

# In The Press

*The Sydney Morning Herald*

## New generation follows heroin parents' addictive example

**Heroin**  
Health Writer

From parent to child, through successive generations, heroin addiction can be handed down from generation to generation, the drug education centre Odysseus House has found.

Not at many stages, if one mother to baby in the womb, but through children growing up in environments where drug use is normalised, and where the pain of living with addicted parents is eased by following in their footsteps.

Increasingly, said James Pitts, executive director of Odysseus House, people seeking treatment and counselling were second generation drug users with children of their own.

"One of the more alarming things we see is people running into the program... and we realise that their parents are also drug users and have been involved in criminal activity."

"That would describe about 10 per cent of my current population... and it has an effect on the next generation as well."

Odysseus House was founded in 1977 and along with its drug counselling services, and alcohol and gambling programs, residents with children learn parenting and life skills. About 50 people go through the program each year.

"We talk about drug use being a good role model, being able to negotiate the system and all that sort of thing, including school and health care and providing at least a sense of purpose for them," Mr Pitts said.

These skills become more critical as second generation drug users think about Odysseus House with their own children.

"We don't want a third generation," Mr Pitts said. "But 22 have used heroin and other drugs for the past seven years."

When the second Odysseus House 36 months ago she had just served a year in jail for shoplifting and had two young

**HUGS NOT DRUGS**  
**HUGS ARE HEALING**



Starting over... James Pitts, of Odysseus House, helps addicts such as Rachel, below, turn their lives around. Photo: Peter Moran

of all those in her children. "When I went to jail I left my family, when I came out I had nothing, I was on the street, I was drug hungry."

"I was doing just about anything I could to remember my past memory. There just came a point where I didn't want to do it any more... in the end I just threw myself into rehab."

Rachel has since finished the residential part of the Odysseus House program, and is now renting her own home.

She has a son of five years, 6, who was in foster care, and has recently gained custody of her other two children, a girl, 8, and a boy, 3. They are expected to come

and other drugs reasonably. "I have headed into rehab, I've been in by trying to do drugs. I can't see how my parents' behaviour has been passed on to me," she said.

"My parents appeared when I was two, and my whole life, my mother drank and she was a heroin addict. You are like your father, you are just born."

"And in jail I ended up doing exactly the same as her. If something is a distraction you do enough to not to be there."

Since completing the residential program, Rachel, who did not want her last name revealed, said Paul Dillon, of the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre.

"There are many issues to consider," he said. "Drug use is a very complex issue that is complicated and messy. Factors that make young people more vulnerable and use associated with other users, leaving school early, coming from a poor background - were also likely to be present if a parent was a problematic drug user," he said.

"The effect on the children of drug users does not become drug users, it is a factor that off any kind of drug use," Mr Dillon said.

## Do something, addict pleads

by SEAN CUNNINGHAM

DU something or die? That is the message former Cabramatta drug addict only known as Vi, delivered to youngsters who could be in danger of forming a drug habit.

Kicked out of her home by her father at 15, Vi, now 17, managed to kick her addiction with the help of residential treatment program provider, Odysseus House. It was there she was hanging around with the wrong crowd, and she said, "I didn't like it to start with but I kept taking it (heroin) to be part of the group and never admitted I had a problem."

"At the time I decided to deal to support my habit and had no self esteem. I was living in a unit in Cabramatta, couldn't afford to pay the rent and was evicted - it was a sad, hard life."

"I got busted for dealing and went to jail, then I was transferred to Odysseus House. It was the best thing in my life being transferred, and I wouldn't be the person I am now without Odysseus House's help."

Playing an instrumental role in Vi's road to recovery from drug addiction, Odysseus House enabled her to cope with her daily duties once more.

"Being placed at Odysseus House gave me a lot



Former drug addict Vi credits Odysseus House with saving her life.

# Newsletter

## ODYSSEY HOUSE



## 'A Calm in the Sea of Addiction'

## New Odyssey House After Care Program



Open for business!  
Pat Farmer, Lesley Mosbey and James Pitts at the new Odyssey House After Care Program premises.

Odyssey House is entering an exciting new era with the recent establishment of new premises within the Campbelltown CBD for the After Care Program. The service will provide post-rehabilitation support to any member of the local community who has experienced previous problems with alcohol or drug misuse.

"The new premises provide an opportunity for Odyssey House to extend its support in the treatment of people who have previously undergone any type of rehabilitation and are needing professional help with their recovery process," said James Pitts, General Manager of Odyssey House.

The new After Care Program service was made possible by a grant of \$243,000 received from the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation over a two-year period.

The Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation was established by the Federal Government in 2001 to support programs and projects that address the prevention of alcohol and other licit substance misuse

and focus on support for vulnerable population groups.

