BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of "We Mainline Dreams: The Odyssey House Story"


Ever so rarely does one find a book so unique that it should appeal to all disciplines of our Academy. It should also grip the attention of the general public, ranging from the adolescent to the sociologically minded adult, with satisfaction. This is a dynamically personal book on many levels—psychological, medical, political, and social. The author, Dr. Judianne Densen-Gerber, J.D., M.D. (a Fellow and proposed Dame of our Academy), projects her sociological philosophy into a workable program. We Mainline Dreams: The Odyssey House Story relates the story of Odyssey House, a drug rehabilitation program which began in 1967 with 17 addicts and $3.82 and has progressed to its present growth of 33 facilities in six states.

The format of the book consists of narrative chapters by Dr. Densen-Gerber, interspersed with candid autobiographical chapters by ex-addicts and professionals. Odyssey House policy statements, schedules, and reports, as well as newspaper clippings, add to the overall understanding of Odyssey's program, even though I at times found them to be detrimental to the main consistent tempo of the psychological phenomenon of describing human interactions.

Autobiographical chapters include one by their medical director of services, Dr. Charles C. Rohr, and one by their organizational director, James P. Murphy, both members of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. Both have been active in presenting papers and material at our annual meetings over the past several years, which added even more interest to the overall enjoyment of reviewing this book.

The material describing drug usage and addiction in children was most poignant and should be used as a constant reminder of the cost and results of the emotional and social deprivation of the ghetto.

Early in the book one is aware that the basic strength and adhesiveness of Odyssey is Dr. Densen-Gerber and her philosophy of life manifesting firm convictions. These convictions at times are in areas of marked controversial subject matter; that is, methadone main-

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In conclusion, I recommend that they "paperback" this book for more widespread distribution, for it has something to offer the general public in the pertinency of the topic and the clarity, insight, and realistic options given to it.