by treatment and relapse prevention. Easing withdrawal symptoms can be important in the initiation of treatment; preventing relapse is necessary for maintaining its effects. And sometimes, as with other chronic conditions, episodes of relapse may require a return to prior treatment components. A continuum of care that includes a customized treatment regimen—addressing all aspects of an individual’s life, including medical and mental health services—and follow-up options (e.g., community- or family-based recovery support systems) can be crucial to a person’s success in achieving and maintaining a drug-free lifestyle.”

Senator George Amedore, co-chair of the taskforce, said the purpose of the hearing was to make sure the current recovery system works the way it should and that the systems are targeting the right people. But ultimately, the only way to stop the epidemic is to “Get everyone involved,” Senator Amedore said. “It’s not one person or one law that’s going to eradicate this problem.” ●

New Grant for Peer Counselors

Odyssey House has been awarded a grant from the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) to support a peer advocate position as part of the Bringing Recovery Supports to Scale Technical Assistance Center Strategy (BRSS TACS). BRSS was launched in 2011 by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to broaden recovery through the adoption of recovery-oriented services and systems by building on the accomplishments of the mental health and addictions movements. The project serves various constituencies that are vital to moving the field towards a recovery orientation, including people in recovery; state, county, and city health authorities; policy makers; behavioral health providers; and family members.

The peer advocate will work in collaboration with the 2015 New York State BRSS Team and a counterpart peer specialist from the mental health system. In addition, the peer advocate will provide technical assistance (TA) to Odyssey House and will work to develop opportunities to educate mentors and providers on the status and efficacy of peer services; outreach to statewide organizations, initiatives, and recovery coaches, to engage them in community forums and TA sessions; and participate in regular and ongoing meetings with mental health and substance use systems.

Odyssey House was chosen to participate in the BRSS project from a competitive field of applicants due to our experience in peer recovery services. This not only gives our agency insight into the practical application of delivering effective mentoring services, but also proves beneficial to other treatment programs. More specifically, this allows agencies that are still in the process of developing or implementing their own programs, to expand their knowledge in this particular area. Odyssey House has been an advocate for peer recovery programs for more than five years, and our successes with these programs shows that Odyssey House will be a great asset to the BRSS project. ●



Resources Administration (HRA), looked at integrated primary care services and SUD treatment and convincingly found that the integration of physical health and addictions care not only helps reduce barriers to care, it also enhances recovery from substance abuse.

“In fact,” the report states, “two or more primary care visits in a 6-month period have shown to improve abstinence by 50 percent in individuals with substance abuse disorders, and those with medical conditions related to substance abuse are three times more likely to achieve remission over 5 years. Regular health and addictions care for people with substance abuse disorders also decreased hospitalizations by up to 30 percent.”

Today’s model of care, ushered in by passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010 and the earlier Mental Health Parity and Addictions Equality Act (MHPAEA) in 2008,

provides opportunities for behavioral health care organizations to further develop integrated care services. According to SAMHSA, ACA expands benefits to approximately 60 million Americans. This legislation mandates coverage of certain preventive services and, together with MHPAEA, ensures health insurers provide the same level of benefits for behavioral health.

This is all good news for people in need of substance abuse and mental health treatment who also have physical health needs. Studies have shown that individuals with substance use and mental health disorders who also receive treatment for medical conditions demonstrate improved outcomes in both behavioral and physical health. The demand for medical services is further supported by advances in addiction treatment medication which require appropriately trained staff to administer and monitor these medications for opioid and alcohol addictions.

While the new regulatory environment brings challenges to how we manage our limited resources, who we partner with, and how we monitor the health needs of the individuals we serve, the benefits of an integrated system promise improved care for underserved Americans, not least among them the millions of individuals with substance use and/or mental health disorders. ●



NYS Office of Mental Health Commissioner Ann Marie Sullivan, M.D. and Gina Bae, director of licensing, visited our newly renovated medical clinic to learn more about our integrated care model. From left, Darrelle B., Family Center client; Dr. Sullivan; Odyssey House medical director Dr. Anne Lifflander; Dorothy Hopton, nurse practitioner; and Ms. Bae.

Save the date!

TENTH ANNUAL
Run For Your Life



Celebrating recovery & wellness in NYC!

