

Care Packages for Students Made Easy, Online

**Young alumni hope to expand business from Durham to
Boston**

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FIVE UNH ALUMNUS, (FROM LEFT), GRETCHEN EASTMAN, JESSICA STREITMATER, CHRISTINE DINISI, MATTHEW ROBINSON, AND DAVE LEBLANC, AN INTERN WHO PROVIDES TECH SUPPORT, DEVELOPED A MOBILE DEVICE APP CALLED, REGAALO, THAT ALLOWS PARENTS TO GIFT ITEMS AND SERVICES TO THEIR STUDENTS IN COLLEGE.

Back in the Dark Ages of high-tech — say, in the early 2000s or so — this is what parents had to do to send a care package to their child in college: They went to a store and bought something. Or, maybe they baked cookies. Then, they packed it into a cardboard box, went to a place called the “post office” and “mailed it.” With a little luck, it showed up at the right address maybe a week later.

So what if the cookies were crumbled? It had actually arrived!

Little wonder, then, that an increasing number of parents are embracing a new online gifting service called, “[Regaalo](#).”

Started by a handful of UNH business students who graduated in 2011, the fledging company allows parents to select, pay for and send gifts online – ranging from fresh pizza to flowers to hair care to a “date night” – from local merchants to their students via the Regaalo website. The site instantly sends a voucher code to the student’s smart

phone or email address. The student shows the voucher to the merchant and — presto! — the gift is given.

“It’s a nice way of saying, ‘I’m thinking of you, even though I can’t be there,’ ” says Gretchen Eastman, who now co-leads the company with Jessica Streitmater, Christine Dinisi and Matt Robinson.

The concept has proven so popular at UNH that the business is looking to expand to Boston — and its founders are seeking donations to finance its growth via a relatively new way of raising money called “crowdfunding.”

“What we’re doing is so unique, and we think the potential is really there for this to take off,” says Dinisi, a Regaalo co-founder. “So crowdfunding is a way for UNH alumni and friends to show that they really believe in what we’re doing, and that they want a UNH alumni business to succeed ... It’s also a way to show that you support local businesses, because all of the merchants we work with are local.”

Crowdfunding supports entrepreneurs by encouraging people to make donations online through social media. Regaalo’s funding site features a video about the company, details about getting involved, and a list of perks rewarded to donors.

So far, more than 1,000 families, friends and students in the UNH community are signed up with Regaalo, which has agreements with 27 businesses in Durham, Newmarket, Dover, and Portsmouth to offer more than 140 gift ideas. The company has begun marketing to families at Boston University and Northeastern University, and hopes to reach out to other schools in the greater Boston area.

“We have some angel investors who are interested, but they want us to prove that this model works as well in the city as it does in a smaller college town like Durham,” says Eastman, who was making the Regaalo pitch this week to families visiting Durham for June Orientation.

By June 30, Regaala hopes to raise \$5,000 in donations. The company plans to use the money to hire four interns to promote Regaalo subscriptions in Boston. Donors who give more than \$25 receive gift incentives, ranging from a steel water bottle to a complete Regaalo party at your business or location.

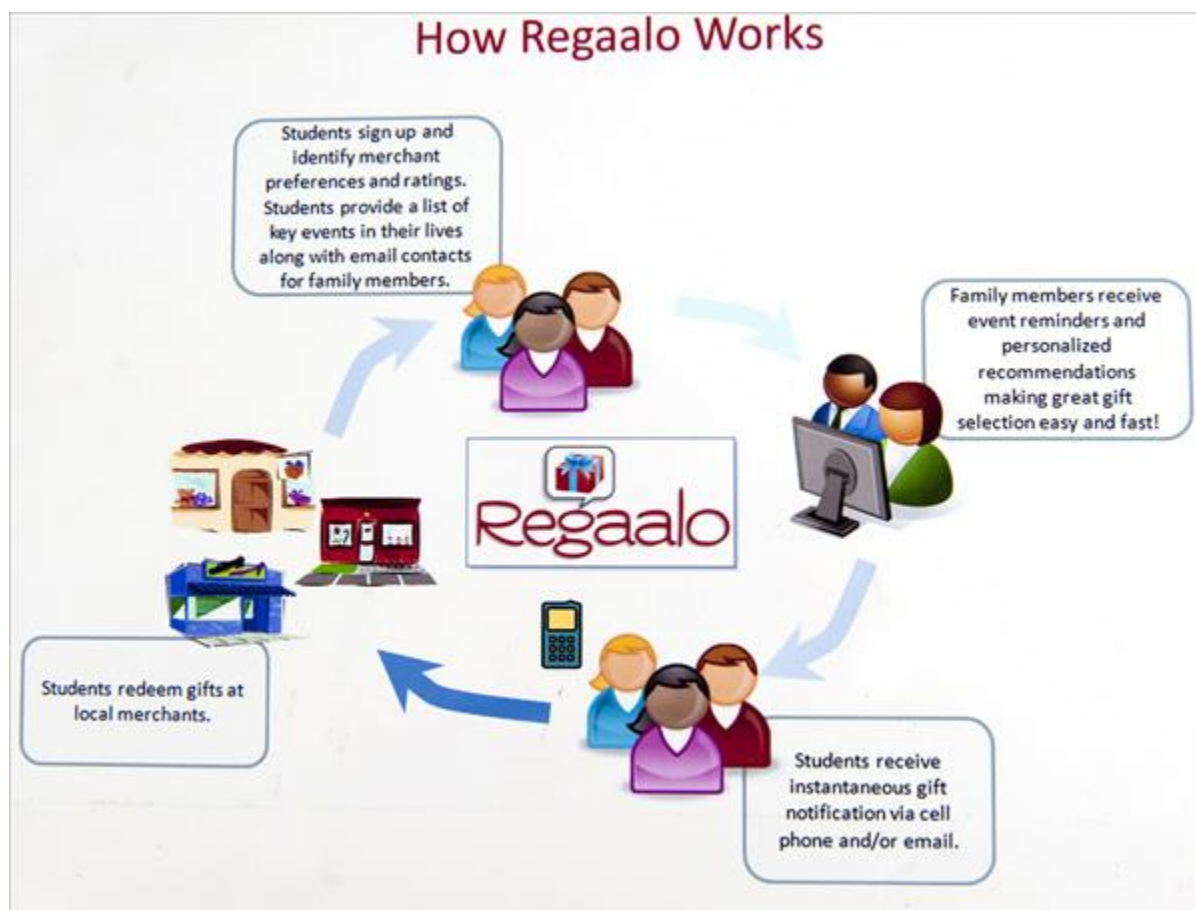
“Expanding to Boston is crucial to the success of Regaalo because it demonstrates that we can successfully capture a new, big urban market with many international and far-away parents and families,” reads an appeal on the website.

Merchants who participate with Regaalo give a small percentage of their proceeds to Regaalo for sending them business.

In addition to donations, Regaalo is also seeking contacts with merchants, families of college students and university leaders in the Boston area. “There are all sorts of ways people can help, from making a donation to simply putting us in touch with merchants,” Dinisi says.

Regaalo took second prize in the 2011 Holloway “Innovation to Market” Competition at UNH, ahead of 43 other competitors. Regaalo is now one of five start-up companies

based at the [New Hampshire Innovation Commercialization Center](#) at the Pease Tradeport in Portsmouth. In partnership with UNH, the center provides early stage companies with a combination of seed capital and hands-on involvement from the center's seasoned startup executives.



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INNOVATION



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