



ODYSSEY HOUSE



*A Calm in
the Sea of
Addiction'*

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Newsletter

New Beginnings

Carmen is an intelligent and caring woman, who knows only too well the soul-destroying effect drugs can have on an entire family. Carmen was raised in the Campbelltown area and had a fairly stable home life during her early years, even though both her parents drank.

Carmen had a sister with cystic fibrosis and being only 14 months apart in age, they were very close. Sadly, when Carmen was 17, her sister passed away and she found it very difficult to deal with her death.

Around the same time as her sister's death, Carmen was sexually assaulted. Devastated, she hid the assault from her family and friends and tried to cope with her feelings when she discovered the assault had led to a pregnancy.

"My life from that point would never be the same again. I left home and tried to conceal my pain. I had a beautiful baby boy and attempted to put my past behind me," says Carmen.

After the birth of her first child, Carmen met and married a man when she was 19 years old and they had two children together. Their marriage lasted four years and when they separated, Carmen moved to the country



Carmen believes Odyssey House saved her life.

with all three of her children. During this time, Carmen worked in a factory fulltime, working from 6am to 3pm, whilst also trying to raise the children on her own.

"Whilst I was working at the factory, I became involved with a peer group that drank heavily and smoked marijuana. Before long, my past caught up with me and I began using alcohol and hallucinogenic drugs to feel good about myself. By the time I was 23 years old, I had suffered a nervous breakdown."

Carmen's oldest son went to live with her parents and her two other children went back to live with their father. Carmen entered Odyssey House in a last-ditch attempt to try and sort out her chaotic life.

"It amazes me that I am alive. Odyssey House gave me my life and self-esteem back. I am now able to form positive, platonic relationships with men, which I never would have thought possible."

Eighteen months after first entering Odyssey House, Carmen has now started seeing her three children on a regular basis and hopes to graduate from the program in the near future. She wants to pursue studies in the alcohol and other drug field and would like to secure a job and a place of her own.

"There is always hope, you should never give up. No matter how addicted someone may be, they can change, no matter how old or how desperate! I take each day as it comes, but thanks to Odyssey House, I now have a future to look forward to."

One-Day Only Appeal

We are launching an inaugural *One-Day Only* Appeal during the week of 22 October 2001, to help further position Odyssey House and subsequently increase awareness and raise much needed funds.

The *One-Day Only* Appeal is themed around the premise that if each person in NSW supported one resident in Odyssey House for one day by making a \$110 donation, we would be able to help many

more people with drug, gambling and alcohol problems as well as significantly reduce current crime rates.

Members of the public will be asked to support the appeal through a direct marketing campaign, bucket collections at various shopping centres and by visiting the main treatment facility at Campbelltown on Sunday 28 October 2001, 10am to 3pm, for a family Open Day.

We are currently working to secure media sponsorship

and advertising support to help promote the *One-Day Only* Appeal.

Volunteers are needed to help collect money at various shopping centres in the Macarthur area from Thursday 25 October to Sunday 28 October 2001.

If you can help, please contact Julia Morse, Marketing Officer at Odyssey House on (02) 9820 9999 or 0414 995 309.

A message from the Chairman



Allan Rogers

It seems amazing that the support Odyssey House receives from the community continues to grow day by day. The extraordinary hard work and commitment of everyone involved in the

program – including staff, Board members, residents and volunteers is being rewarded by a record number of residents being enrolled in the program.

Given 2001 is the International Year of the Volunteer and volunteers contribution to society is being recognised worldwide, it seems appropriate for me to acknowledge the many selfless volunteers who dedicate their time, energy, knowledge and commitment to the work of Odyssey House.

This includes the fifteen Odyssey House Board members whose experience covers a wide range of business and educational activities. Their commitment to Odyssey House is all the more astonishing, given their hectic schedules and already large work obligations! Their expertise and dedication to helping Odyssey House over the last financial year is greatly valued.

The commitment and unpaid time given by the volunteers who assist at the admissions centre, finance office and in other departments of Odyssey House are also to be commended. As is the time and knowledge offered by the Odyssey House graduates, whose experience at having "been there and done that" is so vital to the success of the residents involved in the earlier stages of the program.

If anyone is interested in volunteering for Odyssey House, they should contact Julia Morse, Marketing Officer at Odyssey House on (02) 9820 9999.

Our greatest challenge for the new financial year will be the refurbishment of the facility at Campbelltown. The building plans are currently with local council and \$450,000 has been raised towards the total refurbishment cost of \$1.2 million.

Thanks to the many generous "volunteer" donations we have received, I believe we are heading in the right direction for the new financial year. We are making good progress and should soon be able to finalise some long-term goals.

Please be part of our continued success – your individual support of the important work of Odyssey House really can make an enormous difference to the lives of so many people in need.

