

**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 **\$100** **\$500** or
\$ _____

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

Visa **Mastercard** **Amex** **Diners Club**

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Title: (Dr/ Mr/ Mrs/ Ms/ Miss): _____

Signature: _____

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Address: _____

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**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.com.au
Phone: (02) 9820 9999
Fax: (02) 9820 1796

**ODYSSEY
HOUSE**



Please return this coupon and your donation to:
**Odyssey House McGrath Foundation,
PO Box 459, Campbelltown, NSW, 2560.**

**ODYSSEY
Recognition**

Support that Odyssey House has recently received from the following donors is greatly appreciated.

- AMP - GIFT MATCH
- BELL POTTER
- CAMPBELLTOWN CATHOLIC CLUB
- CHEERS BAR & GRILL
- S CHISHOLM
- DEUTSCHE BANK
- C GRAY
- INTERRISK AUSTRALIA
- A LOVE
- G PRATT
- G WILSON

The Golden Calf

Comedian Vince Sorrenti again captivated guests as Master of Ceremonies at the fourteenth annual Australian Fund Manager Awards, held on 18 October.

The Australian Fund Manager Awards acknowledge the outstanding performers and achievements in the fund management industry over the past year. Instead of naming a Hall of Fame winner, this year's event instead paid tribute to the late Robert Maple-Brown,

who recently passed away. Mr Maple-Brown was also a generous supporter of Odyssey House for many years and made an enormous contribution to the fund management industry.

We congratulate the award winners and formally thank the Australian Fund Manager Awards Committee for their ongoing support of Odyssey House and all the sponsors and fund managers who support these awards.

Odyssey House is dedicated to giving people something addictions like drugs, alcohol & gambling never can: a future.

Please donate online
www.odysseyhouse.com.au



Celebrities Cook up a Storm for Odyssey

Real Men Cook for Odyssey celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2012, as one of the most anticipated events on the Odyssey House calendar. The event continues to grow stronger each year and 2012 was no exception with a sell-out event at bel mondo restaurant at The Rocks and male celebrities lining up for the prestigious role of 'celebrity chefs' for the day.

This year's celebrity chefs all showed tremendous support to help raise money for Odyssey House, demonstrating their culinary and serving expertise to cook up a storm for their guests. The group this year included: media personalities Luke Jacobz, Cameron Daddo, Chris Gray and Justin Melvey; celebrity chefs Darren Simpson and Ed Halmagyi; comedians Mikey Robins and Vince Sorrenti; Hahn master beer brewer Chuck Hahn; wine expert Huon Hooke; and Bondi Rescue life guard Andrew Reid. Sunrise host Melissa Doyle did a tremendous job as MC for the day.

The highlight of the luncheon is the personal story from one of our recent graduates. This year Steve shared with guests his touching story of recovery and what he has accomplished on his road to recovery in the Odyssey House Program.

We would like to give a special thanks to everyone who supported Real Men Cook for Odyssey and helped us raise more than \$30,000. Special thanks goes to our principal sponsor Chris Gray, founder and CEO of Empire, as the event would not be possible without his continued generosity.



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December 2012



'A Calm in the Sea of Addiction'

odyssey NEWS



*It's your turn to be Santa
What will you GIVE this year?*

Christmas Appeal

**ODYSSEY
HOUSE**



Odyssey House - 35 years of saving lives

Odyssey House opened its doors on 28 October to more than 450 visitors including past and present staff, graduates, friends, family and supporters for Celebrate Recovery Day and our anniversary.

Celebrate Recovery Day is held annually to recognise the achievements of Odyssey House clients, educate the public about the organisation's work, and thank staff and supporters. This year was a very special occasion as it is marked Odyssey House's 35th anniversary, recognising the organisation's continued work helping more than 35,000 people to overcome drug and alcohol problems since 1977.

Celebrate Recovery Day was held on a gorgeous spring day with numerous stalls featuring woodwork, art and craft created by Odyssey House residents as part of their therapy, as well as multi-cultural displays, face painting and food stalls.

