

2023-2024

PHILANTHROPY IMPACT REPORT



**LENOIR-RHYNE
UNIVERSITY**

THE IMPACT OF



On behalf of all of us at LR, thank you for your support.

We're thrilled to share the impact of your generosity in this year's philanthropic impact report. This report highlights how your contributions have directly empowered students, expanded LR's reach, and brought us closer to achieving our mission. As you delve deeper, you'll see inspiring stories and data that showcase the transformative power of your investment.

Thanks to generous donors like you, LR received more than \$13.6 million in fiscal year 2024. This impressive figure reflects a strong commitment to LR's mission and vision. It encompasses \$11.9 million in cash, new pledges, and new planned gifts for LR, and \$1.4 million specifically designated to support student scholarships.

As you know, LR's impact reaches far beyond the classroom. Experiential learning opportunities, service outreach — and much more — are made possible because of the generous support from donors, like you. Philanthropy isn't just about giving; it's about giving back and empowering the next generation of leaders. Philanthropy brings us together as a community.

I'm inspired by all the investments made by our extended Bear family and excited about the future. Because of you, we are strengthening LR's academic reputation while remaining affordable and accessible to brilliant young minds.

Here's to another extraordinary year, and as always — Go Bears.



Fred Whitt, Ed.D., President



The Impact You Make

HOW YOU GIVE

The Fund for Lenoir-Rhyne supports every student, every program and every faculty member on LR's campus. With more than 9.3 percent of LR alumni giving back last year, more than **\$6.6 MILLION** was raised in support of annual funds, helping to support every element of the campus experience.

\$13,660,837

TOTAL RAISED IN FISCAL YEAR 2023-24

1,441

TOTAL NUMBER OF ALUMNI DONORS

\$3,798,220

TOTAL REALIZED PLANNED GIFTS

\$451,033

**TOTAL RAISED IN UNRESTRICTED GIVING,
OR "UNIVERSITY'S GREATEST NEED"**

\$1,400,000

**TOTAL CASH RAISED IN SCHOLARSHIP
SUPPORT FOR LR AND LTSS**

\$18,000+

**AWARDED IN INTERNSHIP FUNDS TO
51 STUDENTS**

Your Gift, Their Future

LR is leading the charge in the ELCA higher education landscape with the new Fritz Honors College, the first of its kind. Made possible by visionary philanthropists Rob '76 and Kathy Fritz, the college isn't just about top grades. It seeks high-potential, highly motivated students from all backgrounds, and strives to foster a vibrant and inclusive intellectual community.

Led by founding dean Dr. Jeff Vahlbusch, the Fritz Honors College is creating a unique blend of interdisciplinary honors courses, research opportunities, internships, and leadership development experiences. This holistic approach seeks to empower our students to become the future leaders and problem-solvers our world needs.



LEARN HOW YOU CAN GET
INVOLVED WITH LR!

You Are in Good Company

Lenoir-Rhyne appreciates the generosity of our loyal supporters. Our giving societies were created to recognize outstanding generosity, and celebrate four types of giving:

1,064

FOUNDERS SOCIETY MEMBERS

WHOSE CUMULATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TOTAL \$25,000
OR MORE

108

1891 HERITAGE SOCIETY MEMBERS

WHO DOCUMENTED A PLANNED GIFT

422

PRESIDENT'S SOCIETY MEMBERS

WHO MAKE ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

1,003

LOYAL BEARS

WHO HAVE GIVEN THREE OR MORE CONSECUTIVE YEARS

Special thanks to our **237 VOLUNTEERS** who gave their time and talents to support the mission of the university.

Bears Break Records

On Tuesday, March 26, LR hosted its seventh annual giving day, Bears Give Back, and set a new record for total dollars raised in 24 hours. **785 generous alumni, family, friends and students** contributed **\$847,320** in support of academics and experiences that make LR special. These funds will provide immediate and direct support to students in the form of scholarships, innovative curriculum and instruction, study abroad opportunities, access to events around the United States, athletic programs and other elements of a multi-faceted liberal arts education.

Students celebrated and thanked donors all day long at our campus wide gathering, learning about the impact of philanthropy on their student experience. No matter where a gift is designated under the Fund for LR, it provides meaningful, transformative opportunities for our students across a variety of academic and extracurricular disciplines. Your support enriches every element of the LR experience and impacts every Bear. Thank you!

