

## ODYSSEY HOUSE



### A Calm in the Sea of Addiction'

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*Diane, Stuart and Richard have undertaken a long and difficult journey together.*

## Without Your Love...

For retired police officer Richard and his wife Diane, their son Stuart's acceptance into the Odyssey House program over 18 months ago was a huge relief.

"We were shocked and had a sense of real loss when we discovered Stuart had a drug problem," says Diane.

For Richard, his son's addiction was felt even more acutely, given he had worked with the NSW Police Service's District Drug Squad Section.

"I never thought the day would come when I would see someone from my own family in court and the mess Stuart was in," says Richard.

Stuart started smoking marijuana when he was 17 years of age and had left school. He was able to hide his drug use from his parents whilst living in a granny flat adjacent to their house. He was working shift work in the hospitality industry.

"Sometimes I suspected something wasn't quite right about Stuart's demeanor but he had our complete trust. He used to say he was just tired from all the shift work, which explained his appearance," says Richard.

After the death of his girlfriend from leukemia and continued

problems with back pain, Stuart's drug use escalated to speed, ecstasy and heroin. Despite his addiction, somehow he still managed to work fulltime.

"One day Stuart just didn't come home. He disappeared for the week. We searched his granny flat and discovered drugs. It explained a lot to us – money and tools had gone missing to pay for Stuart's addiction. We really didn't know what to do," said his mother.

Things continued to go downhill and Stuart left the family home and at one stage Richard and Diane thought there would be a knock on the door telling them their son was dead.

Stuart committed crime to help pay for his addiction and his father received a call from the police to come and pick him up. Richard and Diane organised for Stuart to enter Odyssey House after a number of failed attempts at detox centres.

Richard and Diane are immensely proud of their son's achievement of now living a drug-free life.

"Odyssey House was Stuart's lifeline. When he first entered, it was really hard for me to let go. We wanted to be there for him and the limited access was hard," says Diane.

"We knew it was up to Stuart and he has shown that he was able to do it."

Amazingly, Richard liaised with the founder of the Odyssey House McGrath Foundation, Walter McGrath, when Walter's son James overdosed some 25 years ago.

In his capacity as a police officer, Richard witnessed the heartache of the McGrath family firsthand. "I didn't think in my wildest dreams my own son would be needing the services of Odyssey House further down the track," says Richard.

Richard and Diane are now looking forward to moving to the south coast and Stuart has just started a job with South West Sydney Area Health Service, helping people who have resorted to crime as a result of their drug addiction.

"I have so much motivation and energy. Odyssey House has given me back my morals and values. I actually like myself again," says Stuart.

"Without the love and support of my parents my journey to be drug-free would not have been possible."

"I have a dream job. I love the fact that I am now helping other people and I am really looking forward to studying and traveling and doing all the things I have missed out on over the last few years."



A message from the  
Chairman

The highest of distinctions  
is service to others  
- King George VI



Allan Rogers

This is a particularly exciting year in the life of Odyssey House with its 25th silver anniversary. As such, I would like to

convey enormous gratitude on behalf of the many sons, daughters, mothers and fathers that Odyssey House has helped over many years.

This assistance would not have been possible without the hard work and determination of some amazingly dedicated people, who have contributed much of their lives to the establishment and ongoing success of Odyssey House.

These people include the Hon Peter Philips, Milton Luger and James Pitts.

The professionalism, dedication and passion that these men exhibited towards Odyssey House during the last quarter of a century is inspirational to say the least!

Organisations like Odyssey House don't just happen. The behind-the-scenes work that is carried out to ensure the continued success of Odyssey House year after year is enormous.

Odyssey House has continued to triumph in occasionally turbulent economic and political circumstances. This is a direct result of the conviction and personal investment that people like Peter, Milton and James have made in the young women and men who come through the doors of Odyssey House on a daily basis.

The future of Odyssey House is exciting. Our challenge for this 25th silver anniversary and beyond is to continue to manifest the commitment, enthusiasm and energy of Odyssey House staff in their work of helping people overcome their addictions. This, combined with the continued assistance from our major supporters, will ensure Odyssey House celebrates many more anniversaries.

Allan Rogers

Chairman

# Alone we can do so little, TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH

Helen Keller



Working at Odyssey House is all about great teamwork. To carry out the day-to-day work of the organisation and implementation of the program is no easy task!

