

A Supportive Space

Durham couple rallies to assist UNH student in need of parking

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DAVID BEAUREGARD HAS BEEN WORKING AT WENTWORTH-DOUGLASS HOSPITAL IN DOVER DURING THE SURGE OF COVID-19 CASES (COURTESY PHOTO)

David Beauregard '23 was in dire need of a parking space. With the clock ticking on his quest to find one, his last resort wound up being a virtual space.

A member of the New Hampshire Air National Guard, Beauregard recently received a mandatory assignment to work at Wentworth-Douglass Hospital in Dover as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 surge, upending any plans for a normal semester at UNH.

It had been months since Beauregard – a self-described infrequent Facebook user – had logged on in any meaningful way, but facing the prospect of taking at least a semester off from college if he couldn't find a place to keep his car and having exhausted all other options, he made a plea for help to a Durham community group on the ubiquitous social media site.

He wrote the post one afternoon and by the next morning had received a message from a local couple offering a space in their driveway for as long as he needed it, free of charge. It takes him about five minutes to walk from the parking space to his apartment.

“It’s something that maybe seems small to them, but I appreciate it so much,” Beauregard says. “They said my situation hit home for them. I’m very grateful for what they did.”

Beauregard has spent the semester break working normal business hours at the hospital Monday through Friday, but once the spring semester started at UNH he knew he’d be “working basically every moment I don’t have class,” including evenings and weekends.

Beauregard didn’t have a parking space at his apartment, and his efforts to find an affordable option in town proved fruitless – the company he rents from could only offer a waitlist, and nothing else realistic materialized. So he took to Facebook knowing that if he didn’t get any bites, he’d likely have to leave UNH for the semester and move back into his family’s home in Dover in order to commute back and forth to the hospital.

But the Durham couple – who wish to remain anonymous – put any of those concerns to rest. Beauregard said they told him they wanted to help him because he serves in the Air National Guard, he’s supporting the state’s COVID efforts and he’s “a UNH student who is juggling a lot right now.”

The connection initially made through a digital community only served to drive home how important authentic community is.

“As students we’re mostly just in our own little world on campus, so it was nice to meet people who live in town,” Beauregard says. “It’s good to be able recognize that Durham is more than just UNH.”

Beauregard has certainly experienced more than just UNH as a student and member of the Air National Guard. With the ongoing spike in COVID cases creating a shortage of staff in hospitals throughout the state, military members have been assigned to ease the burden. Beauregard has been working in the Wentworth-Douglass drive-thru testing center, acting as “the middle man” between staff who check patients in and technicians who do the swabbing outside. His job is to ensure that technicians receive test tubes with accurate identifying labels and, once samples are collected, to label them again for packing on the way to the lab where they are processed.

How long Beauregard is required to work at the hospital will depend on the surge in COVID cases. He’s hoping for some relief by the end of February, but acknowledged the work could be required until March or April. He told the couple who offered the

space as much and promised that “as soon as I’m done with the hospital work, I’ll be out of their driveway.”

Already behind by a semester because he joined the Air National Guard while attending UNH, he said the prospect of having to take an additional semester or two off would have been “discouraging.” By staying enrolled, the [environmental conservation and sustainability major](#) and business minor will stay on track to graduate and pursue work he’s passionate about, like ultimately owning or working for a business with a focus on a green or sustainable mission.

For all of those reasons, the impact of the kind gesture will last well beyond his final departure from the driveway.

“It meant a lot to me,” Beaugregard says. “Without them everything about the next few months would look a lot different than I’d planned it to be, and with their help I’ll be able to make it work and go to school while I’m helping out at the hospital. Sometimes a small gesture can really go a long way.”

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