Guest speaker Bryan Doyle MP, Member for Campbelltown and former Chief Inspector of Police, attended the day for several hours to chat with staff and residents and spoke eloquently of his support and admiration for Odyssey House. He said he was deeply impressed by the care and concern shown, the obvious support from families and loved ones, and the commitment of those on their journey to overcome drug problems. He also congratulated Odyssey House for the major contribution the organisation has made to the community over the last 35 years.

A highlight of Celebrate Recovery Day was the annual graduation ceremony, where

clients who have recently completed the Odyssey House residential rehabilitation program are recognised by their peers, families and friends, and often by past Odyssey House clients.

There weren't many dry eyes in the audience as graduates spoke of their journey to overcome dependence and rebuild their lives, and CEO James Pitts commended them on the courage and commitment they have shown during their time at Odyssey. Of particular note were four young mothers from the Odyssey House Parents' & Children's Program, who were joined on stage by their children, and a man whose father had graduated from Odyssey House last year, inspiring his son to enter rehab himself. He proudly announced to guests that the cycle of alcohol dependence in his family had finally been broken after four generations!

Mr Pitts said it was important to note that success is not dependent on completing the Odyssey House program, but rather

on the benefits gained through treatment.

"While we give official recognition on the Celebrate Recovery Day to clients who graduate the program - usually after many months or up to a year or more of in-house rehab - we also commend clients who have engaged in rehabilitation for even a few months," Mr Pitts said.

"Given the challenges, we're proud of the fact two-thirds of a sample of Odyssey House residents were drug-free three years after completing treatment, according to the Australian Treatment Outcome Study conducted by the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre."

Another uplifting aspect of the day was the presentation of staff achievement awards, which included recognition for years of service: four staff for five years of service, two staff for ten years, and stalwart Melissa Cranfield, head of the visual arts department, who has been with Odyssey House for 20 years!



Graduates of 2012



Goulburn to Camden Charity Ride

Odyssey House was again a grateful beneficiary of the pedal-power of keen corporate charity riders in the Paradise Investment Management Goulburn to Sydney Corporate Charity Ride 2012, held on 15-16 September. Time trials on Day 1 were followed by the event the riders had been training months for and where all their hard work would pay off (quite literally): the 150km ride from Goulburn to Camden on Day 2.

Thick fog hindered visibility as the riders departed Goulburn but the riders powered through to the first rest

stop at Mittagong. The sun was definitely shining when the riders raced across the finish line in Camden, where the crowds were cheering them on to the end.

All money raised was donated to Odyssey House, Youth Solutions, Inspire Foundation and Goulburn's St John of God Palliative Care and Oncology Support Unit.

We are all very grateful to David Paradise, Simon Poidevin, Geoff Wilson, and Will Dangar and to all the riders who took part in raising \$85,000 for Odyssey House.



A message from the Chairman



Doug Snedden

This is our final newsletter for 2012.

On behalf of my fellow Board members I would like to thank the staff, volunteers and all the other people who support us financially, through advocacy or in kind.

I would also like to recognise the people who have participated in our programs for their determination, personal achievement and the support they provide for each other.

Christmas and the holiday period is a challenging time for Odyssey House and for people with dependence on alcohol and other drugs. Their is inevitably a greater challenge in continuing with an abstinence program and, regrettably there is a trend in our society of increased drug and alcohol abuse during the festive season.

We recently celebrated our 35th year of operation. While the model of care is continually evolving the essential framework of a therapeutic community brought to Australia by Walter McGrath and managed under James's leadership for the past 28 years has stood the test of time and held nearly 40,000 people in some way.

The graduation ceremony was particularly significant with half the people also participating in the parents and children's program and another the second generation to graduate the program.

The state member of parliament for Campbelltown Bryan Doyle, former Chief Inspector of Police, was our guest and spoke about the value Odyssey provides to the community and was clearly impressed with the program and those graduating.

We have received support from successful fundraising events recently, the Paradise Investment Management Goulburn to Sydney Corporate Charity Ride, Real Men Cook for Odyssey and the Australian Fund Managers Awards. I would like to thank those who organised the events and gave so generously.

In closing I would like to wish everybody a safe, relaxing and joyous Christmas and a prosperous 2013.

