

SUNSHINE NEWS

Strength through Unity, Fellowship, and Recovery

WWW.OXFORDHOUSEFL.ORG



TOP NEWS

- FLORIDA WAS WELL-REPRESENTED AT THE OXFORD HOUSE WORLD CONVENTION 2023 IN WASHINGTON DC, SENDING 104 DELEGATES. THEIR PARTICIPATION HIGHLIGHTS ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THE RECOVERY COMMUNITY
- FLORIDA EARNED RECOGNITION AS THE FASTEST-GROWING STATE.
- THE SUNSHINE STATE IS SET TO HOST THE 2024 ANNUAL WORLD CONVENTION IN ORLANDO, FL WITH A THEME OF STRENGTH IN NUMBERS.
- THE MEMBERS OF THE OXFORD HOUSE NETWORK IN FLORIDA HAVE TEAMED UP WITH MOBILIZE RECOVERY TO HOST 25 SERVICE EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE SUNSHINE STATE.

TOPICS COVERED

- *NEW TO THE OXFORD HOUSE FAMILY*
- *A DAY OF SERVICE*
- *MEMBERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT*
- *EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS*
- *RE-ENTRY*
- *ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT*



NEW TO THE OXFORD HOUSE FAMILY

Since September of 2022 the Oxford House network in Florida has grown tremendously, adding a total of 402 new beds throughout the state while expanding into new areas. Let's welcome Oxford Houses, Improv, Bungalow, Miracles, Actions, Everglades, Vista Nueva, No Reservations, Lightning, Apogee, Paddle Boat, Tidal Wave, Heat Wave, Southern Light, Vertex, Peace River, Gulf Oasis, Devotion, Epic Start, Morning Dove, Seashore, Whipporwill, Palm Cove, Driftwood, Checkered Flag, Shanti, Fauna, Pharaoh, Peace Garden, Tangelo, Swordfish, Manta Ray, Mermaid Cove, Barracuda, Okaloosa, Emerald Coast, Honesty, Angel Sun, Wahoo, Westworld, and Sapphire. All of these houses along with their Chapters are well on their way to doing some amazing work in their communities supporting individuals in need. In Chapter 12, Oxford House Driftwood opened its doors with the members coming together to open the newest addition to their chapter. Driftwood added 9 more beds for men in recovery and has increased the total number of beds to 57. The opening of Oxford House Driftwood will mark a total of 3 male houses for the Palm Coast area which will provide round-the-clock peer support for individuals trying to rebuild their lives. Over the past year, we have made some amazing strides here in the Sunshine State and would like to recognize all of our houses that have opened and become part of the Oxford House family.



**OXFORD HOUSE
DRIFTWOOD**



**OXFORD HOUSE
NARANJA**



**OXFORD HOUSE
BARRACUDA**

In Cape Coral, Chapter 4 has recently opened Oxford House Barracuda. This new addition to Chapter 4 will be providing 10 beds for men in recovery to start their journey and service the Lee County area. Barracuda will bring the total bed count for Chapter 4 to 84. Oxford House Barracuda opened its doors on August 5th and has since provided round-the-clock support for all 10 men who have chosen to start their journey. We are happy to have them as part of the family and look forward to seeing some amazing things to come out of its membership.

In Marion County, FL Chapter 15 has opened Oxford House Pharaoh, adding 7 more beds for men serious about their recovery. Pharaoh will bring the total bed count to 41 for Chapter 15 and will be the second men's house in Ocala, FL. Oxford House Pharaoh opened its doors on August 17th and now provides a stable peer-supportive environment for all seven men starting to rebuild their lives. Chapter 15 now has a total of 16 beds for men serious about their recovery and looking for that supportive environment so they can thrive as well as work on themselves and learn that new way of living. We wish them all the success.