An investment in our future

A wise man, Winston Churchill once said that you make a living by what you earn, but you make a life by what you give.

The David family have certainly followed this counsel and recently made a very generous donation of \$100,000

to support the Odyssey House refurbishment program.

"To say we are grateful John and his family is an understatement. His investment in the work of Odyssey House is highly commendable. On behalf of all the courageous residents involved in the program, we thank the David family for their conviction in our work and for their passionate investment in our future," said Allan Rogers, Chairman of the Odyssey House McGrath Foundation.



Allan Rogers and James Pitts thank John David (centre) and his family for their \$100,000 donation.

HELPING US BUILD A BETTER HOUSE

Tooheys recently donated \$60,000 towards the refurbishment of the main Odyssey House facility.

Doug May, Trade Relations Manager at Tooheys handed over the cheque during a lunchtime presentation hosted by Boardmember, Maurice Green.

"We are delighted to help such a worthy cause and congratulate Odyssey House and its staff and residents on their life-saving work," said Mr May.

James Pitts thanked Tooheys for their continued commitment to helping Odyssey House and its residents.

"By donating this money, Tooheys has demonstrated to Odyssey House that we are not alone in the challenge of helping people battle their addictions. The support of Tooheys will directly contribute to Odyssey

House building a facility that will lead us into the future. Thanks to the support of Tooheys, we will maintain and improve on the life-saving work of helping people overcome their addictions in a positive, crime-

free environment," said Mr Pitts.

The association between Tooheys and Odyssey House has been strong over a five-year period, with Tooheys donating over \$150,000 to Odyssey House during this time.



Doug May, Trade Relations Manager, Tooheys (seated, far right) hands over the \$60,000 donation to Odyssey House. From back row: Allan Rogers, Chairman, Odyssey House McGrath Foundation. Bob McKinnon, representative from the Australian Hotels Association. James Pitts, General Manager, Odyssey House & Maurice Green, Board member, Odyssey House McGrath Foundation.

Honour for drug treatment pioneer

by SIMONE RICHARDS

AN Arramoon man responsible for establishing the network of Odyssey House drug treatment facilities in Australia has had a unit at the Ingleburn centre named in his honour.

A new detoxification unit in the centre was dedicated last week to Milton Luger, former executive director of Odyssey House from 1977 to 1994.

"I think it's very nice of them to do that," he said after the unveiling of the plaque.

"The detoxification unit is a very important part of the program. If people drop out... it's usually during the detox part of the program."

Mr Luger, formerly from America, has dedicated his life to youth in trouble.

He was director of rehabilitation at the New York City Department of Corrections from 1954 to 1960 and deputy director and chairman of the New York State Narcotic Addiction Control Commission from 1960 to 1971.

Mr Luger administered and managed delinquency prevention programs of New York State in the early 1970s and established residential and community-based approaches to assisting youth at risk.

From 1975 to 1977, he was administrator of the federal office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

"I had a combination of interests in both delinquents, law breakers and substance abusers," Mr Luger said.

"I was invited to start the ODSEY program here and I did it in Sydney, then in Melbourne, Auckland and Christchurch."

The Odyssey House program has helped 6500 drug addicts turn their lives around.

After graduating from the program, 75 per cent of previous residents remain drug and crime free after a five year period.

"We tried to introduce the idea of a therapeutic community, not simply a mental health clinic," Mr Luger said.

"There are many reasons why people turn to drugs and it's not simply because they are mentally ill."



Honoured for pioneering work... Milton Luger has had a unit at Odyssey House named in his honour. Photo: SIMON DEAN

It is with great sadness that we advise readers that Milton Luger, founding Executive Director of Odyssey House at Campbelltown, passed away on 6 July 2001.

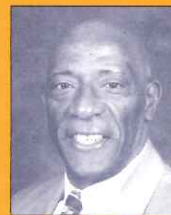
Odyssey House will remain forever in debt to Milton and his family - his wealth of knowledge and humanity taught us all a great deal.

An article on Milton and the naming of the Odyssey House Detoxification Unit, recently appeared in *The North Shore Times*.

In Memory Milton Luger

A message from the Chief Executive Officer

It is hard to believe we are already halfway through the calendar year and at the start of another fiscal cycle! Time has a way of escaping from us all, including the staff and residents at Odyssey House, who have been particularly busy.



James A. Pitts

Residents have been involved in a number of activities associated with the redevelopment of Odyssey House in the last few months. This has not only provided necessary additions to our physical plant but has also helped residents with their on-the-job training and vocational enhancement.

Building activities have included the construction of a new outdoor learning centre, which will form part of the Progressive Learning Centre, the adult education program at Odyssey House. The new structure offers additional classroom space for the ever-increasing number of people involved in the rehabilitation programs at Odyssey House.

