

# The Ledger

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## The Most Important Five Percent

### Invest in Others

Preston Byers left a thriving practice in March 2007 to join LPL Financial. He and his business partners sought the typical rewards of independence, but were especially drawn by the opportunity to have greater control over their charitable endeavors. They formed ClearBridge Wealth Management of Atlanta, Georgia, and have since aided many in their home state, including soldiers, children and even a white tiger or two.

“Charitable giving has always been very important to me,” said Preston. “However, it typically started and ended with writing a lot of checks to a lot of different causes supported by our clients. We still do that, of course, and are happy to help out in that way, but we also wanted to create a vehicle that would allow us to make a more meaningful impact to a few select charities. We started our Charitable Partners Program and currently support four wonderful causes with our time and financial resources. Our goal is to dedicate five percent of our total net revenues to our Charitable Partners.”

Giving back to the community motivates Preston, an LPL Financial Chairman’s Club member, and his coworkers to continue to grow their business. To him, the philosophy is simple: “We are keenly aware that the more successful we are as a firm, the more resources we will have to support the causes that interest us.”

### Support from All Sides

Preston openly acknowledges that, in a sense, the money ClearBridge donates to charities comes from its clients, since they provide the company’s revenue stream. The clients, however, are well aware of the firm’s Charitable Partners Program and embrace it. Some even mention it as a key reason they choose ClearBridge as their financial advisor.

“We don’t hide our community involvement from our clients. In fact, we go out of our way to tell them about



Preston Byers, holding a baby Asian leopard, and his children, Taylor, Trey and Lawson, cherish their time together at the Chestatee Wildlife Refuge.

the programs and events with which we are involved, and even invite them to participate,” said Preston, who regularly arranges behind-the-scenes tours for clients and their children at the Chestatee Wildlife Preserve—one of ClearBridge’s primary charities.

Clients have also visited and volunteered at Camp Twin Lakes, an outdoor camp for special needs children and another key charity for ClearBridge. Preston has found that clients who make a personal connection with those who receive assistance have become some of the biggest supporters of the ClearBridge tradition of giving.

“These are good people who enjoy being part of efforts that help such worthy causes. They understand that we could just as easily keep the profit for ourselves, but have elected to do otherwise. I hope that our clients are as proud of our accomplishments as we are.”

Volunteering is a team endeavor at ClearBridge, where the five staff members all donate time and energy to the charities the company supports. According to Preston,

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providing a culture of philanthropy with opportunities to pitch in for worthy causes is a big reason some of them came to work at ClearBridge.

“They like it here because we do things a little different. We work really hard, but we also try to keep things in perspective.”

### Wounded Warriors Receive Small Repayment

The first organization identified by ClearBridge as one of its Charitable Partners was the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP). The partnership began when Preston and one of his clients decided more should be done for the wounded service members they saw on the nightly news returning home from duty in Afghanistan and Iraq.

They wanted to provide tangible support for these patriots to help them heal their physical and mental wounds, so they started an annual fund-raiser to benefit WWP. The organization’s original mission was to deliver backpacks to the bedside of recuperating service members, packs filled with personal items to help the soldiers feel “normal” and let them know in a small way how much they are appreciated.

The WWP has evolved from its humble start of delivering a few backpacks, and now offers a diverse array of important programs that aid combat victims, many of whom suffered traumatic gunshot wounds, burns, or blasts and have lost a limb or limbs during the current conflict in the Middle East.

ClearBridge helped host a local event that raised almost \$80,000 for the WWP. The event included a silent auction



National media personality Clark Howard (left) poses with Preston Byers at a Wounded Warrior Project fund-raising event hosted by ClearBridge Wealth Management at which Mr. Howard spoke.

and speeches from national media personalities Neil Boortz and Clark Howard. Preston was particularly proud to learn that some ClearBridge clients were key contributors to the event’s enormous fund-raising success.

### A Special Camp for Special Kids

Camp Twin Lakes is a not-for-profit organization that provides a year-round camping facility outside of Atlanta for children with serious illnesses and special needs. The camp supplies the medical equipment and staff necessary to maintain the campers’ health at the camp without sacrificing their ability to connect with nature and have fun just being kids.

The camp is billed as “a place where young spirits can soar.” Supporting this terrific organization financially certainly has lifted the spirits of the ClearBridge group. Preston has a personal connection to the camp, since members of his immediate family have special needs, as do a number of ClearBridge clients.

Of particular interest to Preston is Camp Sunshine, which caters to children with cancer and is one of more than 15 special needs organizations that use the Camp Twin Lake facility. Camp Sunshine provides programs throughout the year so children with cancer can enjoy normal activities like swimming, horseback riding, arts and crafts, and making friends. Often isolated from their peers due to their illness and the demands of treatment, the children who attend Camp Sunshine realize they are not alone in their struggle with cancer.

Preston describes volunteering at the camp as a “humbling experience” since these children bear such heavy physical and emotional burdens, yet are so appreciative of their camp experience. Their smiles make it all worth while.

### Granting Wishes

Because the experience of working with the Camp Sunshine children, the ClearBridge group is in the midst of adding another Charitable Partner, the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Through Make-A-Wish, ClearBridge will become an official Wish Grantor. This requires specific training since Wish Grantors work directly with the children and their families. One of the most important roles of Wish Grantors is to help children determine what their ultimate wish is. After helping a child determine a wish, ClearBridge will provide the financing to make that special wish come true.

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Through his work with Camp Sunshine, Preston has already seen the impact a fulfilled wish can have on the children and their family. "The wish can allow the focus to switch from illness and treatment to fun and laughter, even if for a short time."



Helping animals rescued by the Chestatee Wildlife Preserve is particularly rewarding for Preston Byers, who has been an animal lover since childhood.

### Helping Fill the Kitty Kitty

When he brings his own children out to the Chestatee Wildlife Preserve, another ClearBridge Charitable Partner, Preston, who has always loved animals, feels like a kid himself. The refuge is home to more than 300 exotic animals, including the largest collection of white tigers in North America. Its primary mission is to rescue animals that have been orphaned, mistreated or are otherwise endangered.

On more than one occasion, ClearBridge has arranged for animals to be brought to Camp Sunshine or for Camp Sunshine campers to take a field trip to Chestatee. By hosting such outreach events or sponsoring charity golf tournaments on behalf of Chestatee, ClearBridge has been able to raise awareness for the refuge and attract additional visitors and support.

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### Giving Freely but Wisely

ClearBridge employees manage their Charitable Partner giving with one simple guideline: It's not enough to just write a check.

They want to select charities in which they can be materially involved, charities in which their level of contribution will have a substantial impact. Preston offers that same advice to other LPL Financial advisors looking to get more value from their philanthropy.

"When we formed ClearBridge, we didn't start with a complicated business plan," explained Preston. "Instead, we created a list of our 10 core values which have become the foundation for everything we do. Giving back to the community was one of those core values."

As far as getting the most value for your employees and yourself, Preston suggests the following: "Do it for the right reasons. Don't worry about what will drive the most business to the firm; just try to find a cause or causes you really care about. We're all pretty blessed in this business, and the ability to give back is very special."