

In The Press

Macarthur Chronicle
- 8th April 2008

Odyssey takes Pitts to summit

MELANIE GARDNER
BEST AND BRIGHTEST
James Pitts, who has worked in drug addiction for more than 30 years, was one of the brightest minds at the summit. He was joined by a number of other experts in the field, including Dr. Chris Ryan, who has worked in the field for 20 years. The summit was held in Canberra on the weekend of 2-4 April 2008. Mr Pitts said his work at Odyssey House was well received by the government for his work in drug addiction.

Campbelltown Macarthur Advertiser
- 23rd April 2008



Hope springs from tedium

THREE Campbelltown advocates were among the delegates at the 2020 Summit in Canberra on the weekend of 2-4 April. The summit was held to discuss the future of mental health care in Australia. University of Western Sydney vice-chancellor Justice Reid, Youth Off the Streets founder Chris Riley and Odyssey House executive James Pitts were among participants divided into 19 groups to talk about issues in the health, health, justice, education and the economy. "I've been in the industry for 30 years and I've seen a lot of change," Mr Pitts said. "It's important to have people like me at the summit to share our experiences and to help shape the future of mental health care."

Alcohol abuse eclipsing heroin

Awareness that Australia has a drinking problem has reached the highest levels of government, writes Bianca Nogrady. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has released a report that shows that alcohol abuse is now the leading cause of death in Australia, eclipsing heroin. The report also shows that alcohol abuse is the leading cause of hospitalisation in Australia. "This is a major public health issue," said Dr. Chris Ryan, CEO of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. "We need to do more to address this problem, particularly in terms of prevention and early intervention."

Drugs eclipsing heroin addicts

Drugs are eclipsing heroin addicts, says a report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. The report shows that the number of people who die from drug poisoning has increased significantly in recent years. "This is a worrying trend," said Dr. Chris Ryan. "We need to do more to address this problem, particularly in terms of prevention and early intervention."

Weekend Australian - 23 February 2008

The Progressive Learning Centre's Annual Report and financials are available online or by request.

Newsletter

- ### Odyssey Recognition
- Support that Odyssey House has recently received from the following donors is greatly appreciated.
- David Adams
 - Audrey Page & Associates
 - Tony Bannon
 - Martin Barge
 - Robert Barry
 - Christopher Bartlett
 - Susan Bennett
 - Bermria Pty Ltd
 - Mark Bethwaite
 - Stewart & Suzanne Boyce
 - Camilla Boyd
 - David Clarke
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 - Ian Ferrier
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 - Ross Grant
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 - Maurice Green
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 - Stewart Hindmarsh
 - James N Kirby Foundation
 - David Kirk
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 - Sally Loane
 - Andrew Lockhart
 - David Lowe
 - Macquarie Group Foundation
 - Roger Massy-Greene
 - Anthony Meagher
 - Ray Meagher
 - David & Barbara Mortimer
 - Anne Murphy
 - Next Capital
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 - RA Gale Foundation
 - Robert & Helen Rich
 - Atholl Robertson
 - Gary & Mary Smoker
 - Southern Cross Hotel
 - Sean Straney
 - The Hunt Family Foundation
 - John Tierney
 - Tim Green Commercial
 - The Walker Corporation
 - Nick Waterworth

ODYSSEY HOUSE



'A Calm in the Sea of Addiction'



James Pitts with Minister for Housing, Tanya Plibersek at the 2020 Summit

Odyssey sends one of its best and brightest to the 2020 Summit

Chief Executive Officer, James Pitts was selected to attend the Federal Government's 2020 Summit as a delegate recently. Mt Pitts participated in the "Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities and Social Inclusion" stream. The streams co-chairs were Rev. Tim Costello and Federal Housing Minister, Tanya Plibersek (pictured). Pitts said, "It was a great honour to be selected to participate given the number of people who applied. To be selected out of 8000 applicants is an honour for me personally, but also for all involved with the Odyssey House organisation!"

The Summit generated a number of ideas as to how to improve the lot of families, the communities in which they live and the inclusion of all members of society. All delegates were asked prior to their attendance to choose one idea they felt would make a difference and what were the challenge(s) in implementing it. This formed the platform for discussions within the stream on the first day and the individual ideas were coalesced and built upon to form policy and priority areas, which were presented at the plenary session on the final day by the co-chairs.

