

Discipleship

■ How does Lightbearers disciple college students?

- The aim of the Lightbearers Discipleship Community is to connect college students with Jesus, His people and His plan for the ends of the earth. We do this by owning and operating housing where students live and make a 12-month commitment to a discipleship community that provides an ecosystem for spiritual growth. The four elements that make up the LDC is: Community, Institute, Mentorship and Missions.

■ How is Lightbearers different from a CRU or BSM? (for MSU speak to future hopes once apartment is built)

- We believe that in a large college town that many efforts are needed to reach the next generation for Christ. We are grateful for other organizations that are working toward that end as well. The main difference between Lightbearers and other college ministries is the community aspect and specific focus on discipleship. Statistics show that 70% of the next generation seriously struggle with anxiety and depression and research shows that the best antidote is real friendships and community. There is an eternal need for the gospel to be understood and we believe that our communities provide a safe space for the gospel to be understood and lived out.

■ Do you partner with other college ministries?

- Our primary partners are local churches. As a parachurch ministry, Lightbearers desires to be a servant to the local church. To that end, we connect students with mentors from their churches, invite local pastors to speak at the Lightbearers Institute, encourage students to travel overseas with their churches, and recruit students to Lightbearers at the invitation of these churches. In addition, we work to maintain good relationships with evangelical parachurch ministries at our different campuses.

■ Are you like a RA (resident assistant) living with students?

- The most similar part of my job to an RA is that we try to encourage community through events and relationships. Outside of that factor, the majority of a discipleship staff's time is spent meeting with students and mentors to encourage spiritual growth. Time is also dedicated to Institute, networking with local churches and ad hoc needs at the apartments. (Discipleship Staff Job Graphic)

■ What does a typical day look like for you as a discipleship staff?

- (Discipleship Staff Job Graphic)

Apartment Model

■ Why does Lightbearers not use the rental income to pay for full staff salaries?

- Lightbearers as an organization has two purposes: discipling students and funding missions. In alignment with this mission we want our rental income to go toward these two goals as well. The majority of student ministries require full support to be raised for their staff so Lightbearers aims to lighten that load for our ministry staff. There is also some inherent value in having a support team as it provides an accountability network and prayer team. Lightbearers values discipleship and because of the sustainable model we are able to fund half of ministry staffs' support in addition to some of the administrative costs.

■ How does Lightbearers acquire its apartments?

- Lightbearers aims to be opportunistic when it comes to owning student housing near college campuses so that the model becomes sustainable quickly. In Fayetteville, AR that meant buying an apartment complex after the financial crisis due to the low sell price. In Stillwater, OK we built the first half of the complex and plan to build the second half when the student housing market has higher demand. In Starkville, MS we hope to build once the capital is raised. Our board and executive director are prayerfully looking to future expansions through the lens of strategy and opportunity.

■ How much work do you do on the property?

- (Discipleship Staff Job Graphic)

■ Does 100% of the profits go to missions?

- Organizationally, we use our profits toward apartment renovations, discipleship costs and missions. Our goal with all of our profits is to disciple students and be generous so that more may come to know Jesus around the world. We are grateful that the apartments have provided over \$1,000,000 for missions over the past 10 years and we hope to multiply those efforts through growing to more campuses.

Raising Support

■ How much of your raised money goes to administrative costs?

- Lightbearers does not take an administrative fee from funds raised for staff support, although it's a common practice among many non-profit organizations. All designated funds for staff support go directly towards staff salaries and approved ministry expenses. Staff members do raise funds to cover normal payroll-related expenses (taxes and health insurance, where applicable) as well.

■ Why should I give to staff support instead of straight to missions?

- By giving to support, the money goes toward discipling students near campus and additionally helps with apartment profitability that goes to missions. We want missions to get the funding needed to reach unreached peoples so we have ensured that our model is generous to that end.

Missions

■ What kind of projects do you fund?

- We fund project grants for missionaries involved in Gospel-centered work in Asia and northern Africa. These grants range from Bible translation to start-up business expenses to microfinance and social welfare projects administered by Great Commission workers. As we are limited to project grants, we do not fund salaries or other ongoing budget items such as maintenance or utilities.
- Our projects typically focus on different areas of church planting: access and sustainability, training and equipping, and scripture translation.
- Specific Example: In rural India, Lightbearers funded a partner to purchase a flatbed truck that could haul bricks for construction. This truck was used to rebuild homes and churches in a town where Hindus persecuted Christians. This truck was half way funded by the grant and the business model paid off the rest of the debt. Now the truck is paid off and is used to move equipment for revival meetings.
- Specific Example: In Southeast Asia, we have had multiple projects where we've funded for local lay pastors to get together for training and Lightbearers has paid for travel expenses, hotels and venue so the locals could encourage one another and mutually equip.
- Specific Example: In the Middle East, we have given a grant to help fund thumb drives that went in jewelry so that believers in closed countries could get the scriptures.
- We also have two podcasts where we interview partners that you can encourage supporters to listen.

■ Why do you only work in Asia and northern Africa?

- Jesus came to ransom a people from every tribe, tongue and nation. We feel called organizationally to direct our funding towards those tribes, tongues and nations that currently have the least access to the Gospel and the fewest resources to that end. Most of these areas are in Asia and northern Africa, so we have made the decision to focus on that geography of the world.