

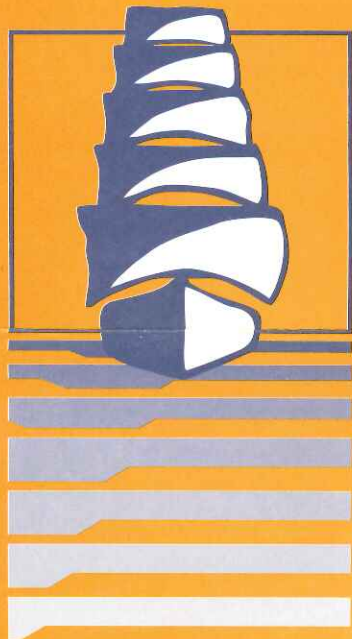


ISSUE NUMBER 3

2002

Newsletter

**ODYSSEY
HOUSE**



*A Calm in
the Sea of
Addiction'*

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A whole new world

It is thought that when we seek to discover the best in others, we somehow bring out the best in ourselves. And that is exactly what has happened for Odyssey House residents Wayne, Ian and Stan.

Having all entered Odyssey House around the same time in 2000, the men have undertaken a long, heart-wrenching and ultimately successful journey that has spanned over two years and is now complete.

Recently graduating from the drug rehabilitation program together, the men have been inspired by the ability of friendship and the support of other residents involved in the program, to replace their need for drugs and alcohol.

"I didn't know what to expect when I came to Odyssey House. I knew I had a drug problem and I was at the lowest ebb of my life - financially, physically, mentally and emotionally," says Wayne.

With a wife and three young sons, Wayne says the hardest step for him was to actually admit that he had a problem. After that, his odyssey to become drug-free has been all about a lot of hard work, a few tears and lots of love and support from friends, family and Odyssey House staff.

Stan says that he is lucky to be alive, after battling a drug addiction that has spanned some 25 years and that cost him his marriage. Whilst on drugs, Stan missed out on a large part of his two children's lives and lost all his worldly possessions.

"Since being at Odyssey House, I see my teenage son and daughter on a regular basis. Most importantly, I feel like I have them back," says Stan.

Stan's advice to other people who may have a problem with drug addiction is to not give up. Now completing a course to become a



Bringing out the best in each other (from top to bottom) Ian, Wayne and Stan have found enormous support at Odyssey House.

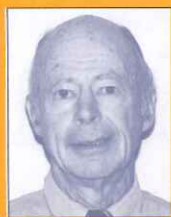
drug and alcohol counsellor himself, Stan is looking forward to helping others with problems that he can relate to.

Ian believes that the program has given him a unique insight into who he is. "It's the ability to understand myself and those around me that has not only allowed me to beat my addiction but has also helped me realise my true potential. Odyssey House has given me the foundation on which I will build my future".

"It is a big deal for us to have graduated together. Although it has been hard, we have got through it and we are looking forward to reaping the benefits for both ourselves and our children," says Ian.

You find true
joy and
happiness in
life when
you give
and go on
giving and
never count
the cost.

A message from the Chairman



Allan Rogers

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improving the services offered by Odyssey House and to seek out new opportunities.

It is for this reason, Board members get together for an annual "brainstorming" session to analyse current services provided by Odyssey House and to study what services we could be providing in the future, if given the necessary financial assistance. It is also a good opportunity for Board members to endorse changes that may act as a catalyst for sourcing further financial support of Odyssey House and its programs.

Previous brainstorming sessions have resulted in the establishment of the Parents and Children's cottages and the refurbishment campaign for the new building. I am looking forward to seeing what ideas we can come up with this year!

We anticipate financial support from both the Commonwealth and State government over the next year, which will enable us to enhance the services we offer currently.

This may include the expansion of a number of drug diversion initiatives we provide currently. We will investigate the enhancement of our dual diagnosis and co-morbidity services - an area that the original founder of the Odyssey House program in America, psychiatrist Dr Judianne Densen-Gerber, believed in.

Another area of our brainstorming will focus on the inclusion of long-term detoxification from methadone in a residential setting. Although these services are separate from those we offer currently, there is a natural synergy between these and our existing services that needs to be further explored.

Allan Rogers
Chairman

Silver Jubilee Ball creates a silver lining



Oh what a night! Long-term supporters Anne Cole, Barney McGrath and Julee-Helen Lyle at the Silver Jubilee Ball.

Odyssey House will be etching the silver lining on many more young people's dream of a drug-free existence, having recently raised approximately \$160,000 at the Odyssey House Silver Jubilee Ball.

Chairman of the Odyssey House McGrath Foundation, Allan Rogers started the fundraising by presenting a donation of \$65,000 made possible by the generosity of the Board of Directors.

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Starwood Hotels and Air New Zealand to donate one of the best international travel packages ever offered at an Australian charity event. This package alone raised over \$37,000 on the night.

Other sponsors that need a special mention include Pacific World, Qantas, Gayatri Villas in Bali and Accor Hotels.

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Sincere gratitude is extended to all involved in making the Silver Jubilee Ball for Odyssey House such a success. Our supporters make such a difference in the lives of so many and allow countless people to see beyond the dark clouds of their addiction.

