

Number 1
2000

ODYSSEY HOUSE



*'A calm in
the sea of
addiction'*

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Newsletter

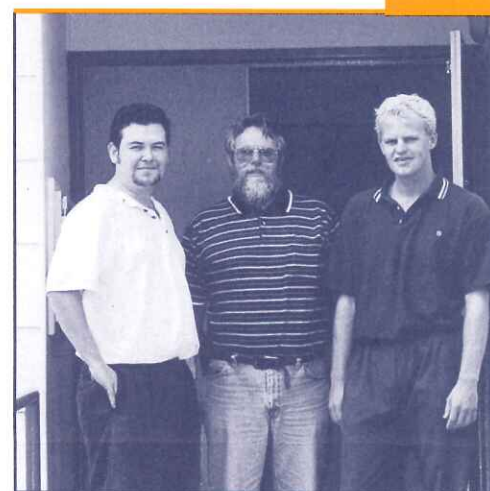


New Detoxification Unit Opens

Odyssey House opened the doors of its new Detoxification Unit on 1 March 2000. This newest arm of our service delivery system can accommodate up to 14 people who wish to detox from alcohol and other drugs. The Unit provides state of the art facilities to residents and comprises three dormitory areas to house both men and women, a lounge area for reading and relaxing, outdoor recreation areas and bathroom facilities that include disabled access and a bath for therapeutic purposes. Tom Bedford, the Unit's Administrator said, "I'm really excited about the opening of the unit and the services we will be able to provide. It is a privilege to work within such a great facility."

Located at the Assessment and Referral Centre, Robin Hood Farm, Minto, the facility provides much needed medically assisted residential detoxification beds in the South West area of Sydney.

The Detoxification Unit was funded primarily by the Commonwealth Government through their "Tough on Drugs" program, part of the National Illicit Drugs Strategy. Additional funding to supplement the capital component was provided by the Baxter Perpetual Charitable Trust through Perpetual Trustees.



*Welcoming newcomers to the
Detoxification Unit
Left) Steve Dunn, RN
Centre) Tom Bedford, Administrator
Right) Stuart*

Odyssey Residents Clean Up

Odyssey House residents had fun at this year's "Clean Up Australia Day" held on Sunday, 5 March. Participating for the 6th consecutive year, 25 residents volunteered their time to clean up rubbish on a stretch of the Hume Highway

Chairman's Message

Last week we had the pleasure of welcoming the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation to our facilities at Minto and Campbelltown. May I quote from a letter written by Lady Fairfax, "It was a memorable experience for all those connected with our Foundation - we commend your organisation for the work undertaken with young Australians suffering from substance abuse".

The Fairfax Foundation contributed generously to help build the new Children's and Parent's Accommodation together with the Ross Grant Appeal raising over \$1million. The houses are now occupied and we would be delighted to show you the wonderful new facilities.

Our thanks to all the generous supporters.

Allan Rogers

Chairman



Odyssey House residents do their bit on 'Clean Up Australia Day'

from Raby Road overpass to Harbord Road, Leumeah. Over 50 bags of rubbish were collected by the Odyssey crew

with the most unusual item found being a car door. Matt, a Level IV who supervised the clean up along with his peers said, "I enjoyed the opportunity to give something back to the community we live in!".

The day culminated with a well deserved meal at McDonalds, courtesy of owner, Ken Tagg.

Taking the Mt Annan Challenge

Congratulations to the Odyssey House residents who participated in the Mt Annan Challenge Walk held recently. The annual walk traversed the beautiful Mt Annan Botanical Gardens situated between Campbelltown and Camden.

A tremendous effort was put in by Darren who finished 14th overall amongst a total field of one thousand participants! "I really felt good about what I achieved. It was something for me and something for Odyssey", he said.

Each of the Odyssey House residents finished within one hour and ten minutes claiming their "Door Prize" which was

given to everyone who finished the course in two hours. Some received discount vouchers to Wonderland Amusement Park, while one Odyssey House resident received a \$100 gift voucher to a retail sports outlet.

cont...



The Odyssey House contingent getting ready for the Mt Annan Fun Walk

Recounting his experience of the walk Jason said, "I loved it! It was a great change to get out and do something enjoyable". Another challenger, Cassandra, said "It was great to participate in something like this with other people. I really look forward to doing it again."