89

PEOPLE MADE
THEIR FIRST GIFT TO
LR DURING BEARS
GIVE BACK



Amaya Saunders '24 (left) and Kayla Blackwell '26 (right)

LR Education in Action

The Little Read program embodies the spirit of a liberal arts education by bringing together multiple disciplines. It centers around a nationally recognized children's author who comes to LR for a spring residency. This year, we celebrated record attendance for the giant puppet theater performance based on children's illustrator Michaela Goade's award-winning book "We Are Water Protectors."

Faculty from Lenoir-Rhyne's School of Education join forces with elementary teachers to craft a multi-disciplinary curriculum based on the selected book. This curriculum weaves together elements of literature, science, social studies, and the arts, offering a well-rounded exploration of the chosen theme.

The LR Playmakers, a student theater group, bring the book to life with a captivating play adapted from the story. This artistic expression not only entertains but also deepens understanding of the characters and themes.

The program's impact extends beyond the classroom. Through the generosity of donors to The Little Read program, LR provides free copies of the selected book to students in collaboration with Hickory City, Catawba County and Alexander County schools. For some, this may be their first or only personal book, a precious gift that ignites a passion for reading.



Seeing the activities I wrote come to life in local schools made me realize I made an impact on the program this year and some of the students may remember these activities and experience for the rest of their lives."

EMMA PENLAND '25
Elementary Education



Hands-on Exploration and Discovery

Through the generosity of alumni and local businesses, the Alex Lee Career and Professional Development Center at Lenoir-Rhyne hosts etiquette dinners for students interested in learning how to best conduct themselves during professional dining situations, like interviews or business outings.

The evening of learning is set over a multi-course meal where students receive instruction on etiquette topics and have time to visit with fellow dinner guests, practice learned skills, and network with a mentor or local business professional, sitting at the table.

The dinner helps develop leadership skills and confidence as they network over a business meal. Most students who participate have not had substantial experience at professional dining event. Through hands-on, experiential learning opportunities, like this, students build the skills necessary to navigate business situations and stand out with hiring managers.



“Participating in events like the etiquette dinners at LR has given me a firsthand look at the great impact my alma mater is making in the lives of its students. That’s exciting to me and something I want to continue to support.”

JAMIE TREADAWAY '92
Alumni Board member and chair of the Business Council Advisory Board



“In the etiquette dinner, I valued the engagement and opportunity to expand on my previous knowledge. I learned different ways to speak and eat properly and professionally around others and what utensils to use on certain dishes/foods.”

AVELYN PAULINO '26
Human Resource Management



Leadership and Community

LR's mission to develop the whole person, to liberate mind and spirit, clarify personal faith and spirit, foster physical wholeness, build a sense of community and promote responsible leadership for service to the world — is deeply embedded into everything we do.

Bears learn early about the importance of giving back. This year, the Theta Xi fraternity made a record-setting donation of \$1,750 to the Habitat for Humanity of Catawba Valley, demonstrating their expanded commitment to community service.



FRATERNITY &
SORORITY LIFE
CONDUCTED

400 HOURS

OF COMMUNITY
SERVICE



We hope that this donation demonstrates how much our chapter prides itself on service and leadership.

DEVIN OSBORNE '24, MPH '25

Chapter president and community health major

Developing the Whole Person

Three hundred and twenty-five student athletes earned a spot on the 2023-2024 South Atlantic Conference (SAC) Commissioner's Honor Roll, with at least one student athlete coming from each of LR's 23 sports. To be eligible, the student athlete must maintain a GPA of 3.30 or higher throughout the year.

Additionally, LR student athletes ranked ninth nationally among Division II schools by totaling **7,514 total hours of community service**. This marks the fourth straight year where LR has marked in the top 15 among DII institutions, and the ninth-place finish is tied for the best finish in LR history.

"I am extremely proud of our Bears student athletes for how they prioritize the importance of serving and giving back to our community," Vice President for Athletics Kim Pate said. "They truly embody everything we'd want in a student athlete; they are excelling in their sport, in the classroom, and are making an impact in the community."





Join Us Again with Your Generosity

Your support helps Lenoir-Rhyne students succeed in our ever-changing world. We're raising the bar to prepare graduates who will be responsible citizens and future global leaders. We remain committed to our mission and strive to make a positive impact on the world.

How to Make Your 2024-2025 Gift

MAIL a gift to 625 7th Ave NE, LRU 7467,
Hickory, NC 28601.

VISIT www.lr.edu/IGive2LRU or scan the
QR code to make an online gift.

CALL 828.328.7345 for more information.

We'll be glad to speak with you about how to support the areas of LR you're most passionate about and giving vehicles such as multi-year commitments, planned gifts and more.