**OXFORD HOUSE
PHARAOH**

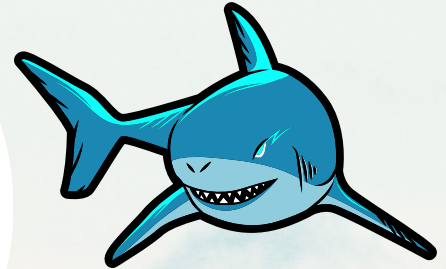
A Day of Service

Oxford Houses of Florida teamed up with Mobilize Recovery and hosted a total of 25 Days of Service events throughout the month of September in celebration of National Recovery Month. Chapters from around the state have collaborated with community partners for some amazing events to show our support for our communities. Some of the events pictured are handouts to unhoused individuals, toy drives, Narcan distributions, and neighborhood clean-ups.



MEMBERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

RAMON CALDERON



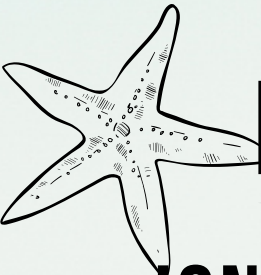
GROWING UP I WAS SHELTERED FROM A LOT. MY MOTHER TRIED HER BEST TO RAISE ME AS A SINGLE MOTHER. AFTER MY BROTHER WAS ARRESTED FOR ROBBING A BANK, MY MOTHER WANTED BETTER FOR ME. SHE PUSHED SCHOOLWORK HARD. I WAS IN HONOR CLASSES UNTIL I GOT INTO HIGH SCHOOL AND STARTED SMOKING MARIJUANA. PARTIES TOOK OVER MY WEEKENDS. SLOWLY BUT SURELY MY ADDICTION SPROUTED AND LATCHED ON TO ME, CONSTRICTING MY FOCUS. I WAS BLACKOUT DRINKING ON THE REGULAR AND WAS SNORTING ANYTHING THAT COULD BE CRUSHED UP. ONCE I WAS KICKED OUT OF COLLEGE EVERYTHING SPIRALED. I FELT LIKE I DIDN'T HAVE A PURPOSE. I GRADUATED TO I.V. USE. I WOULD WAKE UP AND COMMIT MULTIPLE FELONIES TO SUPPORT MY DRUG HABIT.

BEING PRESENT IN MY KIDS' LIFE WASN'T EVEN CLOSE TO BEING ON MY MIND. THEN THE MOMENT CAME. I WAS ALONE IN A ROOM, NOWHERE TO GO, BROKE, NO LICENSE AND A CAR (WITH NO PLATES) OUT OF GAS. NOBODY WANTED TO BE AROUND ME. I TOLD MYSELF I DIDN'T WANT TO CONTINUE LIVING MY LIFE IN THAT MANNER. I HAD TO GO SEE MY PROBATION OFFICER, AND IN DOING SO I GOT THE BEAUTIFUL GIFT OF DESPERATION AND TOLD ON MY SELF.

I WAS COURT ORDERED TO REHAB WHERE I ATTENDED SALVATION ARMY. I WASN'T READY AND THOUGHT LIFE WAS A GAME. I GOT KICKED OUT AFTER 3 MONTHS. I WENT HOME AND WORKED EVERYDAY FOR 2 WEEKS HIRED A LAWYER AND TURNED MYSELF INTO JAIL. CLEAN, MY LAWYERS FOUGHT AND GOT ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO BACK TO THE SALVATION ARMY. MY LUCK, THE PROGRAM SHUT DOWN A MONTH AFTER I GOT THERE. THE DAY IT CLOSED I RELAPSED.

I WAS GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO EITHER TRY MY LUCK ON THE STREETS AND VIOLATE PROBATION OR JUMP ON A BUS TO A REHAB WILLING TO TAKE ME IN. I CHOSE THE LATTER OF THE 2 AND WENT TO A PROGRAM CALLED WESTCARE IN ST. PETERSBURG. THAT PROGRAM WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE CHANGE IN MY PERSPECTIVE. I BECAME HEAD COORDINATOR AT THAT FACILITY OF 120 MEN. FIRST SHOT OF HOPE FOR ME.