General Manager's Message

Odyssey enters the "New Millennium" with a number of challenges in the years to come. As an organisation we feel we are up to these challenges as we plan an appropriate response to each which faces us. Our most immediate need is to be able to renovate the main facility located at Eagle Vale. A former Christian Brothers teaching seminary, the building is now 62 years old! As our services grow, the demands upon the building over the years have resulted in high maintenance costs and a less than ideal configuration of the office and living spaces. We plan to commence a fundraising campaign in July to raise the funds to undertake the renovations. The expected costs are predicted to be \$1.7 million

Over the years we have diversified our services to meet the growing list of needs identified within the alcohol -and other drug- using population. We now provide legal services, assessment and referral of residents, medium to long term residential treatment, re-entry services, transitional housing, medically supervised detoxification, educational interventions, vocational training services, services for problem gamblers in a residential and non-residential setting, counselling services in the general community, and a specialised program for parents and their dependent children.

Increasingly we are seeing residents who need interventions for not only their alcohol and other drug problems but because of mental illnesses. Our goal is to develop a more comprehensive approach to those residents who have co-morbid (alcohol/drugs and mental health) problems. We recently participated in the National Co-morbidity

Workshop held in Canberra, March 6-7. This was an extremely helpful exercise as we look to further develop our services for the future. Finally, all organisations, if they are to develop and grow, need to be introspective and honest as to their capabilities. The Odyssey House McGrath Foundation Board of Directors have undertaken to do just that. The Board members will hold a brainstorming and future planning meeting in May of this year. The purpose is to determine where Odyssey House McGrath Foundation needs to be placed as a provider of alcohol and other drugs intervention services during the next 2-5 years.

This and other challenges we look forward to with energy and enthusiasm.

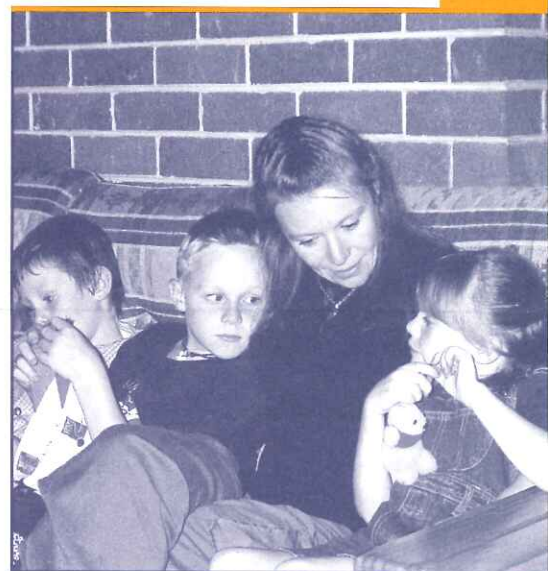
James Pitts

Community dinners - Recognising the Strength of Families

Over 200 families and loved ones were welcomed to Odyssey House for the bi-monthly Community Dinner held on March 16 2000.

The meal, prepared by the residents, is presented under a cultural theme which is representative of a segment of the residents' own culture. This gathering provides an

essential opportunity for loved ones to reunite, discuss issues, relax and spend time together. Following dinner everyone is invited to attend the weekly General Meeting which covers administrative matters, program activities and



Families reunite at recent community dinner

acknowledgment of good work. The residents' progress through the different stages of the program is also announced.

After the General Meeting, parents and loved ones are invited to participate in an information/question session with the staff. This promotes familiarity between the two groups and opens the lines of communication. Odyssey House recognises the benefits of having the families of drug misusers involved in the rehabilitation process where appropriate. This relationship building exercise proves to be a beneficial experience for all concerned.

The Riders were met at the start by ultra marathon specialist and local hero, Pat Farmer, who has had a long association with Odyssey House. They were waved off by General Manager, James Pitts, and other Odyssey House staff members and residents. Thanks goes to staff member, Lea Griffiths, who organised the event and enlisted the support of the local motorcycle club, including her husband Geoff. Support also came from a number of motorcycle distribution parts outlets within the greater Macarthur area.

Odyssey House Ride to Recovery

On 25 March over 100 motorcycle riders participated in the inaugural Odyssey House "Rally for Recovery".

The riders made their way from McDonalds Family Restaurant in Narellan, on Camden Valley Way through Wollongong and the Royal National Park where they met at Audley Weir. It was here that everyone disembarked for a well deserved sausage sizzle and luncheon.



Odyssey staff and residents relax at the National Park

YES! I would like to help Odyssey House!

Please find enclosed my donation of (please circle)

\$50 \$25 \$100 \$500 or \$ _____

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

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