Chase Retrosi ’20 says that he lives to push people out of their comfort zone. “[In college] you have the opportunity to be the person you want to be, but it’s a limited time offer,” he says. Personal development and community building drive Chase Retrosi. So, when opportunity comes knocking at his door, he doesn’t just walk through, he sprints. Chase, a Dover local and the latest in a long line of Retrosi Wildcats, came to UNH knowing that when he stepped onto campus he would be exposed to a host of new and exciting experiences that he could take advantage of. The first of those important and early UNH experiences was Pre-Orientation Adventure for Wildcats or PAWs.

PAWs, a week-long pre-orientation program, exposes first-year students to a small community of other Wildcats while challenging them in the outdoors. Through backpacking, rock climbing, and paddling, students create relationships that will help carry them through many challenging college experiences. When Chase arrived on campus after PAWs, he not only landed as a more confident student but did so with a slew of new best friends and a solid support system. Reveling in the academic and co-curricular freedom UNH afforded him, during his first year Chase focused on being open and curious. In the second semester of his first year, Chase went to the Outdoor Job Fair and discovered the Browne Center. The Browne Center, located a few miles from the UNH campus, is an experiential teaching lab. Through activities such as ropes courses and games, facilitators help individuals and groups work together effectively and efficiently. Having worked at a ropes course in high school, Chase was drawn to the self-imposed challenge and experiential learning philosophy of the Browne Center and applied for a position. Chase began his tenure doing trail maintenance and shadowing facilitators. As he got more experience, he began to facilitate activities, eventually becoming the student caretaker. When hired, Chase was the youngest staff member. Although a little intimidated at first, Chase leaned into the experience, knowing that if he put forth effort, he would only grow and learn.

Chase's work at the Browne Center and experience at PAWs inspired him to take a class in the Outdoor Education program. As he took more classes in Outdoor Education, he went from a Communications major to adding an Outdoor Education minor, eventually switching fully into Outdoor Education. Outdoor Education encapsulates many of the things Chase loves. He’s able to build meaningful relationships within the small program and focus on experiential learning. With each class, Chase feels that he's able to reflect and directly apply what he's learning in the classroom to his personal and professional life.

As Chase is always looking for opportunities to meet others, build community, and mentor, he has sought out several co-curricular activities on campus. In Campus Recreation, Chase works as the bouldering wall manager and outdoor trip leader. In the Memorial Union Building he is a member of lead staff and a financial assistant. In these roles, he focuses on team building. He leads team members to work to their fullest potential while mentoring younger staff members and other student leaders. To illustrate how Chase has set his team up for success at the MUB, he assessed and adjusted staff protocols to make works flow better. Another outlet for community building is his passion for music. Chase and his band, Daylo, have played in several popular venues on the Seacoast, such as The Press Room and The Stone Church.

Going into this senior year, Chase returned to what he saw as one of the ultimate platforms for positive social connection, self-growth, and mentorship at UNH, PAWs. As the backpacking coordinator, Chase designed, planned, and facilitated a series of backpacking trips for incoming PAWs students. Chase knew from personal experience the positive impact that PAWs has on students. Knowing that he was a part of the personal development of several UNH students, fulfilled him deeply and is his proudest moment at UNH thus far.

In terms of advice for other Wildcats, Chase remarks, “Push yourself to an experience that you're not 100 percent sure about. Worst possible scenario is that you have a great story to tell. Best possible scenario is that it could change your life forever.” As an educator, Chase is consistently trying to push himself and others to new experiences full of unexplored benefits. For example, when Chase hangs around the bouldering wall, he always introduces himself to new climbers in hopes of bettering their experience on the wall or within the climbing community. Through PAWs, facilitating at the Browne Center, working at Campus Rec and the MUB, and studying in the Outdoor Education program, Chase has seized opportunities that have enabled him to become a better friend, mentor, student, and educator. Chase has encouraged any new Wildcat to ask questions, say yes to opportunity, and be curious, for, as he says, you never know how you might affect others or what you might discover about yourself.

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