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Changemaker Coach Reflects on Leadership Role of Mentoring First-Year Students

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by Cassie Hollasch '22 | English, Writing and Business Administration

Being given the opportunity to reflect on such a transformative year, Maddy Roy '22 [Social Work](#), Human Development and Family

Studies, details her experience as a

Changemaker Coach. The Coaches work in

UNH's [Changemaker Collaborative](#), a partnership of the Sustainability

Institute, the Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics and

the Carsey School of Public Policy. Roy was selected by the

Changemaker Collaborative to be matched with five Changemaker

Fellows. Fellows are new students to UNH and are either incoming first-

years or transfer students. The Collaborative aims to provide highly

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qualified coaches to aid their Fellows about growth opportunities at UNH and connect them with programs applicable to their goals and passions. Maddy is a notable coach who has spent the year diligently serving as a resource and connection for her Fellows.

Maddy is passionate about many facets of sustainability, including social justice, health care and youth wellbeing. Maddy worked with UNH's [Sexual Harassment and Rape Prevention Program](#) as an Outreach Educator, which gave her the opportunity to educate prospective students and parents on SHARPP's provided resources and services. During her sophomore year, she led discussions on healthy relationships and how to recognize the early signs of domestic violence. Maddy also participates in the [Students of Social Work \(SOSW\)](#) group on campus as their Fundraising Chair. The group promotes social change through volunteering for local agencies, increasing awareness around social issues including mental health and sexual assault.

Maddy has had prior experience in mentoring from her internship with the Semester in the City ([SITC](#)) program at [Boston's Brookline Teen Center](#), which helped her build skills to serve as a Changemaker Coach. At the Teen Center she realized she enjoyed working with this age group and creating a safe, enjoyable environment where teenagers can engage in constructive, educational and leisure activities. Last summer, Maddy was given the opportunity to work with Life Bridge Community Services through AmeriCorps, working with early teenagers performing activities that allowed the teens to work through the life challenges and identify goals and methods to overcome them. Maddy credits both experiences to developing her future goals for working with young adults to early teenagers.

Throughout the school year, Maddy has assisted her Fellows in adjusting to university life and providing unique guidance specific to each of her Fellows. Maddy recalls helping one student identify their passions in relation to declaring a major. She said, "They all came in with so much passion about so many different things, and were able to take advantage of UNH's opportunities even during the pandemic."

Several of her Fellows will be participating in internships over the summer that Maddy helped facilitate. She's extremely proud of how much all her Fellows have achieved in just one year, stating "So many of them have internships for the summer and as first-year students it's super impressive to see their dedication especially when they're going through so many transitions and challenges. I just love that they were so motivated." Working through these first-year challenges has not been easy, but Maddy is empathetic and open to working through hurdles together.

Outside coaching sessions, the Changemaker Fellowship cohort meets monthly to discuss various issues related to the United Nations' 17 [Sustainable Development Goals](#). These goals work to globally address various issues such as injustice, gender equality, access to education, environmental shortcomings, climate change, and much more. Maddy has helped collaborate with her Fellows to present how a specific country found a solution to one specific goal, hone presentation skills, make social connections and practice working as a team. Maddy has noticed her team gain confidence and find themselves as leaders.

One of the biggest lessons Maddy has learned as a Coach, the importance of being patient and not being too overbearing. She enjoyed learning how to support her Fellows while still letting them grow on their own. Maddy states, "It's a big responsibility. I learned a lot around the SDG goals and helping my students with public speaking and building those social connections especially during a remote/hybrid year because of the Corona virus." Maddy advises students to get involved with the Sustainability Institute and educate yourself and friends on some common misconceptions about sustainability. For example, she advises, "A lot of people think sustainability is only related to the environment, but there so much more - it's related to including personal wellbeing, education, and social justice. Try to educate yourself on the topics and how to get involved on campus."

Contact Faina Bukher, Program Director of the Changemaker Collaborative to learn more about participating in the program or apply

to be a Fellow [here](#).

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