I COMPLETED THAT PROGRAM AND DECIDED TO FIND SOBER LIVING. OXFORD HOUSE SANDY BOTTOM IS WHERE I LANDED. VERY QUICKLY I BECAME INVOLVED IN MY HOME AND MY CHAPTER. OXFORD HOUSE HAS GIVEN ME PURPOSE. A SAFE PLACE TO RECOVER AND TO HELP THE NEXT ADDICT IN HIS JOURNEY. THE COMRADERY WAS JUST WHAT I NEEDED. THE PROGRAM OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS AND THE SAFETY OF OXFORD HOUSE ARE PARAMOUNT IN MY JOURNEY. I AM NOW CHAPTER 16 CHAIRPERSON. I DO AS MANY PRESENTATIONS AS MY SCHEDULE WILL ALLOW. I AM INVOLVED WITH THE HOUSES IN MY AREA. I ATTEND DAYTONA STATE COLLEGE WHERE I WAS EVEN INTERVIEWED BY TELEMUNDO AND BROADCASTED. I RECEIVED AN OXFORD HOUSE SERVICE AWARD FROM OUR CHAPTER. I AM TRULY GRATEFUL TO BE APART OF THIS FAMILY. THANK YOU.



MEMBERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT



JONATHAN CRIER



MY NAME IS JONATHAN CRIER. I'M A 42YR. GRATEFUL RECOVERING HEROIN ADDICT. MY LIFE WASN'T ALWAYS WONDERFUL AND AMAZING, LIKE IT IS TODAY. I WAS BORN IN ORANGE PARK, FL. A SMALL SUBURB OF JACKSONVILLE. THE MIDDLE CHILD OF 7. FROM DAY 1, I WAS ALWAYS A DIFFICULT CHILD TO SAY THE LEAST. I BEGAN USING AT THE AGE OF 14. MARIJUANA, PSYCHEDELICS, AND ALCOHOL. TRYING TO FIT IN AND EMULATE MY OLDER SIBLINGS. LITTLE DID I KNOW THAT MY EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES WOULD TURN INTO A FULL-BLOWN ADDICTION TO OPIATES YEARS LATER. I TRAVELED FOR MANY YEARS IN MY EARLY TWENTIES ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. SAN FRANCISCO, SEATTLE, AND ALASKA, TRYING TO RUN FROM MY PROBLEMS. I WAS INTRODUCED TO HEROIN FOR THE FIRST TIME WHEN I WAS OUT WEST. FROM THE MOMENT I TRIED IT, I BELIEVED I MET MY SOULMATE FOR LIFE. THE UNCONDITIONAL WARMTH AND LOVE I FELT WAS ALL A DELUSION. DURING MY ACTIVE ADDICTION THAT SPANNED OVER 20YRS. I'VE OVERDOSED CLOSE TO 40 DIFFERENT TIMES. INCARCERATED FOR BURGLARY, GRAND THEFT, DEALING IN STOLEN PROPERTY, AND GTA. THE DEATH OF 10 VERY CLOSE FRIENDS STILL HAD NO EFFECT ON MY USE.

ON THE EVENING OF MARCH 30TH, 2022, THAT ALL CHANGED. I WAS ARRESTED FOR GTA IN ST. JOHNS COUNTY. THE NEXT MORNING, I WAS NOTIFIED THE DEVASTATING AND LIFE ALTERING NEWS THAT MY GIRLFRIEND HAD OVERDOSED AND PASSED AWAY THE SAME NIGHT. IT WAS AT THE VERY MOMENT THAT I FULLY SURRENDERED. I WAITED FOR OVER 8 MONTHS GOING BACK AND FORTH OBSERVING DRUG COURT, MORE THAN 13 DIFFERENT TIMES, BEFORE THE STATE MADE ANOTHER OFFER, 1 YEAR. MEANING I WOULD BE FREE AND CLEAR IN 4 DAYS. INSTEAD, I CHOSE LIFE AND THE 1-YEAR INTENSIVE TREATMENT PROGRAM.

