Zhuoying "Joy" Yang personifies her given name. Her passion for service to her community and those around her is palpable when she speaks, whether by encouraging friends to try something new that helps boost their confidence, or by sharing her gift of music with others. She chose the University of New Hampshire to pursue a degree in Information Systems and Business Analytics because she knew she could use her education to serve society, by combining that education with volunteer work, and her enthusiasm for making the most out of each experience. As a senior, I suddenly am very unwilling to graduate and leave because UNH has become a part of my life and brings me so many good memories. Because UNH makes me feel warm and loved, full of goodwill, I am willing to pay back to those I know and help those around me.

When Joy came to UNH from China, she feared that the transition would be scary because of what she had seen in the movies and on the news about life in the United States. But upon arriving in Durham, she instantly felt safe. People smiled at her on the sidewalk, cars stopped in the street to let her cross, and her roommates and classmates were open and welcoming during new experiences like group projects. In her first semester, Joy knew she wanted to explore all her new home had to offer: She tried archery for the first time, got an on-campus job in the Dining Hall for 20 hours a week, and started volunteering. Joy played piano in the church she joined and served as a teaching assistant in an elementary school's after-school program.

Independence is important to Joy because she wanted to prove to her family she could make a unique impact on the world, both with her academics and her involvements, and also by getting a job to pay for some of her living expenses. "UNH taught me that I can do well and do 'good' for the world. This place is warm, loving. I feel loved, and I want to give love back to the people around me."

When asked how she is different from when she stepped on campus, Joy said she is more independent. She said that was made possible because it was a safe environment, and because of the support of staff from the Office of International Students and Scholars and Paul College Undergraduate Programs. Each semester she grew as a person, and this encouraged her to continue to push the boundaries of what she was comfortable doing. "Before I came to the United States from China, my family would drive me anywhere I wanted to go and took care of everything for me so that I was always carefree. When I got the UNH I had to learn how to navigate the bus system and wanted to find a job to earn my own money."

Despite all of the ways she has changed because of her experiences at UNH, that one thing about her has remained: her desire to help others. This is what has kept Joy motivated when group projects, exams, papers, and presentations start to pile up. Knowing that she can help others through community service, or through her marketing internship with Navitas (a program that provides services to international students to support adjustment to university culture), has given her the balance in her life that helps her feel fulfilled and therefore, to succeed.

"I want to say that I have never been afraid of any challenge, because I will always have a positive attitude to face and overcome it."

Zhuoying Yang