It’s not every day a social worker finds himself with a spare condo. But when Terry Etling (B.S., social work, 1966) and his partner, Mark Schwamberger, decided to return to Ohio after years of living in Florida, the question arose of what to do with their home in Fort Lauderdale.

Their final answer: Donate it to help future social workers and their clients.

The property gift, with an appraised value of $448,000, is the largest gift ever to Ohio State’s College of Social Work. Proceeds from selling the property will fund a charitable gift annuity, which will provide Etling regular payments for the rest of his life, in addition to funding the college.

Etling, whose career includes rehab counselor at Apple Creek State Hospital, deputy director of Ohio Rehabilitation Services, and a policy advisor for the Florida Rehabilitation Council, has yet to decide the exact use of his gift, but his primary interest is in outcome-based research.

“That’s an area I’d like to see the college invest in,” he said. “You look at services and decide which outcomes are successful and which are not. It’s common now for services to be based on ‘If it feels good, it must be right.’ I feel it’s important to take a good look at what works.” Such an approach, he explained, helps providers identify and foster their strengths. “There’s a good deal of variability among various providers of the same service,” he said.

In addition to donating his condominium, Etling plans to give the college the gift of his time as well, as a member of the college’s first-ever Dean’s Development Circle. Etling said Dean William Meezan approached him about participating on the board, which focuses on fundraising, and “was pretty persuasive.”

While Social Work hasn’t received as many large gifts as other areas of the university, Etling believes that will change. “The College of Social Work doesn’t receive a lot of large gifts, probably because they graduate a large number of social workers,” Etling said, laughing.

Since social workers touch a lot of people’s lives and their work benefits everyone, Etling hopes that someone considering making a gift to the university will see the appeal of supporting social work. “We’re hoping this gift will help get the ball rolling and get people to think about making their own significant gifts,” he said. “They wouldn’t have to be from the College of Social Work to consider making a gift to the college.”