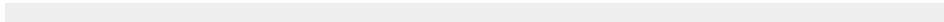




Styled Up

Visiting barbers offer free haircuts for all hair types to students



Wednesday, April 20, 2022

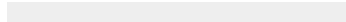


BRUNO PIVA DE CASTRO '24 GETS HIS HAIR CUT BY JOSE MELO (LEFT) WHILE ELVIS PRESINAL STYLES ADRIAN SUTTON '23. MELO AND PRESINAL WERE VISITING BARBERS FROM D'CACHET BARBER SHOP IN ROSLINDALE, MASSACHUSETTS, OFFERING FREE HAIRCUTS TO STUDENTS AS PART OF A DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION EVENT APRIL 19.

Adrian Sutton '23 is used to struggling to find local barber shops he feels confident visiting every time. Even when he's discovered places that have a barber he can build a rapport with, many others on the staff often don't seem to have the same experience cutting

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all hair types.

“Sometimes around here it’s hard to find barbers you can trust,” Sutton says.

So Sutton was quick to jump on the opportunity to get a haircut on campus Tuesday, when three barbers from D’Cachet Barber Shop in Roslindale, Massachusetts, visited UNH as part of a diversity, equity and inclusion event that offered free haircuts to students, catering to all hair types and styles.

Sutton, a member of the men’s track and field team, was just one of several dozen UNH students – many of whom were athletes – to take advantage of Tuesday’s event.

“Especially because a lot of athletes at UNH aren’t from around here, it can be hard to find the right barber, and some might be pretty expensive – so this is definitely a great idea,” Sutton says.



RYAN VERHOOG '23 GETS HIS HAIR CUT BY JAVIER MENDEZ.

The idea was to revive an offering previously held on campus – the Museum of Art hosted a similar event in 2018 – and was brought to fruition this year by UNH’s Committee on Mutual Respect (COMR). The initiative was originally born

because many Black students and student-athletes would often drive to neighboring states – or wait until they returned home for break – to have their hair cut, due to a lack of local outlets that are able to tailor services to all hair types.

Marcel Vernon, UNH’s chief financial officer, made the connection with D’Cachet thanks to a friendship with owner Elvis Presinal, and Vernon covered the cost of Presinal and his barbers visiting for the day.

“We came in here to try to bring a little diversity into the area,” Presinal says. “That’s one of our main focuses – we don’t just focus on one thing; we can do all types of haircuts. And we put a lot of passion into it.”

Presinal was joined by Jose Melo and Javier Mendez from his shop in Roslindale, and the trio set up at three tables in Lundholm Gymnasium from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with appointments every 30 minutes.

Bruno Piva De Castro '24 was another client to visit during the event. A native of Brazil, he was surprised to find that haircuts cost significantly more in the United States than his home country, so he was pleased to have the opportunity to get a free cut. He also praised the work Melo did, noting that the barber immediately understood the style he was looking for when he sat down.

“For students, I feel like the price and all the variations of haircuts” are great benefits of an event like Tuesday’s, Piva De Castro says.

The COMR team created additional ambiance by playing music throughout the day and also posted educational information about the cultural history of Black barbershops on posters along a wall inside the gym.

Those posters noted that owning a barbershop was one of the only businesses open to Black entrepreneurs in the free Northern states during the 19th century, and that they didn’t begin catering specifically to Black patrons until after the emancipation.



EDUCATIONAL POSTERS ADORNED THE WALL IN THE GYM.

During the rise of the Jim Crow laws, spaces where Black people could gather grew limited, and barbershops became a safe refuge from discrimination.

That sharing of cultural impact and history coupled with the opportunity to offer students free haircuts from experienced barbers are some of the reasons that members of the COMR hope to make events like Tuesday's more regular occurrences going forward.

"The dream is that we'd be able to host twice a semester going forward," Sarah Ross, assistant athletic director for student-athlete wellness and academic support services said during an interview leading up to the event.

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