- 5K Run / Children’s races
- Fitness demos / Prizes
- Recovery Walk
- Zumba / Refreshments

Registration & details @ odysseyhouseinc.org

Saturday,
September 19, 2015

Icahn Stadium,
Randall’s Island

Be visible, vocal,
valuable*

*A National Recovery Month Event

What is Your Spirit Animal?

For their eighth exhibition, members of the Odyssey House Art Project explored spirit animals as a means of expression. In their review of shamanic traditions, the artists learned that spirit animals are beings that empower, guide, and protect. Based on this concept, the artists selected animals that resonated with them and used a variety of mediums and techniques to produce this unique collection of artwork.



Big Elephant by Michael R. "I want my elephant to be the biggest elephant in the world. This elephant is a guide, a leader. Especially to children."



Bear Loose in Flatbush by Denise R. "I grew up in Flatbush...that's my street in the picture. It was scary growing up there. I like a bear for my spirit animal. If I was a bear I would always be safe."



Bird, Teapot, Teacup by Abdul N.



Artist Russell M. explored the spirituality of his Irish heritage in *Horned Deity*, which depicts Cernunnos, an antlered deity associated with animals that were important to the ancient Celtic people's survival.

► Now open to the public at the Haven Art Gallery, located at 239 E. 121st Street, New York, NY 10035. Please call (917) 492-2582 to schedule a viewing. Photos of the artwork can be viewed at [flickr.com/odysseyhouse](https://www.flickr.com/photos/odysseyhouse).



Michael R. selected a koi fish as his spirit animal because it “is a symbol of eternal life and perseverance, which is shown by its ability to swim against currents and travel upstream.”

Graduates Look to the Future



April (left) credits her support system, including friends like Cheryl, for encouraging her to work on her recovery and pursue a high school equivalency diploma.

Passing the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (the high school equivalency exam that replaced General Educational Development test in NYS) enables Odyssey House residents of any age to reach a higher platform of educational achievement and gain numerous personal, financial, and social benefits. Earlier in the summer, Odyssey House held a graduation ceremony for 33 residents who earned their high

school equivalency diplomas to celebrate their success.

Elyssa Gersen-Thurman, director of work readiness for HOPE Program, congratulated the graduates for their perseverance: "Prepping for this exam while actively engaged in the recovery process is an endeavor that requires dedication and stamina that would make most people give up." Ms. Gersen-Thurman urged them to continue on with their education, reminding everyone that "learning does not have to take place in a classroom or school, or even cost money."

April S., the graduate speaker from the Manor Family Center, described how her education was derailed after a car accident in high school left her with traumatic brain injury and unable to walk or talk for three months. After regaining her mobility, April attempted to return to school but was beset with difficulties stemming from the

accident and dropped out of high school. She drifted along aimlessly for the next several years, turning to drugs to fill the time.

She made a few attempts to complete her education over the years – even being tutored by the father of her children – but she never found the time to commit to studying. It was not until April entered treatment that she decided to make earning her diploma a priority, in order to be a good role model for her daughter, 7, and son, 4.

"Last year I asked my daughter what she wanted to be when she grew up and she said, 'I want to be just like you, Mommy.'" I knew then I had to go back to school and show my children that they can accomplish anything they want if they work hard and believe in themselves," April said.

Odyssey House's Vocational Rehabilitation Services, in partnership with the New York City Department of Education and Project Restart, provides on-site educational services available to all residential clients and administers the TASC four times a year. ●

Supportive Housing Program Celebrates First Year



Last year, Odyssey House opened Soundview Avenue, a New York State Office of Mental Health-funded supportive housing building that provides permanent housing in the Bronx for 56 single, low income adults living with special needs. To mark our one-year anniversary of providing services, we held a breakfast for our tenants, neighbors, and community partners.

Guests included representatives from the 43rd Precinct Community Council, the Soundview Residence Council, Urban Health Plan, and Leake & Watts, a child-care social services agency. Dr. Sidney Hargrave, vice

chair of Bronx Community Board 9, said, "Odyssey House has been a partner with Community Board 9 for years. Thank you for being a beacon in this community. This is one of the best residences in our district."

Ruth S., a tenant who moved into Soundview Avenue in January 2014, addressed the crowd to talk about her experiences in the shelter system and how her life has turned around since moving in: "I felt insecure, hopeless and sad all the time – I isolated myself and my mental illness worsened. It's comforting to have

my independence back and stability in my life. Odyssey House has made me feel better; for the past year, I have felt safe."