Doug Snedden
Chairman



“ Thank you Odyssey for giving me back my life and giving me the opportunity to be the best mum I can be. ”

Road to Recovery

“I moved to Australia from Poland when I was 13 with Mum, Dad and my younger sister. It was a new start but our new way of life held many challenges for me.

“As a child I always had low self-esteem issues; I felt I was never good enough to be someone's friend. Making friends at school was difficult and often I would retreat to the library so as not to be noticed.

“Life took a turn for the worse when I turned 18. I would fight with my parents and felt they never understood me; I eventually ran away from home and started hanging around with a bad crowd.

“I began smoking pot, drinking and taking ecstasy on the weekends. I was eventually kicked out of year 12 for poor attendance; I didn't care I had more interesting things to do.

“Soon I realised that living with friends wasn't working out well for me, and so I moved back home. Life was back on track for a short while and I committed to finishing my HSC at TAFE.

“I was 21 when I met Daniel and two years later I gave birth to my wonderful daughter Amber. Not long after she was born I became obsessed with losing the baby weight I had gained and began to abuse prescription medication.

“Daniel and I parted ways when I was 26, and again I moved back home with Amber. I cleaned myself up and got a job in a customer service role.

“Unfortunately the stability didn't last. I met Craig, who introduced me to speed. I

struggled to resist, but it was something new and interesting and I soon found myself a regular user.

“At 29 I got my own place, started a new job in a health pharmaceutical company and was a serious gym junkie, but then somewhere along the line I discovered ice and met Ken.

“We both had our issues, Ken was a heroin addict and I kept using ice. Soon enough I had no money, I lost my job and was about to be evicted when Ken invited me to move to Newcastle with him and his mother.

“For the first eight months I had no interest in heroin, then sitting by myself one day I decided to give it a go. By the time I was 30 I was a full blown ice and heroin addict.

“In 2009 I fell pregnant with Jack. I was determined not to use during my pregnancy and went on a maintenance program.

“I suffered from post natal depression after Jack's birth and when he was six-months old I went back to my old friends - ice and heroin - to solve all my issues.

“I spent a lot of my time playing the pokies. In Christmas 2009 while I was playing pokies strangers broke into my car to rescue Jack who I had left locked in the car.

“The police and DOCS were called, and I promised to get help. I completed a seven-day detox program and was back to using as normal a week later.

“My behaviour was erratic, Ken and I had split and I neglected my parenting duties. Ken's mum eventually kicked me out and threatened to take my kids.

“I had hit rock bottom; I was shoeless; I

was homeless; I had to get help.

“I went back to my parents, did a home detox and then entered Odyssey House. The children went to stay with Ken's mum in Newcastle while I was in treatment.

“Two and a half months into treatment, something in my gut told me I had to get my kids. I walked out of the program on the Saturday and made my way to Newcastle to find my children neglected and watching inappropriate television. By the early hours of Sunday morning I was back with my parents, and on Monday morning I was fortunate that Odyssey House allowed me to re-enter the program, this time with my children in the Parents' and Children's Program.

“My Odyssey journey was very challenging. Not only did I have to focus on recovery and being a parent all over again, but I was also faced with a custody battle with Ken.

“Eventually due to Ken's drug use I was awarded sole custody, and after 20 months in Odyssey House I finally graduated.

“I am so fortunate to have had the continued support of my family, regardless of what I had put them through. I realise now that parenting is my therapy and each day I strive to be the best parent I can be.

“I am back at TAFE undertaking my Certificate III in Community Services. I am so passionate about my recovery that it is important that I am able to give back and support others.

“Thank you Odyssey for giving me back my life and giving me the opportunity to be the best mum I can be.”

*Names have been changed for privacy.

Teenagers and the Silly Season

Kids who drink are more likely to be victims of violent crime, to be involved in alcohol-related traffic accidents, and to have serious school-related problems, according to the US National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

One of the most powerful forces attracting young people to alcohol is peer pressure. They may feel embarrassed or ashamed to be left out of a new, dangerous activity, and may also drink alcohol because they believe it will improve the way they feel, such as being more relaxed and sociable. Usually young people drink with others - at parties or in a group at a pub or someone's house. Although alcohol is a depressant, people seeking to escape from their problems sometimes turn to alcohol in the mistaken belief that it will make them happier.

