

ODYSSEY HOUSE  
Community Involvement Center  
542 Springfield Avenue  
Newark, New Jersey

THE NEWARK STOREFRONT

FINAL REPORT - 1970

I. Objectives of the Community Involvement Center

The Community Involvement Center, an integral part of Odyssey House, has been set up as an outreach program in the community to make known the agency's programs and services to people, primarily those to whom we could serve - street addicts, frightened parents and all people concerned with the spreading and overwhelming problem of drug addiction.

The goals of the storefront operations in New Jersey have been manifold and generally well implemented. Following are their basic objectives: -

- A. To motivate street addicts to seek help and to be amenable to treatment;
- B. To disseminate information on drug addiction and substance abuse and the techniques of prevention to the community;
- C. To coordinate with other agencies engaged in similar programs and to develop a referral system; and
- D. To organize community awareness groups.

10400

## II. Activities and Accomplishments

A. The initial process in motivating street addicts to seek help and enter into a treatment program is to develop contacts with drug users and orient them toward the concepts of the Odyssey House program. A viable referral system was developed with the Courts, probation officers, social agencies and other local groups.

Once motivation is shown, the raw addict is sent to the induction center of our treatment facility. Motivation is developed through confrontation of his street behavior and his manipulateness. Likewise, his prompt reporting to the storefront and his willingness to help clean the storefront are manifestations of his developing motivation.

The number of raw addicts who come to the storefront has greatly increased: From the average of 10 who came in weekly for the first three Quarters, the number has tripled in the last Quarter. In fact, 90% of the residents (patients) of the New Jersey treatment house is supplied by the storefront.

B. Aside from motivating raw addicts to seek treatment, the Community Involvement Center serves in the area of prevention and community education. People and local organizations in the community who are concerned with the

problem of drug addiction come to the storefront to obtain information on how they can help solve or minimize its spread.

At the start of the storefront operations people from the neighborhood were very skeptical about the program and hardly any non-users visited the facility. However, the number of such visitors has increased during the last six months. These are the people who want to get involved in combatting the modern epidemic of drug addiction and substance abuse.

An "everything package" is given to every visitor who comes to the storefront. This package contains information about the Odyssey House program and other literature on drug addiction and substance abuse in general. The number of visitors to the storefront has increased five times over the past six months.

Aside from the above services the storefront conducts encounter and "rap" sessions with people, especially teenagers, to develop better communication and healthy attitudes of policing each other against the use of drugs. These group sessions are held every day.

C. Odyssey House believes in a coordinated approach to the burgeoning problem of drug abuse. The storefront operation

have established contacts with the various agencies engaged in similar programs to develop avenues of better-working relationships and good referral systems. Through the Mayor's Office in Newark, which is organizing a narcotics coordinating council, these various agencies have been meeting together and discussing common problems and exploring possibilities of effectively working together. Delegate members from each agency will comprise the coordinating council.

D. A continuing program on the prevention of drug addiction is imperative. Through the storefront operations Odyssey House organized concerned citizens against drug abuse. Among the teenagers who come regularly to the storefront to attend group sessions, a Junior Volunteers group was organized. The primary goal of this group is to develop an awareness among themselves, each member to police another and finally to involve other teenagers in its preventive programs. Another group which was organized is the Senior Volunteers group composed of the older people from the community. They received a deeper understanding of the drug problem and how they could help minimize it. The group serves also to provide supportive services to those who are undergoing treatment in the program. Finally, the

group envisions the involvement of the total community in helping to fight the war against drug addiction and substance abuse.

### III. Recommendation

There is a need to follow up and develop the newly-formed volunteer groups. The storefront operations are rapidly expanding: Supplying 90% of the residents in the treatment facility, volunteers can work in various capacities to strengthen the program.

The Community Involvement Center should be a continuing program, part of which should be in making the community eventually responsible for its operations. It should continue to be funded until the community is able to take over.

Meaningful academic research should also be undertaken sometime in the future to determine the effectiveness of storefronts, for the purposes for which they are established, and to find out new methods and techniques of operation.

Prepared by:

Rene D. Casalang  
Assistant Director