Pitts said, "the Summit was well organised considering the time prior to its commencement. The processes used in our stream promoted participation by all delegates to put forth their ideas and discuss them vigorously. This process went all the way to the last day, when we as delegates felt the facilitators failed to capture the essence of our ideas. In the end we were able to have them changed".

"In the end it was a rewarding experience I had the pleasure of participating in. I was pleased particularly in having the volumetric tax on alcohol and alcohol related violence on the final agenda. These were policies I had advocated for".

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 or single mattress (all must be brand new in accordance with Australian Health legislation).

YES! I would like to help Odyssey House assist residents 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

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.

'A Calm in the Sea of Addiction'

PO Box 459
Campbelltown NSW 2560
Telephone: (02) 9820 9999
Facsimile: (02) 9820 1796
www.odysseyhouse.org.au

A message from the Chairman



Cathy Doyle

Thank you to the attendees and donors at our recent fundraising event - the Annual Rugby Dinner held March 14 at the Shangri-La Hotel.

We raised more than we did last year and at present our total monies raised for Odyssey stands at \$165,000! This is a wonderful effort and the monies will be used to continue to provide the services, facilities and programs to those who need them.

It was such a fantastic event - for those of you who weren't able to attend there were great rugby memories shared amongst some very infamous commentators from both Australia and New Zealand, several Rugby luminaries in attendance to catch up with throughout the evening, our own Choir performing and fine wines and great food! Hope to see you all again next year - and to meet some new invitees to enjoy what is such a great evening. My personal thanks to the organising committee of the event - it was a wonderful team effort - and I really appreciate you all.

One of our next events is our Pearls of Wisdom dinner celebrating our 30th birthday, where iconic Australians will share their timeless pearls of wisdom and provide personal anecdotes that will touch and inspire - contact marketing at Odyssey House for further information.

Finally I am proud to say our own CEO - James Pitts was invited to participate in the recent 2020 submit held by the Prime Minister. It is a credit to James and great recognition of the work he does for families and the community to be able to participate and fly the Odyssey flag - well done James.

May I wish you all a happy and safe next few months...look forward to catching up in the next newsletter.

Cathy Doyle
Chairman

RUGBY DINNER A RESOUNDING SUCCESS!

The Odyssey House Rugby Dinner recorded another fantastic record for fundraising again this year. The dinner was hosted by Sally Loane, long time Odyssey supporter. The theme of this year's dinner was the Bledisloe Cup and the rivalry associated with it and its combatants over the past 77 years of its existence.

The proceedings began with Jonathan Welch, Founder of the "Choir of Hard Knocks". Jonathan was joined later by the Odyssey House choir, which is made up of residents and some staff members. They, along with Jonathan sang the rugby anthem, "World In Union". The 450 guests assembled at the ball room of the Shangri-La Hotel stood as one to give them a well deserved standing ovation which set the tone for the evening.



Sally Loane and Mark Greenfield (graduate of the program) talking about how Odyssey has helped

The evening's program was enhanced by the presence of two of rugby's premier commentators David Fordham of Australia and Keith Quinn of New Zealand. Their biased perspectives on the development of the rivalry between the two countries vacillated between informed entertainment and fabulous frivolity which left many

laughing until the wee hours of the morning. Their performance highlighted the intense but respectful rivalry which exists between the two nations.

We wish to thank all in attendance on the evening who contributed to the phenomenal fundraising total of \$165,000 which was pledged on the night! We Thank You!

Odysseys' Focus - "Local Eyes"



Debi Ingram with her finalist photo, Local Eyes exhibition



Colleen with her finalist Gum Tree photo, Local Eyes exhibition

Sydney's United Way sponsored an innovative project recently titled "Local Eyes". It was a photographic project in which charities supported by United Way nominated members of their organisations to undergo photographic training. The objective was to help the community see itself through a different lens.

Four people from Odyssey House participated in the project. They were: Debi Ingram and Diane Jackson, staff members; and Colleen and Aaron, residents of the program. They all had their photographs selected to be exhibited at the launch of the exhibition at Customs House, Circular Quay on 26th March.