The teenage years are a time for learning how to accept responsibility and to make sensible judgements. Many teenagers find it hard to refuse alcohol, and if they begin drinking, they lack the experience to understand when alcohol clouds their judgement.

The changes alcohol triggers arise from chemical reactions inside the body. Alcohol passes into the bloodstream through the lining of the small intestine and then to other parts of the body, especially the brain. Alcohol changes the way the brain operates, particularly the parts that control concentration, making judgements and body movements.

The brain changes during adolescence and alcohol can seriously harm its growth and development. The frontal lobe (one of the largest regions of the brain) and many nerve pathways and connections continue to develop until the age of 16. The brain itself does not mature until age 25. Damage from alcohol in a person's early years can last a long time and the brain may never recover. Even moderate drinking affects learning and memory far more in young people than in adults.



People become very drunk when alcohol in their blood increases before the body can deal with the alcohol already there, causing them to become drunk over a very short time and risk injuring themselves or others with this binge drinking behaviour.

Warning Signs

Alcoholism takes time to develop, but a number of signs may warn of a drinking problem that could develop into alcohol dependence, or alcoholism. A combination of these signs - or if any of them escalates suddenly - might be a clue to a real problem:

- Mood changes: flare-ups of temper and irritability
- School problems: low marks, poor attendance or getting into trouble
- Rebellious against family rules
- Changing friends and not introducing new friends to the family
- A 'nothing matters' attitude: sloppy appearance, a lack of involvement in former interests and low energy
- Physical or mental problems: memory lapses, poor concentration, bloodshot eyes, lack of coordination or slurred speech

Teaching teenagers to say "No"

Teach teenagers a variety of approaches to deal with offers of alcohol:

- Encourage them to ask questions. If a drink of any kind is offered, they should ask, "What is it?" and "Where did you get it?"
- Teach them to say "no, thanks" when the drink offered is an alcoholic one
- Remind them to leave any uncomfortable situation. Make sure they have money for transportation or a phone number where you or another responsible adult can be reached
- Teach teenagers never to accept a ride from someone who has been drinking; encourage your teenager to be honest and call you when they need help.

Someone who has a problem with alcohol may feel very lonely. Beyond seeking help from family members, many individuals and groups can offer help and advice. For your nearest support service visit www.adin.com.au.

A message from the Chief Executive Officer



James A. Pitts

Having celebrated our 35th anniversary and just returned from presenting at the World Federation of Therapeutic Communities conference, I have been reflecting on what's changed since Odyssey House founded in Australia in 1977 by Sydney businessman Walter McGrath, whose son had died of a heroin overdose.

From humble beginnings (with five staff and tent accommodation), Odyssey House has prospered to become one of Australia's largest and most successful rehabilitation programs. Our services have expanded to meet changing client needs, treatment developments, social trends and drugs of concern. For instance, clients now report first using drugs much younger (12/13 years rather than 18/19), alcohol has surpassed heroin in admissions, and 44 per cent of clients have a co-existing mental illness, up from 10 per cent just ten years ago.

Sadly, the underlying reasons people resort to drug misuse have not changed since 1977, including: low self-esteem; serious family/relationship issues; sexual abuse (around 60% of female clients and 30% of males); domestic violence and other trauma; parental drug misuse; and health problems.

Overcoming drug dependence - and not relapsing - remains a very difficult undertaking that relies on dealing with your often deep-seated problems, giving up long-standing entrenched habits, learning new life skills and coping strategies, becoming more resilient, developing new social networks to move away from bad influences, and being vigilant to relapse triggers for the rest of your life. We're proud to have assisted more than 35,000 people in the past 35 years.

Given the reasons people turn to drugs are age-old, it's likely our services will always be necessary, particularly with governments reducing spending on community services. At this time of goodwill and giving, I thank you for your support on behalf of the board of directors, the staff and, most importantly, the men and women undergoing rehabilitation! When you're writing your list of Christmas gift recipients, please consider including Odyssey House to help us help others change their lives and start afresh in 2013.

James A Pitts, MA
Chief Executive Officer

