Liberty University
DigitalCommons@Liberty University

April/May 2009 2009

4-1-2009

Partners in Ministry

Liberty University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lj_2009_apr

Liberty University, "Partners in Ministry" (2009). *April/May 2009*. Paper 13.
http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lj_2009_apr/13

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2009 at DigitalCommons@Liberty University. It has been accepted for inclusion in April/May 2009 by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Liberty University. For more information, please contact scholarlycommunication@liberty.edu.

Partners in ministry

April 01, 2009 ¦ Mitzi Bible

In the Planned Giving Department on the second floor of Campus North at Liberty University, a framed Mission Statement hangs on the wall: “To endow the future of Liberty University by securing deferred gifts through the estates of donors who support our cause.”

With one director, six planned giving officers and two administrative assistants, the Planned Giving Department is ultimately responsible for much of the university’s fundraising — now and in the future.

The department reported a banner year last year (operating from July 1-June 30), with funds totaling more than a record $18 million, doubling the amount from the previous year. Now, more than halfway through the current year, the department is poised for another successful year-end report. It has already produced more than 250 gifts, totaling $11 million, with a high number of them being charitable annuities.

“Even in what we call slow economic conditions, when you think about some of the programs we have, especially our annuity program — it’s a great way for people to double or triple their income — that’s probably why we’re still doing so well,” says Tom Arnold, director. “Some organizations won’t see three [charitable annuities] in a year — we received three in one day.

Some of the biggest universities in the United States won’t do but 20-25 a year; in six months, we’ve received over 80. The Lord’s blessing us.”

A charitable gift annuity is when a donor transfers cash or securities in exchange for the charity’s

promise to pay a fixed payment for life.

The annuity is just one of the depart-

ment's offerings, but it is often what opens the door to more planned gifts in the future, such as the Pennsylvania donor who gave Liberty its fourth-largest single bequest: $1 million. He had two annuities with LU since 2003, but changed his will three weeks before he died in June 2008, leaving Liberty the bequest in his will.

"The annuity opened the door, the visits and the phone calls and get well cards we sent to him built the relationship to where he felt strong enough to change his will three weeks before he died," Arnold says. "We had no idea we were getting that million dollars."

Sowing a seed, so to speak, the officers build relationships with donors near and far through ministering to their needs.

"It's a long-term, relationship type of business," Arnold says. "That's the reason for the success of this department; that's what we do and what we do really well throughout the United States."

The officers are in the field visiting donors every other week, in their respective territories.

"We go and hold their hand with them when they're in the hospital; we take them out to dinner, out to lunch, we spend time with them," he says.

Liberty's donors are everyone from the West Coast couple ("who probably couldn't tell you where Lynchburg is on the map," Arnold says, but have a love for the late Dr. Jerry Falwell and his ministry), to the Liberty history professor who decided to make Liberty the beneficiary of his insurance policy.

"They've got to have a love for the Lord's work and for this university to put money here," Arnold says, "but when our field men get to talk to them on the telephone, they feel the enthusiasm these guys have [for Liberty University], they sense that in our voice. We talk to them about the pluses this school has and tell them we're a debt-free university in good financial standing. That's one of the reasons we're the largest evangelical university in the world."