Marietta, Georgia, November 8, 2018 – Life University’s Center for Compassion, Integrity and Secular Ethics’ (CCISE) Chillon Project at Lee Arrendale State Prison for women has been awarded another program-sustaining grant from Laughing Gull Foundation in the amount of $75,000 per year for the next three years. This vital funding will help subsidize staff salaries, books and supplies for students, as well as the addition of adjunct faculty to teach the program.

“The Laughing Gull Foundation is privileged to continue our support of Life University's Chillon Project. The Chillon Project is innovative and inspiring in its work to provide educational opportunities to incarcerated students. Their work creates opportunities and changes lives as well as communities,” says Hez Norton, Interim Executive Director of Laughing Gull Foundation.

The Chillon Project is an undertaking of CCISE, together with the Georgia State Department of Corrections, to introduce full associate and bachelor’s degree programs in Georgia’s correctional facilities. Starting in 2016, Life University began offering an Associate of Arts Degree at Arrendale in Positive Human Development and Social Change. This was the first full degree program to be offered in a prison by a college or university based in the state of Georgia since 1994, when Pell Grants were banned for incarcerated people.

Laughing Gull Foundation (LGF) is a progressive family foundation rooted in the Southern United States, and they leverage their resources to transform systems, institutions and relationships for the benefit of people and the planet. Their mission is to honor the family’s evolving identity while proactively addressing broken systems that have created inequality and harmed the planet. They achieve their mission through grantmaking, donor organizing and impact investing in support of three priorities: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Equality; Higher Education in Prison; and Environmental Justice.

In 2015, representatives from LGF met and spoke with several incarcerated people at Lee Arrendale State Prison who were involved in educational programs about why they were interested in obtaining a college degree. This led to Life University’s CCISE writing a grant request, which LGF met with a $40,000 per year grant for the first three years of the Chillon Project.

Thomas Fabisiak, Ph.D., Director of the Chillon Project, says, “We are honored to continue our partnership with the Laughing Gull Foundation, whose support has...”
been essential to the Chillon Project’s development. We are grateful for their extraordinary commitment to justice and equity, and for all that they do to make higher education available to people in prison in the South.”

Fabisiak adds, “The additional funds will support our hiring of a part-time staff person to work onsite with the Chillon Project.” This added position means increased support to the students as well as to the program facilitators, which will free up more time for fundraising, research and program development work.

Michael Karlin, Ph.D., Life University Assistant Professor of Psychology and Associate Director of CCISE, says, “Laughing Gull Foundation was there at the beginning and really got us off the ground with their initial grant. We were able to use the subsidy for our hiring and supplies for the program’s first three years. And now, with a renewed grant and increased funding, this means a vote of confidence in the value of our program and that LGF sees it as doing really important work in the field of higher education in prisons in the South.”

The grant will play a big role in helping sustain the Chillon Project as it expands to include a new degree offering: a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology. Funding the progression of the project will allow the entire first class at Arrendale State Prison, which will graduate with the associate degree in January, to continue on to the bachelor’s program.

To support the Chillon Project and give to defray the costs associated with this valuable education, please visit Alumni.LIFE.edu/ChillonProject.

And, for more information, please visit:
- Chillon Project: Compassion.LIFE.edu
- Laughing Gull Foundation: www.LaughingGull.org

About Life University
Founded in Marietta, Georgia in 1974, Life University is a health sciences institution most known for its chiropractic program, the largest single campus chiropractic program in the world. Life University is regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award baccalaureate, master’s and Doctor of Chiropractic degrees, and also has programmatic accreditation through the Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE), the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) and the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE). The mission of Life University is to empower students with the education, skills and values necessary for career success and life fulfillment, based on a vitalistic philosophy.

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