Member of Parliament for Campbelltown, Pat Farmer, is a long-term supporter of Odyssey House and helped negotiate support for the new premises.

The After Care Program service will strive to help participants with anger management, assertiveness skills, balancing daily activities, conflict resolution, relapse prevention, employment, education and training goals and in recognising cravings that may lead to alcohol and prescription drug misuse.

Individuals enrolled in the program will have group sessions that will look at how to have fun without alcohol or drugs and how to set goals and manage money. Help will also be extended with establishing support networks, positive interpersonal relationships, recreation options and the responsible management of treatment issues and relapse prevention.

Participants will also have the opportunity to participate in formal individual and family counselling sessions designed to

enhance communication, develop realistic expectations of family members and to assist in the re-establishment of trust between family members.

It is estimated that over 100 people will utilise the new service this year.

For further enquiries, please call (02) 4628 8806.

## Diary Dates

**ODYSSEY HOUSE BALL**  
Saturday 31 May 2003  
Four Seasons Hotel,  
199 George Street, Sydney

**FUND MANAGERS AWARDS**  
Thursday 16 October 2003  
Four Seasons Hotel,  
199 George Street, Sydney

**ODYSSEY HOUSE ANNIVERSARY & OPEN DAY**  
Sunday 26 October 2003  
13a Moonstone Place,  
Eagle Vale, NSW

**For further information, contact Odyssey House on (02) 9820 9999**

Odyssey House regularly receives public recognition and support from the media in its commitment to helping people with drug, alcohol and gambling problems overcome their addictions. Here is a sample of news features that have appeared on Odyssey House over the last few months.

## In The Press

**YES! I would like to help Odyssey House assist young Australians 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](http://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



PO Box 459  
Campbelltown NSW 2560

Phone: (02) 9820 9999  
Fax: (02) 9820 1796

[www.odysseyhouse.org.au](http://www.odysseyhouse.org.au)

A message from the  
Chairman



Allan Rogers

With the New Year already upon us, it seems important to mention the enormous amount of money that Odyssey House will save the community throughout 2003.

It is almost impossible to measure or quantify the social, health and economic costs of alcohol and other drug misuse in Australia. Drugs have a major impact on crime rates, health care costs and family functioning.

Odyssey House not only save lives, but also saves the community substantial amounts of money.

The cost of each resident living a drug-free life at Odyssey House each year is approximately \$33,000. This compares to a cost of over \$185,000 a year – which is what it costs the government and society in general, for every person who has an uncontrollable drug addiction. This cost includes Government benefits received, associated health costs, the cost of any criminal activity that has taken place by the drug user to obtain stolen goods or money to purchase drugs and subsequent legal costs.

So in 2003, Odyssey House is set to save the government and the community in general over \$20 million by continuing our life-saving work in helping people overcome their addiction to drugs, alcohol or gambling.

After completing the Odyssey House program, residents are likely to live longer, lessen their drug use, reduce crime and ease demands on health and community services.

According to recent statistics by the National Alcohol and Drug Research Centre, there are over 75,000 people addicted to heroin in Australia. Over 40,000 of these people live in NSW.

In order for Odyssey House to help this growing number of people, we remain dedicated to continually raising funds and increasing awareness about the role of Odyssey House within this particular group of people and to the community in general.

Allan Rogers  
Chairman

# Paul Newman's Own Foundation

Odyssey House recently received \$13,000 from the acclaimed Paul Newman's Own Foundation. The money has been used to set up a fully equipped gymnasium to help establish a recreational and fitness program for Odyssey House residents undergoing rehabilitation.

"The grant has enabled Odyssey House to enhance the self esteem and confidence of the residents. The recreational activities that residents are now able to participate in provide important ongoing physical challenges that are consistent with the overall program goals of Odyssey House," says James Pitts, General Manager at Odyssey House.

In addition to the establishment of a professional gym, some of the other recreational equipment that has been purchased with money from the grant includes a softball kit, a cricket kit, volleyball kits and a tug-of-war rope.

Paul Newman's Own Foundation has donated over \$125 million to charities around the world since its origination in 1982.

Paul Newman once quipped, "From salad dressings all blessings flow."



Odyssey House resident Attila is ready for some sporting action!

## RELAPSE PREVENTION PACKAGE

Odyssey House staff member Anne Flower has written a Relapse Prevention Package to teach individuals who are trying to change their addictive behaviour how to anticipate and cope with the problem of relapse.

The package covers many areas a person may face in recovery, including abstinence, controlled or moderated use.

The package offers information, work sheets and handouts in the

areas of relapse prevention skills, life skills, communication skills, relationships (family, intimate and friendships), stress management and relaxation skills.