DAYS AFTER MY RELEASE, I INTERVIEWED AND WAS ACCEPTED IN OXFORD HOUSE SAN SEBASTIAN AND QUICKLY BECAME THE HOUSE SECRETARY. A FEW WEEKS LATER I WAS NOMINATED FOR THE HSC CHAIR FOR OUR CHAPTER. A POSITION THAT I TRULY LOVE AND AM PASSIONATE ABOUT. THE ACCOUNTABILITY, RECOVERY AND FAMILY ATMOSPHERE THAT THE OXFORD HAS AFFORDED ME, IS THE MOST INCREDIBLE, EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE OF MY LIFE. I WAKE UP EVERY MORNING, THANKING GOD FOR EVERYTHING HE HAS DONE FOR ME AND HOW I CAN GIVE BACK WHAT WAS FREELY GIVEN TO ME. WITHOUT OXFORD HOUSE AND ALL ITS MEMBERS, I COULD HONESTLY SAY I WOULDN'T BE ALIVE TODAY.



MEMBERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT



I'M JASMINE GANTT, AND MY JOURNEY IS A TESTAMENT TO RESILIENCE AND TRANSFORMATION. I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA, WHERE I WAS EXPOSED TO ALCOHOL AT A YOUNG AGE THROUGH MY PARENTS. THIS EXPOSURE LED TO A TURBULENT PATH. BEFORE TURNING 21, I FACED TWO DUIS, MULTIPLE JAIL STINTS, AND A SPIRALING DESCENT INTO ALCOHOLISM. WHAT STARTED AS FLEETING FUN WITH DRINKING QUICKLY TURNED INTO OVERWHELMING DESPAIR, MARKED BY BLACKOUTS AND AN URGE TO CONFRONT THE WORLD WITH ANGER.

MY ROCK-BOTTOM MOMENT WASN'T THE NUMEROUS ARRESTS; IT WAS THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION THAT PUSHED ME TO THE BRINK OF NOT WANTING TO EXIST. THAT'S WHEN I RECOGNIZED I NEEDED HELP, AND THIS TURNING POINT LED ME TO A DETOX CENTER IN GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, FOLLOWED BY A TREATMENT FACILITY. MY JOURNEY FROM THAT POINT ONWARD WAS GUIDED BY A HIGHER POWER.

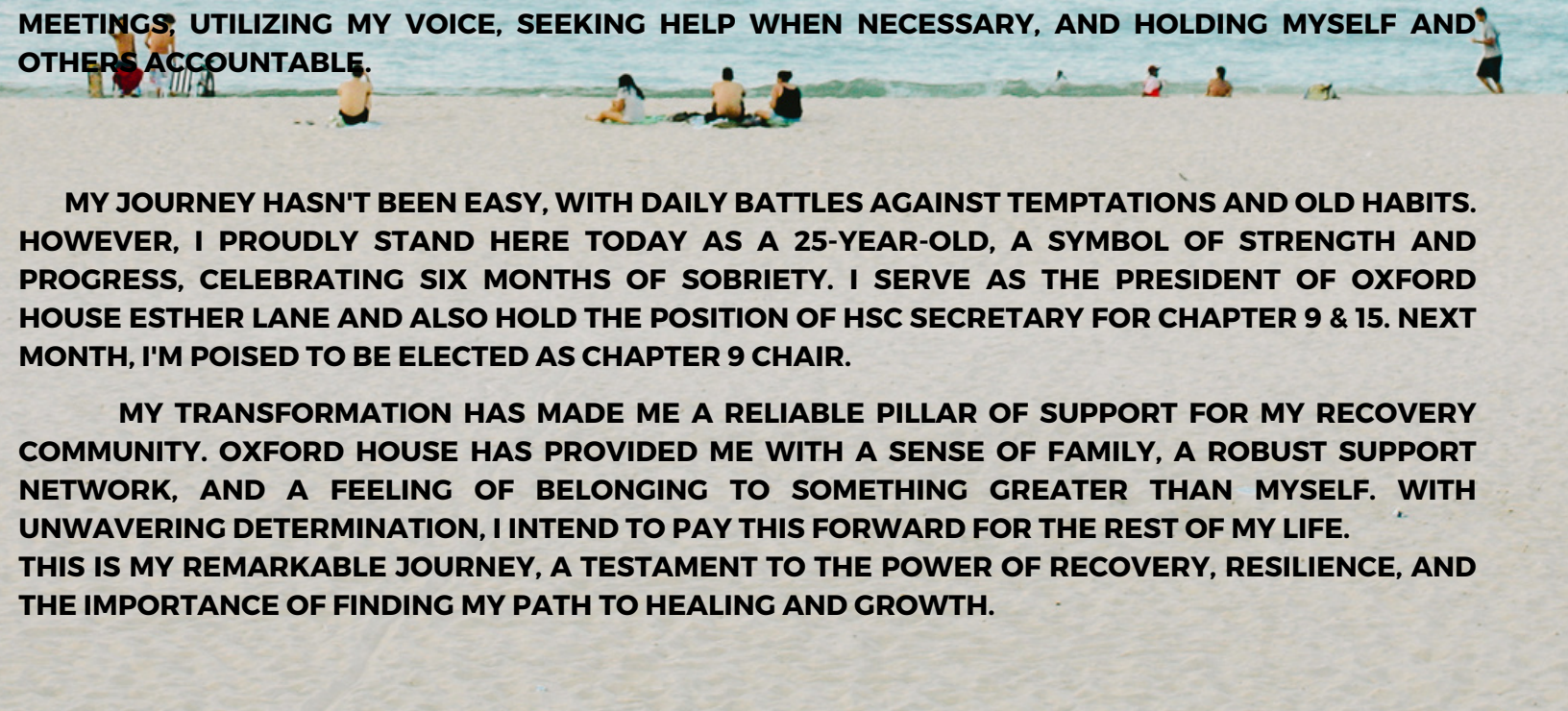
I WAS INTRODUCED TO OXFORD HOUSE THROUGH PRESENTATIONS MADE BY ITS MEMBERS DURING MY TIME IN TREATMENT. AFTER 45 DAYS OF REHABILITATION, I TRANSITIONED INTO OXFORD HOUSE AND TOOK ON THE ROLE OF HOUSE PRESIDENT. WHILE THE HOUSE WASN'T PERFECT, I DOVE IN WITH DETERMINATION, DETERMINED TO SHED MY OLD SELF. I EMBRACED OXFORD HOUSE WHOLEHEARTEDLY, ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN CHAPTER MEETINGS AND HSC MEETINGS, UTILIZING MY VOICE, SEEKING HELP WHEN NECESSARY, AND HOLDING MYSELF AND OTHERS ACCOUNTABLE.

