



## The Dismas Family Farm Program

### Dismas House of Massachusetts

The Dismas Family Farm is a residential treatment community located on a 12-acre vegetable and wool farm in Oakham, MA. Former male prisoners, students, volunteers and others work together to create a community of recovery from substance abuse. We offer programs, and a structured community for homeless former prisoners. Former prisoners with criminal/addiction histories agree to follow the rules, house agreements and expectations described in this fact sheet.

The Dismas Family Farm assists in the transition of people released from jail into a supportive reentry program which can lead to placement into other community programs and housing resources offered by staff and partner agencies.

#### **MISSION:**

The mission of the Dismas Family Farm is the reconciliation of former prisoners with society and society with former prisoners. The Dismas Family Farm will reduce recidivism by providing treatment and life skills to inmates to enhance their reintegration back into the community.

#### **FIRST DAYS:**

On or before your prearranged day to move in, call Farm staff or have your case manager/social worker call to confirm that you will be moving in. When you get to the Dismas Family Farm, staff will assign you a room, have you sign a contract, and assign you a chore and a day to do dishes. New residents should speak with staff about services available to them.

**IMPORTANT: The Dismas Family Farm will work with you to make sure you have proper identification before you leave the program. (birth certificate, Social Security card, etc.)**

You must attend a minimum of three (3) AA or NA meetings a week either inside the house or at outside meetings. After your first six weeks you may go to meetings with a sponsor who is willing to meet with staff. If you are going to an outside meeting, staff must know what time the meeting starts & ends. Time will be allowed to go out for coffee or to chat with a sponsor.

#### **HOUSE RULES AND CONSEQUENCES:**

Breaking any of the following rules indicates your unwillingness to live in a peaceful community and will result in your being asked to leave the house.

1. No violence, threat of violence, theft or destruction of property (this includes weapons of any kind). The use of violence means that you will be asked to leave the house immediately.

2. The use of illegal drugs or alcohol on the premises is against the rules. In addition, the use of drugs or

alcohol on or off premises by recovering substance abusers is prohibited. The use of drugs or alcohol means that you will be asked to leave the house immediately. The **Dismas Family Farm staff randomly tests for drugs and alcohol use.**

3. No sexual activity is allowed on the premises. No community member should engage another in a sexual relationship during his time at the Dismas Family Farm.

**If you are asked to leave the house and you are on parole or probation, your parole or probation officer will be notified when you leave.**

#### **ROOMS:**

You are expected to sleep in your room at the Dismas Family Farm every night. You may not switch rooms without staff approval.

Please do not remove furnishings from the common areas.

#### **APPEALS PROCESS:**

When a resident breaks a rule and is asked to leave the Dismas Family Farm, he has the right to appeal that decision to the community. Appeals will be brought to residents at the weekly house meeting. If a resident or staff do not accept that decision, either may appeal to the appropriate committee of the Board of Directors. Staff's decision stands during the appeals process.

**NOTE: Residents who are in their first six weeks of residency and are asked to leave the community do not have the right to appeal.**

#### **HOUSE EXPECTATIONS AND DECISIONS:**

The spirit of the Dismas Family Farm is embodied in the community life of the house. The community is built in part on these shared experiences: evening meals, the house meeting, house activities, and weekly household chores. It is necessary as a member of the Dismas Family Farm to participate in all of these areas.

#### **MEALS:**

There will be an evening meal every Monday through Friday night, provided by volunteers and occasionally by residents. Your participation is expected and important. The evening meal is at 6 PM. Special holiday meals will be prepared together with staff. Breakfast and lunch are prepared by residents. On Saturdays and Sundays, members of the house prepare the meals.

#### **HOUSE MEETINGS:**

House meetings must be attended every week by all residents. The meetings are held once a week and are an important platform for group decision-making and for achieving consensus in areas of conflict or compromise.

**VISITS:**

Visitors are welcome at the Dismas Family Farm. Additionally, residents can invite guests to share dinner with them one time per week Monday through Friday. No visitors will be allowed in bedrooms at any time.

**EMPLOYMENT:**

You are allowed to obtain outside employment 90 days after arriving at the farm. Former prisoners should work with staff and partner agencies to get a job as a priority. Dismas Family Farm staff will assist residents in finding employment, but residents must understand that they are responsible for finding their own job. Staff are to be informed immediately by the resident upon obtaining or losing a job. Dismas Family Farm is a working farm. Those who are not employed will be expected to work the farm.

**CHORES:**

Household chores are to be done per agreement with the staff and the community. During the week your chore area should be made presentable. You also will do set-up and clean-up for the evening meal on your assigned night, as well as welcoming the cooks and assisting them.

**SMOKING:**

There is no smoking in any of the buildings on the grounds including the barn. If you do so you will be asked to leave, per the Board of Directors' decision.

**SERVICES:**

Residents meet weekly with the Dismas Family Farm staff for one-on-one case management sessions where residents set goals and receive services such as preparing a resume and a budget, applying for health benefits, resolving civil and criminal legal issues, accessing free health and dental care, reuniting with children, restoring good credit, obtaining driver's licenses, etc.

**ADDICTION RECOVERY:**

Residents with a substance abuse history should participate in a plan, agreed upon with staff, to support their recovery. Attendance at either AA or NA is a must and you are required to find a sponsor who works the steps of recovery and is willing to work the steps with you. You must seek contacts of other men in recovery.

**INTAKE POLICIES:**

According to the policy of Dismas House of Massachusetts, Inc., former prisoner applicants who want to live at the Dismas Family Farm must be interviewed at least 1-3 times and their criminal record must be reviewed before the decision to accept them can be made. No one with a **sexual offense history, arson history, or serial violent offenders** can be considered to live at the Dismas Family Farm.

**PROGRAM FEES:**

In exchange for paying program fees/rent, you are expected to put in around 20 hours of vocational training on the farm.

**HOUSE AGREEMENTS:**

During house meetings, residents can make new agreements, which, if agreed upon by the full consensus of the house, become house agreements. Following are agreements in effect:

1. The curfew for the first six weeks is 10 PM.
2. Chores rotate monthly.
3. Residents can request weekend passes to visit friends/family after successfully completing their first six weeks.
4. All guests must be accompanied by another resident & cannot help themselves to food and drink.
5. Quiet hours are in effect 24 hours a day, meaning that all radios, TVs, and voices should be kept at respectable levels.
6. All guests must leave by 9 PM.

**SEND YOUR APPLICATION OR OTHER  
CORRESPONDENCE TO:**

**THE DISMAS FAMILY FARM PROGRAM  
PO BOX 30125  
WORCESTER, MA 01603**