The Relapse Prevention Package is available to purchase:

CD and bound hard copy \$550.00 includes GST

Bound hard copy only \$330.00 includes GST

## CARING for the community

All McDonald's family Restaurants in the Macarthur region will help Odyssey House raise money and increase awareness during the month of June 2003. There will be numerous fun activities to participate in at the Macarthur stores that will help demonstrate the important work carried out by Odyssey House.

Make sure you specifically visit a McDonald's restaurant in the Macarthur region on Wednesday 11 June 2003 from 6pm to 8pm, as Odyssey House will receive a 10 per cent donation from all sales generated during this time.

Restaurants that are participating

include Campbelltown Mall, Campbelltown, Eagle Vale, Glenquarie, Macarthur Square, Minto, Mt Annan, Narellan, Narellan Town, Rosemeadow and Woodbine.

Thank-you to McDonald's restaurants for caring!

## Wish List

Odyssey House is in desperate need of the following items. You can be sure that if you were able to help in donating even one of these items, your support would make an enormous difference.

- Single bed linen, pillows and new single mattresses.
- Double wardrobes with shelves and drawers.
- Computers and printers.
- Answering machine.
- Pedestal fans.
- Any useable musical instruments, especially guitars.
- Sleepers, rocks and mulch material for landscaping.
- Power tools, hand tools and garden equipment.
- A combined TV/Video for educational seminars and groups.

## Odyssey Recognition

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

- Australian Youth & Health Foundation
- Sir R Brierley
- CAF Australia
- M Casey
- Corinthian Industries
- Cowley Hearne Lawyers
- J R Grant
- D Greatorex
- A Green
- C Grubb
- N Hall
- P Hunt
- A E Hurtt
- ING Australia Foundation
- Mallesons Stephen Jaques
- D Mortimer
- Hon P S M Philips
- I T Reid
- Sellers Holdings Pty Ltd
- P & L Stern
- TAB Limited
- United Way

A message from the  
General Manager

Odyssey House will be entering a new era this year. After many months of planning, consulting and fundraising, we are ready to begin the renovations on the main facility located at Eagle Vale. Our renovation plans have been assisted by the engagement of McRoss Developments, who will do the construction and design of the redevelopment. This will assist us greatly in keeping the costs to a minimum.



James A. Pitts

Construction on the first phase of the project will begin in mid February. This will entail the renovation of the first floor dormitory and administrative areas.

Whilst we have secured the funding for this phase of the project, which will cost \$900,000, we still need \$500,000 to complete the second phase, which will encompass the renovation of the ground floor kitchen and dining room areas, facilities for staff and a new administrative area.

We appreciate any donations from our supporters to assist us in reaching our goal!

As a result of the 1999 New South Wales Drugs Summit, a need for greater accountability in the alcohol and other drugs field was established. This meant that services such as Odyssey House would receive the benefit of a quality improvement process as a condition of continued funding. The ultimate goal is to have each service accredited against community health care standards. We see this as a great opportunity to display the level of accountability that has always been a hallmark of Odyssey House services.

We will undergo an external review conducted by a team of independent consultants in March of this year.

Odyssey House has benefited greatly through its network of supporters. In February we will be the beneficiary of a generous initiative on the part of the Australian Rugby Union and players from the 1999 World Cup Champion Wallabies. The 1999 World Cup Odyssey Gala Dinner will be held at the Four Seasons Hotel and will feature a retrospective of the 1999 Wallaby season that culminated in their triumphant win in Scotland. Players from the squad who will be in attendance include Jason Little, Richard Harry, Stephen Larcombe, John Eales and a host of others. Tickets are \$300 per person and all proceeds will assist the work of Odyssey House!

This year is shaping up to be not only a new era in the development of Odyssey House, but a whole new movie, a world premiere! We invite you to come along at any time to see what we have on display.

James A. Pitts  
General Manager

## A Road to RECOVERY

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

There is no stopping 35-year-old recent Odyssey House graduate Robbie now that she has maintained a drug-free lifestyle for over three years.

Robbie entered Odyssey House after she nearly lost her life and

her children to an addiction to heroin.

"I was shooting up heroin every day – in the morning, at lunchtime and then at night. I was not coping with my responsibilities as a mother and I was in an abusive relationship."

Robbie believes Odyssey House has bolstered her self-esteem.

"I have learnt I can do

anything I want if I stay focused. I don't need drugs to get through life now – I know I am a capable woman."

Robbie is now volunteering at the Admissions Centre at Odyssey House and is studying to obtain a diploma in community welfare.

"I don't need anyone else to feel good about myself now," says Robbie.



Robbie and her son Callum are looking forward to a bright future.