

Opportunity! Pass it on.

Helping students help themselves

MARTHA BERRY BELIEVED IN HELPING STUDENTS HELP THEMSELVES, and Berry's unique Gate of Opportunity Program is following her lead, enabling students to "work their way through college" with the prospect of graduating debt-free. But it isn't easy, and they can't do it alone. Having someone make an investment in your future can make all the difference now, as it did for generations of earlier Berry students. Just ask Alyssa Hollingsworth.

"To know that a donor has invested in my education pushes me to do better in both work and academics," Hollingsworth said. "It encourages me to do better than my best because I'm not just here for myself. Many times I've been tempted to quit. But then I remember that I was chosen, that someone thought I was a good investment. Thank you, thank you, thank you for allowing me to attend my dream school and for pushing me through the hard times."

Gate of Opportunity is a mission-focused program in which each four-year scholarship represents a partnership among a student and his or her family, a donor, and Berry College, with each partner contributing about a third of the cost of the student's education. The student's contribution comes largely through participation in Berry's Work Experience Program, the donor's either through earnings from an endowed fund or via one of the

targeted annual scholarship gifts that are helping to fund Gate Scholars in the early years of the program. Donors also have the option of serving as mentors for their recipients.

Progressively more responsible work experience is at the core of the Gate of Opportunity concept – as well as the Work Experience Program – and all Gate Scholars are expected to rise to leadership positions in their work department or in one of the growing number of student enterprises on Berry's campus. Gate Scholars work a total of 4,500 hours over the course of four years, including summers and breaks, retaining about 20 percent of their wages for personal expenses and applying 80 percent to the cost of their education.

"The program not only makes it possible for hardworking students to attend Berry in the tradition of our founder," explained Rufus Massey (75C), dean of student work, "but it also builds on our rich history of combining first-rate academics with a premier student Work Experience Program in a way that builds character and shapes values. Already, Gate Scholars are emerging as some of Berry's most promising future leaders."



Martha Berry

GATE SCHOLARS speak out

ON PARTICIPATION IN THE WORK PROGRAM

"[The work program] has helped me realize what perseverance and hard work truly mean. A lot of people are standing beside the Gate Scholars and rooting for our success."



Kelly

Kelly Wiggins
Math major
St. Simons Island, Ga.
Ambassador of special projects, Oak Hill and The Martha Berry Museum;
2012-13 resident assistant

"I have learned that although sometimes opportunity may present itself to you, it is still up to you to recognize it and chase it down. It's very easy to sit around and wait for something great to happen, but making those great things happen through your own hard work is a true test of character."

Darren Barnett
International studies major
Los Angeles, Calif.

Sports producer for Viking Fusion and interactive media assistant for e-communication services



Darren

"I have learned that hard work is required to achieve anything in life. With hard work and dedication, I will be able to accomplish anything that I set my mind to."

Leah Bolden
Biology major
Bowie, Md.
Class of 2015 Firsthand4You representative



Leah

ON GATE OF OPPORTUNITY DONORS

"At all times, I feel that there is someone who believes in me and thinks that I have what it takes to succeed, which helps me put my head down and fight for what I want out of life. If I could say one thing to my donor, it would be that the words "thank you" are honestly not enough. You have truly changed the course of my life and the lives of countless others still to come. I only hope I can someday touch someone's life in the way that you have touched mine."

Rebekah Ingram
Psychology major
Alpharetta, Ga.
Supervisor, Student Prospect Research Team



Rebekah



Ethan

"The sheer generosity displayed by the people donating to this scholarship is truly remarkable and inspiring. Knowing that I have a donor investing in my education drives me to perform at the utmost of my abilities, whether I am in the classroom or in the workplace. If I could say one thing to my donor,

I would thank them for believing in me and trusting that I am a worthwhile investment of their time and money."

Ethan Purser
Economics major
Rockmart, Ga.
Supervisor, Student Activities Office Facilities Team; sports information assistant

photography by Paul O'Mara

\$10 million matching fund

A matchless opportunity to help students

IF YOU ASK ANY OF THE 28 STUDENTS who attended Berry College on Gate of Opportunity Scholarships in the 2011-12 academic year how the unique program affected his or her ability to go to school on the world's largest campus, you likely will hear something very similar to psychology major Anna Brasher's uncomplicated response: "If it were not for the Gate of Opportunity program, I would not be at Berry at all."

Through the generosity of alumni and friends over the last three years, the Gate of Opportunity Scholarship program has been making it possible for these students to "work their way through Berry" with the prospect of graduating debt free. Now, thanks to the tremendous gift of a loyal friend of the college who hopes to inspire the participation of others, the program will grow even faster, eventually expanding the number of Gate of Opportunity Scholarships by 80.

This friend has established a \$10 million Donor Opportunity Fund that is creating opportunity for more Berry alumni and friends to create opportunity for Berry students. The fund is matching the gifts of individuals and groups, such as reunion classes, who endow new Gate of Opportunity Scholarships outright or expand existing scholarships into Gate of Opportunity status. Gifts are matched at the rate of \$1.25 for every new dollar given, making creation of a \$225,000 Gate of

Opportunity endowed fund possible with a gift of \$100,000. This means the donor provides about 45 percent of the funds needed, the Donor Opportunity Fund 55 percent.

The same math works for enhancing an existing scholarship. If, for example, a donor or group of donors opts to expand a scholarship fund of \$130,000 into a Gate Scholarship fund, he or she would make a new gift of \$42,222, and the Donor Opportunity Fund would provide \$52,778 in matching funds for a grand total of \$225,000. Planned gifts, such as those made through an estate, also can be matched using a different formula.

"The seed gift for the Donor Opportunity Fund is an amazing vote of confidence in Berry's enduring mission," said President Steve Briggs. "We are honored and humbled to be able to use these funds to expand the Gate of Opportunity Scholarship Program, which is rooted in Martha Berry's timeless concept of helping students help themselves. At a time when concern over college expenses is making national headlines, new Gate of Opportunity Scholarships will enable even more talented, hardworking students to gain a life-changing Berry education."

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