

# Making a Case for Making “Change That Lasts”

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Thursday, October 29, 2015

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*A letter from David Johnson '02G, director of marketing and communications at United Way of the Greater Seacoast, on the launch of the UNH-United Way “Change That Lasts” campaign*



DAVID JOHNSON '02G

If I close my eyes I can still hear Enya. It's 2001. I'm lying on the bare hardwood floor. The lights are down and Enya's warbling is washing over me like an ocean wave. To my left is the form of a small child, splayed out on his sleeping mat, adjusting his blanket, trying to get comfortable. To my right, another kiddo, long since conked out. I'm

squinting through the soft light at a collection of Annie Dillard stories, in preparation for Andy Merton's upcoming essay class.

Just another typical nap-time in the Butterfly Room.

It was the soundtrack of my life for the better part of three years: soothing Celtic warbling set against a symphony of kid noises as I balanced a full-time job at a preschool with a full-time pursuit of a master's degree at the University of New Hampshire. An unorthodox path towards post-collegiate achievement, perhaps, but little did I know, this nexus would foretell an even greater accomplishment: namely, this article, which, if we're all honest with each other, is going incredibly well so far.

Back then, newly on my own and driving around in a 1986 Camaro that was as mechanically sound as a North Korean battleship, my primary motivation was not to starve to death. Thankfully, I found a job in the three year-old classroom at the Exeter-based Great Bay Kids Company, spending my days chasing kids around the jungle gym, building massive block forts, inhaling star-shaped chicken nuggets and reading up on my literary classics for my second life at UNH. It was Plato meets Play-doh.

Both of those experiences, as oddly matched as they may have been, made me the man I am today. Great Bay (a United Way partner agency) instilled a love for nonprofit work, and UNH equipped me with the skills to make my mark in that sector.

Today, I'm writing as both UNH alum and United Way ambassador to encourage you to give during the "Change That Lasts" campaign. Give to the Fund for New Hampshire Students! Give to United Way! Give to both! I have first-hand intel on the power and promise of both UNH and United Way — the former building tomorrow's leaders, the latter connecting those leaders to do real good in the community and make change that lasts.

And to sweeten the deal: If you give, the next round of animal crackers is on me.

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*UNH faculty and staff are invited to support the "Change That Lasts" campaign, which supports two great causes — the Fund for New Hampshire Students and the United Way of the Greater Seacoast.*

**United Way of the Greater Seacoast:** Your gift will help children enter school ready to learn; train youth in leadership skills and give them tools to help avoid substance abuse; and support families working to gain financial stability. Giving by payroll deduction or credit card are options. United Way-funded partners can be found [here](#), and gifts can be directed to a particular agency. For employees at UNH Manchester, your campaign will be conducted separately, in conjunction with Granite United Way. [Click here to give.](#)

**University of New Hampshire:** Gifts to any area will support UNH students in important ways, but because 81 percent of UNH students qualify for financial aid, you are urged to direct your gift to The Fund for New Hampshire Students. This fund allows UNH to ease

the student loan burden, and your gift will make an immediate and profound impact on students from the Granite State. [Click here to give.](#)

- WRITTEN BY:

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