



community development partnership

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

Two Entrepreneurs Under 25 Who've Learned on the Job

"They saw a hard-working young man, determined to grow the company, even though I could not always see that myself."

Sam Bennison
Owner, JoMama's, Chatham



Sam Bennison says he started his career in the kitchens of his childhood. He honed his cooking and management skills in the culinary program at Cape Cod Regional Technical High School and dreamed of owning his own restaurant. But he didn't think he'd ever have the chance.

Now, not long out of school, he is the first franchisee of JoMama's, running the new Chatham location of the popular coffee and bagel eatery with roots in Orleans.

Cameron Henchy is a sophomore in college who worked for three summers at a boat rental concession at Nickerson State Park. This year, when the owner retired, Cameron took on the business himself.

Microloans from the CDP—and the business coaching that comes with them—have helped both of these determined young entrepreneurs get launched.

Sam started working at JoMama's original location in 2016 and was quickly promoted into manager roles there. Last year, when owners Ricky and Christy Bourgeau decided to grow by offering franchises, they thought of Sam. They knew he had the skills and drive to succeed.

Sam credits the Bourgeaus for helping him get over the toughest obstacle he faced at the outset—his own self-doubt.

"They helped me get into the right frame of mind," he says, encouraging him at a time when his family was unable to offer much support. "They saw a hard-working young man, determined to grow the company, even though I could not always see that myself."

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Sam realized this was not an opportunity he wanted to let slip. But the next challenge would be money.

After arriving at a payment plan with the Bourgeaus, Sam set out to find the capital he would need to go forward taking on ownership. That's when he found the CDP and secured a microloan—our small business loans that come with financial coaching designed to help entrepreneurs get started and stay on track.

Sam built on the experience he had gained as a manager in Orleans to get the new Chatham store up and running. After a great first summer season, he has a winter to do list that includes maintenance, painting, new shelves, and getting an energy audit with Cape Light Compact. Meanwhile the CDP coaching sessions will help him delve into the numbers, comparing income and expenses to projections.

Watching all that Sam is learning and doing energizes us as we work towards our mission, which we are honored to hear Sam sum up this way: “The CDP is a great group of people with an even greater mission, helping everyday people accomplish amazing goals.”

Cameron Henchy is another one of those everyday people whose entrepreneurial spirit inspires us.

As a sophomore at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, he's into engineering and dreams of building lifts to outer space. But this past summer he was back home and in his fledgling year as owner-manager of Lea's Boat Rentals, on Flax Pond in Brewster, a concession in Nickerson State Park.

The leap between spending summers outdoors on the Cape and studying engineering at WPI is not so huge, says Cameron's dad, Dave Henchy. “After all he grew up watching the night sky here. That's what got him interested in astronomy in the first place.”

For three summers, Cameron worked at the boat rental shop, learning the day-to-day dynamics of the business and enjoying the active work.



When the previous owner decided to retire last year, Cameron hoped for the chance to take over the concession. He had managed a good crew who worked well together. He had shown the Park his strong work ethic and know-how. And his family could help some.

But he would need more capital than they could muster to buy the equipment and insurance essential to ownership. A CDP microloan gave him the boost he needed.

Cameron named the business Lea's Boat Rentals, to honor his mother. Meanwhile his dad helped him think about the long view for the seasonal enterprise. Cameron's younger siblings are part of the scene already, helping out and hoping for their turn in future summers.

For Cameron, as for Sam, there was a lot to learn during this first busy season as a business owner. He took on the challenges of pricing, marketing, scheduling, and managing staff, skills he knows will stay with him forever.



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What he loves best, he says, is working directly with customers. But as he headed back to WPI this fall he admitted, “school is easier!”

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