

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 112

BY REPRESENTATIVE KNOX

A RESOLUTION

To commend Odyssey House Louisiana for its mission, growth, and impact over fifty years of treating individuals with chronic addictions.

WHEREAS, Odyssey House Louisiana (OHL) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that was established on February 20, 1973, in New Orleans by a small group of committed individuals, including its founder and first executive director, Alice "Maggie" Pike; the organization traces its roots to the Odyssey House therapeutic community founded in New York in 1967 by Dr. Judianne Densen-Gerber; and

WHEREAS, OHL is primarily committed to serving Louisianians who cannot afford their own medical treatment, especially those who are most vulnerable and at risk, and has grown from a small residential treatment program into a robust network that provides services across New Orleans and offers programs in cities throughout south Louisiana, including Lake Charles and Morgan City; and

WHEREAS, OHL is headquartered in its original home in the Tremé/Lafitte neighborhood; it is a historic facility that was erected in 1866, at the request of Thomy Lafon, to be run by the Sisters of the Holy Family as an orphanage for children displaced by the Civil War; after Mr. Lafon's death in 1893, his bequests funded an expansion to the facility and services provided; and

WHEREAS, after the Sisters of the Holy Family relocated in 1973, the building was purchased through community donations and renovated into Odyssey House Louisiana; the facility offers a broad range of services including medically monitored detoxing, short- or long-term residential treatment, treatment for pregnant women and women with dependent children, and sober living; these services are provided in combination with case management, housing, and mental health and primary medical care; and

WHEREAS, OHL has been recognized for its dynamic treatment model, which integrates primary and behavioral health care with an emphasis on addiction by way of its federally qualified health centers, and treatment facilities across the country have started to replicate this model as a result of its efficacy; and

WHEREAS, the OHL Prevention Department, with the support of grant funding, has saved thousands of lives through naloxone distribution and training, infectious disease testing, and fentanyl test strip distribution; it has also developed radio, podcast, and social media content that addresses substance-use-specific issues facing Louisiana's youth; and

WHEREAS, OHL opened Louisiana's first sobering center, the Odyssey House Louisiana Sobering Center, in 2019; the development was constructed, in partnership with the City of New Orleans, to provide individuals with a safe place to sober up and convenient access to further treatment, while also reducing the burden they might place on hospitals and the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, after Hurricane Katrina, OHL helped to rebuild health service delivery systems in New Orleans, and it remained operational throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that individuals seeking treatment could have access to services; the organization continues to expand its capacity to meet the growing need for treatment; and

WHEREAS, Odyssey House Louisiana is most deserving of the highest recognition for its unfaltering dedication to providing addiction treatment services to at-risk Louisianians.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Odyssey House Louisiana for its mission, growth, and impact over fifty years of treating individuals with chronic addictions and does hereby extend sincerest wishes that it continue to receive the support it needs to carry out its laudable mission of service.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES