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Creating opportunities for people to live, work, and thrive on the Lower Cape

Canal House: A Foundation for Recovery and Renewal

For Cape Cod native Matt Reed, the journey to sobriety wasn't just about quitting substances, it was about rebuilding trust, stability, and a sense of self. Raised between Dennis and Yarmouth, he spent most of his early life on the Cape, finishing high school in Dartmouth. After graduation, he pursued music while working in retail, eventually spending a decade as a traveling visual merchandiser for Ocean State Job Lot.



Missing the Cape, Matt moved back. But addiction slowly took hold. By his mid-20s, he lost his job due to substance use and began a long struggle with unstable housing and financial insecurity. “I was getting into relationships just for housing,” he shared. “I was technically homeless. I always had a place to crash, but never a place of my own.”

From 2010 to 2020, he worked in the restaurant industry, often in management roles. Despite professional success, alcoholism derailed his progress. In 2021, he began seeking recovery in earnest. After short stays in Falmouth at Gosnold and Emerson House, he found Canal House in Orleans, the **only** sober-living home on the Lower and Outer Cape, and everything began to change.

“Canal House was the only place with a bed near my family in Harwich,” he said. “It was like everything lined up perfectly. I started going to AA, got a job right away, and things just started falling into place.”



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At Canal House, he found more than shelter. He found structure, accountability, and a community that believed in him.

“I used to hide from landlords when I couldn’t pay rent,” Matt admitted. “But here, I learned to face problems head-on. Cindi Maule, CDP’s Chief Property Management Officer, worked with me on a payment plan, and AJ from Duffy Health Center helped me build a budget. I’ve built trust—not just with Canal House, but with creditors. I finally have a mailing address so even the RMV can find me. Maureen from Homeless Prevention Council helped me find financial resources and encouraged me to enter its REACH program to work on goal setting.”

The supportive environment extends beyond finances. Weekly house meetings foster open dialogue and mutual support. “We go around the room like it’s a recovery meeting, share our week, give advice, or just listen. It keeps us from isolating.” Matt appreciates the guidance and support offered by the house manager, Daryl Chase, a former resident of Canal House, describing him as a “pillar of sobriety for us. He’s cool-headed, understands what we’re going through, and we trust him.”

Though Canal House has a two-year limit, the CDP has allowed Matt to stay while he works to secure permanent housing, which is especially challenging at this end of the Cape. Canal House “gave me a base—a foundation for everything else. A job, an address, a place to receive mail. It gave me the space to rebuild my family relationships. It gave me my life back.”

Matt’s story is a powerful reminder that recovery is possible with the right support—and that Canal House is more than a program. It’s a place where second chances become lasting change.