MY JOURNEY HASN'T BEEN EASY, WITH DAILY BATTLES AGAINST TEMPTATIONS AND OLD HABITS. HOWEVER, I PROUDLY STAND HERE TODAY AS A 25-YEAR-OLD, A SYMBOL OF STRENGTH AND PROGRESS, CELEBRATING SIX MONTHS OF SOBRIETY. I SERVE AS THE PRESIDENT OF OXFORD HOUSE ESTHER LANE AND ALSO HOLD THE POSITION OF HSC SECRETARY FOR CHAPTER 9 & 15. NEXT MONTH, I'M POISED TO BE ELECTED AS CHAPTER 9 CHAIR.

MY TRANSFORMATION HAS MADE ME A RELIABLE PILLAR OF SUPPORT FOR MY RECOVERY COMMUNITY. OXFORD HOUSE HAS PROVIDED ME WITH A SENSE OF FAMILY, A ROBUST SUPPORT NETWORK, AND A FEELING OF BELONGING TO SOMETHING GREATER THAN MYSELF. WITH UNWAVERING DETERMINATION, I INTEND TO PAY THIS FORWARD FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE. THIS IS MY REMARKABLE JOURNEY, A TESTAMENT TO THE POWER OF RECOVERY, RESILIENCE, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF FINDING MY PATH TO HEALING AND GROWTH.



JASMINE GANTT



Proclamations

WE ARE HONORED TO ANNOUNCE THAT OXFORD HOUSES OF FLORIDA HAVE BEEN GRANTED PROCLAMATIONS THROUGHOUT THE STATE FOR RECOVERY MONTH. THIS RECOGNITION HIGHLIGHTS OUR COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS ON THEIR JOURNEY TO RECOVERY FROM SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS AND PROVIDE SAFE HOUSING. IT SIGNIFIES THE IMPORTANCE OF RAISING AWARENESS, REDUCING STIGMA, AND FOSTERING A COMMUNITY THAT EMBRACES AND CELEBRATES RECOVERY.