Diary Dates

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Acuiti Legal Corporation
Andrew Thyne Reid Charitable Trust
Australian Youth & Health Foundation
Allan Rogers
Perpetual Trustees, Vic
Rodney & Judith O'Neil Foundation
Peter Hunt
Macquarie Bank Limited
Maurice Green
Leslie Green
D Groves
W & N Blanshard
Mark Fesq

The Cross Roads

When times are tough and your road's been rough
And life doesn't seem worth living
When friends are few, and dollars too
And the taking, outweighs the giving

When memories fade of the good times made
With those people who no longer care
Just remember my friend, when it comes to the end
That your true friends will always be there

There are those that will use you then later abuse you
When all you have left is a frown
And those who will hurt you, ignore and desert you
That you once helped when their lives were down

It's then you will find, you must leave them behind
And move on to find a new road
Where companions are few, but their motives are true
And they'll lighten not burden your load

It's then you'll discover as you help one another
That your past has been better directed
Than it was when you found that what goes comes around
But not always from where you expected.

Rusty

A message from the Chief Executive Officer

The success of an organisation is not determined by the content of its promotional brochures, but rather by the support of the organisation's "consumers",



James A. Pitts

who utilise their services. We could not be prouder of our organisation, as was demonstrated by the support Odyssey House received at the 25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee Ball held in June. We were able to raise a total of \$160,000 to assist in our quest to provide the best services possible to the many young men, women and their dependent children who need them. To all the people who contributed to the monumental success of the evening, I extend the heartfelt thanks of everyone associated with Odyssey House.

Whilst the acquisition of much needed funds to continue our mission is important, we cannot forget our most important product, our residents! It is they who have the difficult job of re-orienting their lives from past self-destructive behaviour towards the goal of a life of productivity and pride in one's self. Over the past month we had several people graduate the program. They are: Neil, Wayne, Ian, John, Steve, Stan and Dianne. Each of these young people has completed the first stage of a long and difficult journey, which signifies graduation from Odyssey House. They are now ready to continue to face the challenges of living in the community as tax paying citizens who contribute to its welfare!

Our challenges do not cease, despite our successes. We are still faced with the task of raising the final \$700,000 in order to reach the total \$1.8 million we need to renovate the main Odyssey House facility. We have raised over \$1 million during the past year and we will reach our goal! Funding for our Detoxification Unit comes up again in approximately one month's time. We need to convince the Commonwealth government our outcomes are superior (70% completion rate) to comparable programs of this type, and we are more cost effective in our service delivery. We look forward to these challenges knowing we have the backing of those who are most important to us - you, our supporters!!

James A. Pitts, M.A.

General Manager

A Road to RECOVERY

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

For Polish born 28-year-old Gosia, a fight to become free of an addiction to alcohol has been a poignant and difficult journey that she has undertaken over ten years.

Having spent most of her childhood in Sydney, Gosia left school in year 10 after she found it difficult to relate to her peers. Soon after, she moved out of home, found a job and her own place in Surry Hills and went to TAFE part-time to finish her studies. Gosia was accepted into university but decided she would travel and work around Europe for a few years.

"I started drinking after I moved out of home. I have always been introverted but when I drank, I had a lack of inhibition."

Whilst overseas Gosia secured a highly powered executive position but her drinking and by this stage, drug-taking gradually became heavier. At her worse, Gosia was sneaking alcoholic drinks in the morning and during her working day,

sometimes drinking two bottles of vodka a day, whilst still somehow managing to get the job done.

"I can't explain how I was able to still get up and go to work everyday, but I did," says Gosia.

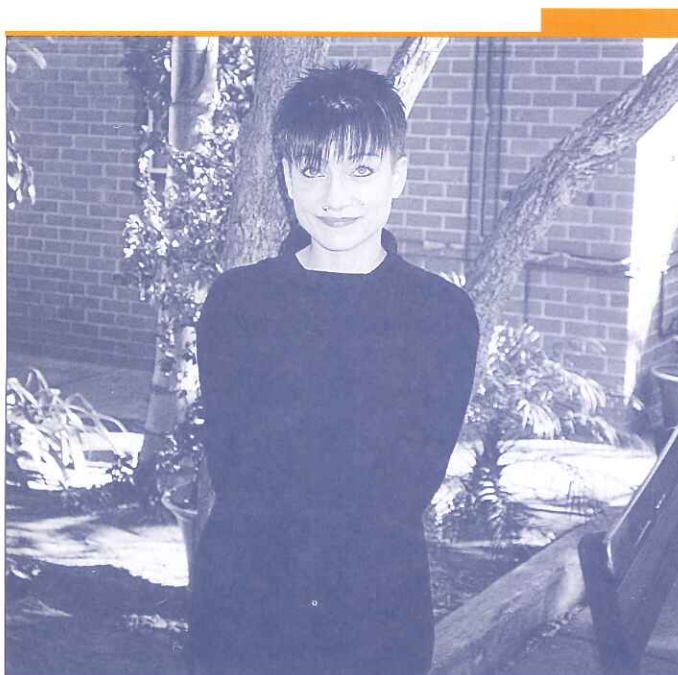
Upon returning to Australia, Gosia was unable to control her drinking and when she finally sought help from Odyssey House in September 2000, she was 40 kilos and fighting for her life.

"I could never just have one

drink - it became an incredibly sad existence," says Gosia.

After spending the last two years at Odyssey House overcoming her addiction, Gosia now has a place of her own, a job and is set to graduate from the program.

"Life is good. I have completed a full semester at University, majoring in Information Technology. I have many plans for the future and I am now able to be honest with myself and have learnt to express myself emotionally," says Gosia.



Gosia is now enjoying life drug-free.

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- W & N Blanshard
- Mark Fesq