The valued staff at Odyssey House make an enormous impact on the lives of residents

undergoing rehabilitation. They nurture souls and assist residents to turn their troubled lives around. Their dedication and energy is inspirational.

Staff that have recently joined the Odyssey House family include (from left to right):

Rachel Murphy, Clinical Coordinator.

Racquel Faram, Parent's and Children's Psychologist.

Sharon Gissane, Parent's and Children's Program Administrator.

Latha Rajan, Admissions Coordinator.

Steve Hocking, Counsellor.

## Diary Dates

### FRIDAY 21 JUNE 2002

Silver Jubilee Ball at The Regent, Sydney.  
Tickets \$250 per person.

### MONDAY 12 AUGUST 2002

Celebrity Golf Day at Moore Park. Tickets \$150 per person.

### MONDAY 26 AUGUST 2002

Real Men Cook for Odyssey luncheon.

### SUNDAY 27 OCTOBER 2002

Open Day celebration and a BODYPUMP Odyssey event at all participating gyms.

For further information on any of these activities, or to confirm your involvement please call Julia, Marketing Officer on (02) 9820 9999.

## Odyssey Recognition

- Special thank-you to the Andrew Thyne Reid Charitable Trust for your recent donations.

- Clemenger BBDO has agreed to support Odyssey House as a pro-bono advertising account recipient. Odyssey House will benefit from the expertise of staff members Danny Searle, Ben Cliffe and Sarah Jones, who have made a firm and impressive commitment to help further develop the fundraising efforts of Odyssey House via innovative advertising campaigns. Thank-you!

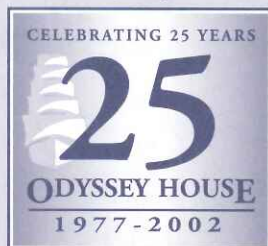
- Easter was made extra special for the residents this year thanks to the generous support of Mars, Cadbury and Woolworth's.



A special commemorative logo to celebrate the 25th silver anniversary of Odyssey House will be used throughout the year to acknowledge the enormous contribution Odyssey House has made to many Australians since its inception in Sydney in 1977.

We are asking all our supporters to join us in celebrating the past 25 years by securing the future years of Odyssey House and its residents by making a special one-off donation.

*New friends are silver  
Old friends are gold  
Always make new friends  
But don't forget the old.*



## A Road to RECOVERY

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

James entered Odyssey House in December 2000 as a referral from the NSW Drug Court.

"Looking back, I didn't have the sense of love and belonging that I needed as a child. Unfortunately, it was clear that I wasn't the most important person in my parent's life."

James admits he misbehaved at school to get the attention that he felt was missing at home.

When he was 12, James' stepfather left the family home but James had already started to have major behavioral problems.

"I had a lot of anger and started truanting from school and getting into trouble with my mates. My mother sent me to a refuge at Auburn when I was 14. The strange thing was that I actually liked it at the refuge as I got on with the other kids and it was happier than being at home."

James left school, spent a year at the refuge and worked in a variety of jobs.

However at 15, James became a ward of the state, started smoking marijuana and began to commit crime. His downward spiral escalated and by his 18th birthday he was in gaol and had a heroin addiction.

James spent two years in gaol and then lived with his older sister and her boyfriend for six months at Auburn. James was working but was still using heroin, marijuana and ecstasy. He committed a break and enter and his case was diverted to the Drug Court.

A decision was made that James would undertake the drug rehabilitation program at Odyssey House.

"Before I came to Odyssey House, I thought I'd spend two days and then leave. But as soon as I walked in the door I instantly felt a sense of belonging and warmth that I have been desperately searching for all my life."

"I couldn't believe that people were interested in me and wanted to help me - I was amazed. I felt at home."

"A lot of the other residents at Odyssey House seemed to be the same sort of people as me - they were going through the same sort of struggles and I remember thinking that if they could stay, then maybe I could too."