Proclamation

REQUESTED BY
MAYOR LAMAR P. FISHER
BROWARD COUNTY COMMISSION

WHEREAS, National Recovery Month (Recovery Month) is a national observance held every September to educate Americans that substance use treatment and mental health services can enable those with a mental and/or substance use disorder to live a healthy and rewarding life; and

WHEREAS, recovery from substance use and mental health disorders is an essential element of health and one's overall wellness; and

WHEREAS, for those who suffer from substance use and mental health disorders prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover in our area and around the nation; and

WHEREAS, by managing, preventing, and overcoming the effects substance use and mental health disorders, individuals can achieve a healthy lifestyle, both physically and emotionally; and

WHEREAS, we must encourage relatives and friends of people with substance use and mental health disorders to implement preventive measures, recognize the signs of a problem, and guide those in need to appropriate treatment and recovery support services; and

WHEREAS, to help more people achieve and sustain long-term recovery, the U.S. Department of Health, and Human Services (HHS), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), Broward Addiction Recovery Center, and the Oxford House network in Florida invite all residents of Broward County to participate in National Recovery Month;
NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA:

That the Board hereby designates, **SEPTEMBER 2023**, as "NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH" in Broward County, Florida.

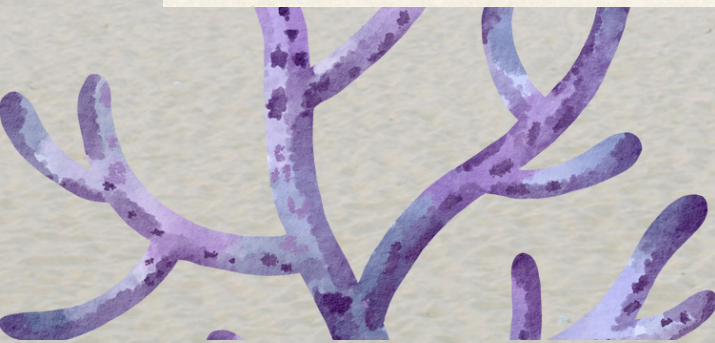
September 1, 2023
Date



Lamar P. Fisher
Mayor



Broward County



The City of
Fort Myers, Florida

Proclamation

WHEREAS, behavioral health is an essential part of health and one's overall wellness; and

WHEREAS, prevention of mental and substance use disorders works, treatment is effective, and people recover in our area and around the nation; and

WHEREAS, preventing and overcoming mental and substance use disorders is essential to achieving healthy lifestyles, both physically and emotionally; and

WHEREAS, we must encourage relatives and friends of people with mental and substance use disorders to implement preventive measures, recognize the signs of a problem, and guide those in need to appropriate treatment and recovery support services; and

WHEREAS, to help more people achieve and sustain long-term recovery, the U.S. Department of Health, and Human Services (HHS), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), and The Oxford House network in Florida invite all residents of Fort Myers to participate in National Recovery Month.

Now, THEREFORE, I Kevin B. Anderson, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Fort Myers, Florida, do hereby proclaim September 2023, as

National Recovery Month

in Fort Myers, Florida, and call upon our community to observe this month with compelling programs and events that support this year's observance of Recovery Month.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and the Great Seal of the City of Fort Myers, Florida, on this 5th day of September in the Year of our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-three.

Kevin B. Anderson
Mayor



Fort Myers



Tallahassee

FROM THE GOVERNING BODY OF
THE CITY OF TALLAHASSEE

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, behavioral health is an essential part of health and one's overall wellness; and

WHEREAS, prevention of mental and substance use disorders works, treatment is effective, and people recover in our area and around the nation; and

WHEREAS, preventing and overcoming mental and substance use disorders is essential to achieving healthy lifestyles, both physically and emotionally; and

WHEREAS, we must encourage relatives and friends of people with mental and substance use disorders to implement preventive measures, recognize the signs of a problem, and guide those in need to appropriate treatment and recovery support services; and

WHEREAS, to help more people achieve and sustain long-term recovery, the U.S. Department of Health, and Human Services (HHS), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), and The Oxford House network in Florida invite all residents of Tallahassee to participate in National Recovery Month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Dailey, by the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Tallahassee, do hereby recognize the month of September as

National Recovery Month

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I HAVE HEREUNTO SET MY
HAND AND CAUSED THE SEAL OF THE CITY TO BE AFFIXED.