Debi Ingram and Colleen had their photos selected as finalists, which will go on a tour of the Board rooms of United Way's corporate sponsors. Say's Debi, who's photograph "Alarm Clock" was on display, "Taking the photo was more than just looking at something, it made me think about who I am in life".

A Road to RECOVERY

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

Andrew was born in the western suburb town of Bankstown. He was the youngest of 4 siblings, 2 sisters and a brother. Most of Andrew's upbringing was unremarkable. He did, however, miss his father who was a long distance truck driver. As a result and due to the differences of ages between he and his siblings, Andrew didn't have much structure in his life as his mother worked as well. He didn't do well, particularly at school, as he didn't feel he fitted in. To exacerbate matters his father died suddenly of a heart attack when Andrew was 13. This event was the prelude for a series of misbehaviours on Andrew's part in years to come.

Andrew was expelled from school at age 14 for fighting. He was mandated to remain at school but left as soon as the court order lapsed. He had begun smoking cannabis and taking LSD trips by this time. He was working as a concreter with his brother-in-law earning good money. Andrew had a severe case of acne which contributed to his low self esteem. In order to get friends he started selling drugs. His drug use increased to include speed and he started to frequent Kings Cross where he would party as he was young, working, selling drugs and living at home. Andrew tried heroin eventually at age 18 and he says, "That was it"! His life became a blurred cocktail of cannabis, alcohol and heroin. Andrew tried to stop his drug use by entering Odyssey House in 1998. He stayed 2 days and left.

Andrew returned to his old lifestyle of working and using drugs. He stole to supplement his income, even though he was working. On one occasion he stole a thousand dollars from a close family friend who was to use the money to pay his



Andrew is working on the Myer-Briggs assessment as part of his vocational guidance at Odyssey

mortgage. The friend, upon discovering Andrew's deceit, took to him with a baseball bat and did the same to Andrew's Ford Falcon. At this stage Andrew was earning \$1,300 a week from his job and all the money was spent on drugs before the weekend was over. Andrew called Odyssey and was inducted in April, 2007.

When Andrew entered the program he was angry and guilt ridden due to his drug use and how it had impacted on he and his family. The first stage of the program was difficult but he adjusted. Upon reaching Level 2 Andrew says, "I started to get it". He says he started to respect himself and others within the program. He tried to assist as

many people as possible by being honest with them even though at times they didn't like what he had to say. He felt proud of his achievements of being drug free, and happy within himself. Andrew says, "Odyssey helped me to change my life and the way I viewed myself. I believe now I can live a drug and crime free life. I have my family's respect. I feel good and have even contacted the person I stole the thousand dollars from".

Andrew is living in the community, working and hopes to own a concreting business after he graduates.

Diary Dates

For further information on any of these events, please contact marketing on (02) 9820 9999 or email marketing@odysseyhouse.com.au

Milton Luger One Day Forum - **June 24**

Real Men Cook - **July 28**

Pearls of Wisdom Gala Dinner - **September 19**

Australian Fund Managers Awards - **October 22**

A message from the Chief Executive Officer



James A. Pitts

The ensuing months have seen us reach 3 milestones. They are the approval of our Application for Development at historic Robin Hood Farm; the resounding success of our annual Rugby Dinner; and my selection to attend the Federal Government's "2020" Summit in Canberra.

The approval of the Development Application for Robin Hood Farm, or the Assessment and Referral Centre, as it is known currently, is timely. It will enable us to make much needed refurbishments to the site, which is the first port of call for residents new to the program. The planned upgrade will enhance the amenity of the dormitory and dining areas immensely.

Our annual Rugby Dinner raised over \$165,000 in pledges and donations on the night. The dinner featured rugby commentators David Fordham and Keith Quinn of New Zealand who commented on Bledisloe Cup highlights. The dinner, a mainstay on our fund raising calendar, registered the largest fundraising total to date in the six years it has been held.

I was deeply honoured to be chosen to attend the 2020 Summit as a delegate in the "Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities and Social Inclusion" stream. My participation and selection are indicative of the status enjoyed by the Odyssey House organisation in the alcohol and other drugs field and the general community as well. We applaud our achievements for a job well done and look forward to the challenges ahead.

James A. Pitts
Chief Executive Officer