New York's first LEED-certified supportive housing building

Soundview Avenue was designed to be Odyssey House's first eco-friendly supportive housing building, incorporating environmentally sustainable and energy-efficient design, construction, operation, and maintenance practices. We are pleased to announce that Soundview Avenue, a LEED-certified project, has achieved Silver level certification, a first for a NYS Office of Mental Health-funded supportive housing program.

LEED, or Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design, is a certification program by the US Green Building Council that recognizes best-in-class building strategies and practices. To receive LEED certification, building projects satisfy prerequisites and earn points to achieve different levels of certification. Key green design features that contributed to our Silver certification include drought-resistant landscaping; water-saving fixtures; daylight and occupancy sensors; low-VOC paints and materials; Energy Star appliances; and bike storage. ●

Agency Executive Elected President of Advocacy Organization



John Tavolacci, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Odyssey House, has been elected president of the Therapeutic Communities Association of New York (TCANY).

With the treatment industry in flux due to changes in Medicaid reimbursement and the Affordable Care Act, this is a critical time for an organization like TCANY, says Mr. Tavolacci. “As we move towards implementation of managed care, it is important to have a group like TCANY to ensure the quality of care in our programs will continue.” High on the priority list will be developing a strategic plan focusing on residential program redesign to help their members navigate the evolving treatment landscape.

TCANY is an affiliate of Treatment Communities of America, a non-profit, member-led professional association founded in 1975 to advocate for and to advance a comprehensive system of community-centered care for those with substance use and mental health issues. Its membership comprises more than 600 programs providing an array of integrated services including primary and preventive care; outreach; education, assessment, referral and follow-up; detoxification and crisis management; residential treatment with aftercare support; outpatient services;

mental health services; vocational assistance and job placement; and emergency, transitional, and permanent housing with supportive services.

In addition to managing the clinical operations of the agency, Mr. Tavolacci is actively involved with advocacy efforts at both the city and state levels. He brings a creative approach to the addiction treatment field, which is exemplified by his incorporating fitness as a significant component of rehabilitation. He leads “Run for Your Life,” a program that trains Odyssey House residents to become runners, participating in smaller charity races throughout the year and culminating in the New York City marathon. A clinical social worker specializing in addiction treatment with 29 years of experience in the field, Mr. Tavolacci has been a TCANY board member for 15 years. ●

Make a Difference Donate to Odyssey House

Thanks to supporters like you, we have been helping people achieve a healthy and sustained recovery for more than 45 years. When you donate to our programs, you are helping us pursue our mission of providing the best possible treatment for individuals and families struggling with substance use and mental health disorders. Donate online at odysseyhouseinc.org and help the families and individuals in our programs rebuild their lives as drug-free, productive citizens.

Caring for Every Child’s Mental Health

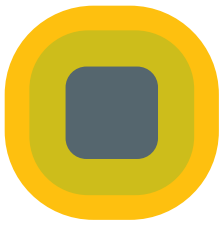


The Manor Family Center children enjoy a book reading as part of the day’s activities.

This summer, the Odyssey House Manor Family Center joined communities across the country in celebrating the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day. This year marked the 10th anniversary of Awareness Day and focused on the needs of children, youth, and young adults with mental and substance use disorders and their families.

To commemorate Awareness Day, parents with young children in residence at the Manor Family Center took part in reading workshops that focused on promoting emotional health.

“Awareness Day is an opportunity for us to celebrate the positive impact we can have on the lives of children and adolescents when we incorporate mental health into an integrated treatment environment,” said Dr. Peter Provet, president and CEO of Odyssey House. “Our family center model focuses on building resilience and social-emotional skills in young children and helps parents provide a nurturing and safe place that allows the entire family to thrive.” ●



Odyssey House

Where recovery lives

120 Wall Street
New York, NY 10005

odysseyhouseinc.org
212-361-1600

On the Horizon



Join us at the Mile 19 Water
Station to cheer on the
Odyssey House Marathon Team!
Sunday, November 1, 2015

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

odysseyhouse.blogspot.com



Help us spread the word
[facebook.com/OdysseyHouse](https://www.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.