MAYOR *John E. Dailey*
DATE *September 13, 2023*



EVENTS & CELEBRATIONS



Members throughout the state of Florida
attended Pride Fest events



Palm Coast



Naples



Citrus County Recovery Fest



CHAPTER 9 & 15



Chapter 12 Flagler Oars
Music Festival & Putman
County Recovery Fest



Recovery Fest Ocala



Pictured: position training, holiday celebrations, house meetings, State Convention, Suicide Prevention Walk



RE-ENTRY ASSOCIATION

Oxford House Reentry empowers individuals who have faced incarceration by providing safe housing, life skills, and a supportive community. Our work breaks barriers, lowers recidivism, and helps individuals rebuild their lives, empowering them for successful reentry into society.

Florida has helped 81 members with move-in fees totaling \$12,150 and is working with the reentry association to see what else we can do to support this transition.

Chapter 3 Tallahassee participated in the Ecological and Reentry Training Hub grand opening



Madison Correctional Institute Presentation

RE-ENTRY SPOTLIGHT

Lisa Grant 6/25/22



I started drinking and using drugs when I was 9 years old. I continued on that cycle for about 15 years. I tried to get sober several times and failed. I ended up in several different institutions throughout the state of Ohio and Florida. I've been incarcerated several times throughout my addiction including 2 prison sentences. June 25th of 2022 was the last time I was incarcerated.

During my stay at the Lee County jail, I was in "the hole" and I just prayed to God to help me with this cycle I was in of addiction and incarceration. I spoke to my reentry classification officer and told her I had a drug problem and I wanted to stay sober. I asked if she could help me get in somewhere I could stay sober and I filled out an application for Oxford House. I feel God definitely guided me in the right direction because I needed more than just a place to stay. I needed support, accountability, and guidance throughout my journey of sobriety. I'm grateful to say my sobriety date is 06/25/2022 and I work an honest program on recovery with the help of my Oxford family.



Lisa did a presentation @ Lee County jail for their Reentry Task Force meeting

ALUMNI

Staying Involved and Inspiring

KELLY KREUZKAMP

My name is Kelley Kreuzkamp and I have been an alcoholic since I was 14 and was addicted to drugs by 18. I was admitted to mental hospitals for suicide attempts, in and out of jail for drug possession and DUI charges. I experienced years of homelessness, zero self-esteem, and did whatever it took to get high. I had no purpose and couldn't stay sober, until I moved into Oxford House Jaguar.

The first 30 days felt like bootcamp. With work, recovery meetings, house meetings, interviews and chores, some days I didn't know if I would make it. About a month after I moved in, I found out I was pregnant. Seven months later, another door opened for me, and a women and children's bed became available at Oxford House Koala. On January 22, 2022, I gave birth to a healthy baby girl. The women in the house patiently guided me through the sleepless nights, as a first-time mother. While living in Oxford House, I learned how to work a recovery program, how to believe in myself and how to socialize without drinking and drugging. I was able to save money and get my license back. I found purpose in giving back, service work, learning how to do the books and holding different positions. Oxford House has shown me how to live like a responsible adult and to also have fun while being in recovery. Service work, service commitments and helping the newcomer have been huge factors in me staying sober.

In June 2023, I found an apartment in a safe neighborhood for my daughter and I and was able to give my room to a mother who was pregnant. I am still actively involved as an Alumni member I go to house meetings and help with position training. I was also able to keep the HSC Treasurer position until the end of my term in December. The accountability this has provided me with is so important in bridging the move from sober living to my own place. What Oxford has taught me is to always remain teachable, to lead by example, and to be transparent and authentic. By the grace of God, I haven't found it necessary to use a mind-altering substance since April 15, 2021. Oxford House has given me purpose, hope and friendships that have turned into family and for this I will be forever grateful.