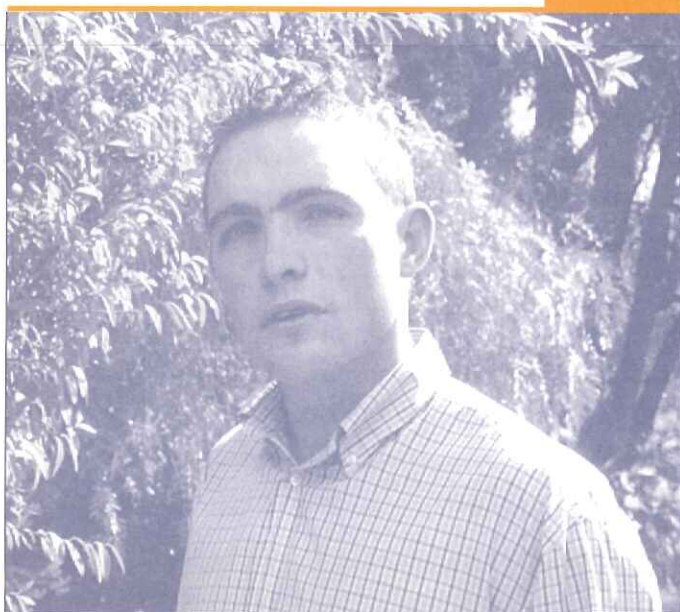
"Since I've been at Odyssey House,

I've learned that I'm not the person that my parents treated me as. I look back and believe that I missed out on the character building that I needed as a child and as a result, I acted like somebody else to survive."

James has since discovered his true self and is excited at his future. He officially graduated from the Drug Court on 9 April 2002.

"Odyssey House is the school that I attended to change my life - I facilitated the change but I feel that I couldn't have done it anywhere else."

James has remained drug-free for over 18 months and has recently completed a cooking apprenticeship at TAFE, where he came second in his class. He is currently seeking a full-time job.



*James is the first Odyssey House resident to graduate from the NSW Drug Court*

## A message from the Chief Executive Officer

We are now six months into the Odyssey House Silver Jubilee anniversary. Activities that will highlight our significant achievement of 25 years of continuous service to the community are well underway.



*James A. Pitts*

It was 25 years ago that Walter McGrath founded the Odyssey House program in Australia following the death of his son, James, to a heroin overdose.

Walter McGrath had the courage and commitment to think outside the square in order to bring the therapeutic community model of Odyssey House to Australia.

From humble beginnings the program has grown and prospered. The first Odyssey residents were housed in tents procured from the army base located at Holsworthy Barracks and slept on bunks made of rough-hewn timber. There were five dedicated individuals who made up the first staff contingent. Despite howls and protests from some people in the local community, Odyssey House found its niche.

Today, Odyssey House is a shining example of what can be accomplished through dedication, hard work, and a focus on relevant service delivery. There are now 53 full time, and 10 part time staff. Our services operate from four different sites throughout metropolitan Sydney. We provide services to over 750 persons per year, including entire families. In addition to our services for the treatment of alcohol and other drugs, we also have a progressive program for problem gamblers. However, our work is as yet unfinished!

We hope to add to our celebratory year by being able to announce the start date for the refurbishment of our main facility at Eagle Vale. We have raised \$1 million to date, all of which are private donations! Our target is \$1.8 million for the total refurbishment. We will get there.

It is our hope that in the future there will be no need for places like Odyssey House, as the problems associated with alcohol and other drug misuse and problem gambling behaviour will be eradicated. Until then, as we have for the past quarter of a century, we will endeavour to provide the best quality of service possible.

*James A. Pitts, M.A.*

*General Manager*



# Thank you TAB



**T**AB Limited will sponsor a specialist gambling counsellor at Odyssey House, Campbelltown, for the next three years. House chief executive officer James Pitts said the new counsellor would make an enormous difference in providing a direct benefit to people and their families. Pictured are (from left) House resident Wayne, House counsellor Gray Crompton, House chief executive officer James Pitts and chief executive, wagering, TAB Limited, Peter Kadar. Mr Kadar said the sponsorship recognised the issue of problem gambling and was part of the company's continual support of community benefit schemes. Odyssey House has helped thousands of people with drug, alcohol and gambling problems since its inception more than two decades ago.

*The Macarthur Advertiser - March 2002*



*James with Dr Rosie King,  
relationships expert.*

**J**ames Pitts and residents Stuart and Wayne were recently interviewed by relationships expert, Dr Rosie King for the forthcoming series on Arena television, titled "Ask Dr Rosie".

The episodes that involved Odyssey House will look at the effect drug use can have on relationships.



**YES! I would like to make a donation to celebrate the Silver Anniversary of Odyssey House**

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



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