



community development partnership

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

Canal House as a path to recovery

“It’s up to the individual...if your mind is not in it, no sober house or program is going to teach you that. It comes from within.”

Nick, resident of Canal house



It was his arrest in 2016 that was the real turning point. Nick, now 32 years old, grew up in Sandwich and started using drugs while in high school. Addicted to heroin he was incarcerated numerous times for drug-related offenses.

When he was arrested in 2016, he was sentenced to 18 months in jail. At his nine month parole hearing he was given a list of sober living facilities to choose from – he chose Canal House. Canal House is owned and managed by the CDP and staffed by Gosnold. The partnership between

the organizations has been a great collaboration for the Lower Cape community.

In preparation for his release, Nick had lined up a job with a local landscaping business, but because of the seasonality of the work, the company lays off its employees in the winter. Nick, who had started working this past June, hadn’t worked long enough to collect unemployment. This is when the CDP’s Canal House stepped in and has subsidized Nick’s rent over the past couple of months. “Winters are tough here. I really appreciate how the CDP helps you out. You don’t have to get stressed out with being sober, having to earn a living, and trying to keep a roof over your head,” says Nick. “I got lucky here. If I were to be released and had to try and find a home as well as finding a job to pay the rent, then worry about losing the roof over my head, it would be very difficult.”

The environment at Canal House is a good one. “I focus on staying around people who are very positive,” remarks Nick. “I knew what I wanted and I know where I want to go. I’m sick of the old life.” He is close to a number of the other residents in the house. It’s a “good set of people” he says and they enjoy meals and spending time with one another. In particular, Nick speaks very highly of Cam, the manager at Canal House. “Cam is not just a manager he’s a big help and a friend,” says Nick. “At other places managers can act more like a principle or be really authoritarian,” which, according to Nick, makes for a less communal, and hence less supportive, environment.

Nick notes that one of the other major benefits of Canal House is that residents have their own room. In a number of other sober living facilities people live 2 to 3 to a room. “I like that you have your own room. You’re dealing with a lot of personalities and if someone is not doing the right thing...that can be a challenge cause it’s right there in your face.”

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Life for Nick is busy as the unseasonably mild temperatures have kept him working. In addition, he is required every week to have one on one counseling, group therapy at Gosnold, and participate in one other type of meeting such as AA or NA. He is spends 3 to 4 nights a week in meetings aimed to help him be successful in this new path he has chosen for himself.

In June Nick's one year lease will be up and he has a decision to make. When asked what he would like to do, he finds himself weighing his options. He may sign another year lease so that he can save up some money in order to be able to afford a decent place to rent or perhaps purchase a house. He may also choose to leave and rent an apartment with one of the other residents. Right now he's focused on getting his driver's license back which will be a huge help as he must now take the bus from Orleans to Yarmouth every day to get to work. Nick, who enjoys walking on the beach and is interested in drones, is hoping to find a hobby that he can enjoy in those rare moments when he is not working or fulfilling his sobriety requirements. "Drugs used to be my hobby; I am ready for a new one."