A new fiscal year also brings new ideas and new challenges for Odyssey House. Staff recently produced a discussion paper that will serve as the framework for planned changes to the content and structure of the treatment program. The proposed changes will enhance service delivery and benefit the residents involved in rehabilitation. We are very excited by the challenges and prospects this will deliver!

New programming will also be available as a result of a \$47,000 grant from Perpetual Trustees to fund a staff member at the Detoxification Unit. Other initiatives we also hope to announce in the near future include enhanced support for families of residents in treatment and services for drug users diverted from the local court system through the Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment (MERIT) scheme.

I would also like to acknowledge my appreciation of the Harvard Club of Australia and the patron of the non-government fellowship award, William Ferris AO, for being chosen as one of the recipients to attend the Harvard Business School. The course I will attend, *Strategic Perspectives in Non-Profit Management* comes at a time of continued growth for Odyssey House, and for the alcohol and other drugs field in general.

Management skill within the alcohol and other drugs sector has been identified as one of the most important issues to be addressed. The Odyssey House program will benefit greatly through my participation in this exciting opportunity, as will the alcohol and other drugs field through my positions on several non-profit boards.

A Road to RECOVERY

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

Anushan has been undergoing the drug rehabilitation program at Odyssey House for over eighteen months and believes that with the help of the staff and other residents involved in the program, he has been able to overcome his heroin addiction.

Anushan was just two months away from completing his Higher School Certificate when he was asked to leave school, due to his drug use.

"I had been in a relationship with my girlfriend for over a year and a half. When we broke up I was devastated and started using heroin recreationally. It enabled me to forget my problems. Basically, using heroin made me feel good," says Anushan.

"I am still amazed at how quickly my drug use went from so-called recreational, to when I realised I was totally addicted."

Anushan started selling drugs in order to finance his own habit. He spent a year in a downward spiral of addiction and lies.

Growing up, Anushan was the man of the house, with his mum raising both him and his younger brother, on her own. It was only when Anushan's mother issued him with an ultimatum - seek help or move out of home, that Anushan decided to give Odyssey House a try.

"For the first time, I realised I wasn't alone. I started to believe that I could lead a better life and find some meaning to my existence."

"Odyssey House has taught me not to bottle up my feelings. If something affects me, I've learnt to speak up. I've also learnt another very important lesson -

you don't need to take drugs to have fun and enjoy yourself."

Anushan is due to leave Odyssey House in the near future and admits this makes him feel both excited and scared.

"I know I will always have the support of my friends at Odyssey. However, I also know how I live my life is entirely up to me. I can't let fear stop me from taking some positive risks," says Anushan.



Anushan has won his battle against heroin addiction.

Harvard Club Fellowship for James

The Harvard Club of Australia recently announced James Pitts had won a Non-profit Fellowship to attend the highly regarded course *Strategic Perspectives in Non-profit Management* at the Harvard Business School in America. James was one of two people selected to receive the award from a pool of 39 chief executives of non-profit community organisations.

The award was made possible through the generosity of Founding Patron, Mr William D. Ferris AO.

"Non-profit organisations will be expected to provide most of the cement in the structure of a fairer and more enjoyable Australian society. That is why

I wholeheartedly support this Harvard Club initiative," said Mr Ferris at the presentation to James by the Hon. Bob Carr, Premier of NSW.

The objectives of the Fellowship are to help bring enhanced leadership skills and performance to the Australian non-profit sector; to assist non-profit leaders to identify more innovative, efficient and sustainable approaches to achieving their organisation's mission and to lever the experience of those who are selected to benefit the Australian community generally.

"The Harvard Club is delighted to be able to support such an inspiring and innovative leader."

Odyssey Recognition

• A big thank-you to Rodney Tubbs for doing such a wonderful job as auctioneer at our annual fundraising ball. Rodney generously donated his time and expertise to help Odyssey House raise over \$120,000.

• Sincere gratitude to the Australian Hotels Association who recently donated \$20,000 from their annual ball to Odyssey House.

Habit of Living

By Larry

There's a time in your life, when you need to be heard
When you need to believe in yourself.

When the doors are all closed and the weather is dark
And there's nothing to feel.

Dust the books off all-alone on the shelf,
let it grow upon the soil of ourselves
And though it's not the same, there's always somewhere to begin.

First by doing, I proved it could be done;
now I'm sitting in the sun
And I've got to believe in myself, the second now then followed on with ease
Now there's no-one else to please, cause I'm pleasing myself
The third slipped by and then I realised, that I love this life of mine
Cause I had a habit of living.

When your world's full of hate, and you can't quite explain
How you can't really love anymore.

Find the door, find your way, cause it's never too late
To find there's something to see.

Take a small step; take a jump, then a leap
Take my past, take my love, and take me
And though it's not the same, there's always somewhere to begin.

First I proved, the second moved, the third slipped by before I knew
I love my life and know I have a habit of living.

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: _____

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

