

Newsroom

November 7, 2016

Georgia Southern University

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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Newsroom" (2016). *Newsroom*. 564.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom/564>

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Georgia Southern mobilized resources to help those affected by Hurricane Matthew

NOVEMBER 7, 2016

When Hurricane Matthew displaced hundreds of thousands of people and left behind a trail of destruction in the coastal regions of Georgia, many families, organizations and people in need were left relying on the help of others. That's when Georgia Southern University stepped in.

In addition to housing and feeding first responders and emergency personnel on campus during the storm, students, faculty and staff from a variety of University departments joined together to assist others from Jekyll Island to Metter, Georgia.

"The compassion of our students, faculty and staff is boundless," said University President Jaimie Hebert, Ph.D. "Civility, kindness and collaboration are part of our core values. I am so proud of our campus community that immediately and wholeheartedly exemplified what Georgia Southern is all about by volunteering and supporting those in need."

Nursing students help evacuate patients

When FEMA/CEMA called a mandatory evacuation from the Savannah area due to the potential impact of Hurricane Matthew, Peggy Mossholder, MSN, CHPN, assistant professor with Georgia Southern's School of Nursing, was asked to coordinate the care of 12 patients from Hospice Savannah who urgently needed to be evacuated to Candler Hospital in Metter, Georgia.

With only three nurses to manage the hospice home care patient triage and care for 12 evacuated patients, Mossholder made the call for volunteer nurses. Seven Junior II and three Senior II nursing students from the School of Nursing responded to the call and assisted the hospice patients and staff of Hospice Savannah.

"Without the help of the nursing students, we would not have managed as well as we did during the emergency evacuation period," said Mossholder. "As a member of the nursing faculty, I was pleased to have 10 students come to our aid and I have never been as proud of our students as I was during this adventure."

Providing shelter to animals and staff from Georgia Sea Turtle Center



In the midst of Hurricane Matthew, residents of coastal Georgia were not the only ones taking to the evacuation routes. A gopher tortoise, diamondback terrapins, box turtles, sea turtles, additional turtles, an owl and a wood stork from the Georgia Sea Turtle Center on Jekyll Island took shelter on Georgia Southern

University's campus as the hurricane passed through the region.

In preparation for the storm, students, faculty and staff with Georgia Southern worked with the Georgia Sea Turtle Center to assist with the relocation of approximately 80 of the Center's animals to the University's facilities and assisted in coordinating shelter for the Center's staff and their families. More than 30 volunteers from several departments within the University's College of Science and Mathematics, including biology, geology and geography, and physics, as well as staff from the University's Physical Plant department and Office of Public Safety, worked to ensure a smooth transition for the animals to their storm shelter on campus.

"Evacuating 80 animals from our facility was a major undertaking and could not have been done without the help of others," said Georgia Sea Turtle Center Director and Veterinarian, Terry Norton, DVM, Diplomate ACZM. "Georgia Southern University personnel and facilities were a critical part of making this effort successful. All animals returned to our facility in good shape and many of them have been subsequently released. We are very thankful to all our partners in this effort."

The animals have returned to their home on Jekyll Island. Fortunately, the animals, staff and facility of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center weathered the storm without harm.

Georgia Southern University has led the longest-running, 28-year-old [Sea Turtle Program at St. Catherines Island](#) on the Georgia coast and works with the Georgia Sea Turtle Center on research and education projects.

Photos and video of the evacuation are available on the [Georgia Southern University Sea Turtle Program at St. Catherines Island Facebook page](#).

School psychology students deliver supplies for hurricane relief



L-R: School psychology program graduate students Emily Cameron, Jessica Miller and Courtney Smith

When the storm's destruction left many families to endure flooding, power outages, downed trees and the loss of valuable food and supplies, leaders from the [Ed.S. School Psychology degree program](#) and School Psychology Student Association (SPSA) in the University's College of Education immediately knew they wanted to help.

"When we found out that many students and families in Savannah had been displaced from their homes in the wake of Hurricane Matthew, we coordinated a donation drive to aid in the storm relief efforts," said Jessica Miller,

graduate assistant for the school psychology program and volunteer coordinator for SPSA. "As aspiring school psychologists, we understand how difficult learning can be when a student's basic needs are not being met."

SPSA members and school psychology faculty reached out to Communities in Schools of Savannah and Silk Hope Church to see what they could do to help.

"With the help of the Georgia Southern community, we were able to collect more than 275 items to support families in Savannah," said Miller. "We want to give a big thank you to everyone who contributed, your generosity is tremendously appreciated!"

On Friday, Oct. 21, Miller and several students from the school psychology program delivered four large boxes of clothing, school supplies, personal care items and non-perishable foods for students and families who were affected by the storm.

SPSA and the school psychology program partner together each spring and fall semester to coordinate a service project focusing on local schools or agencies that support children.

Georgia Southern's Military and Veteran Student Center hosts inaugural Veterans Day Ceremony

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On Nov. 11, Georgia Southern's Military and Student Veteran Center will host the inaugural Veterans Day Ceremony in honor of our American heroes. The event will take place on Sweetheart Circle where American flags will line the walkway from the entrance of the circle to the Marvin Pittman Administration building, and the stately oak trees will be adorned with yellow ribbons. Patriotic music, remarks, and a special appearance by Freedom, the University's American bald eagle, are planned for guests. Students, faculty, staff and members of the community are encouraged to attend.

The ceremony will begin at 9 a.m. with music provided by the Georgia Southern Symphonic Wind Ensemble. Guests are asked to arrive by 8:45 a.m. for seating.

"Veterans Day is a time to celebrate and honor all U.S. military members who have served our country — past and present," said student Lindsey Gile. "I believe it is important to show our support and appreciation to those who contributed to our nation's security and freedoms. I am proud and grateful to have served our country alongside so many great military members. Thank you for your service and sacrifices, Veterans!"

Student Derek Smith, military student advocate, will serve as the master of ceremonies. Speakers include LTC (R) William Roberts, associate dean of students for Military Affairs, Marvin Mills, staff veteran guest speaker, and Justin Williams, student veteran guest speaker. Rick Favors, former vice president of the Student Veterans Association, will provide insight on the history of Veterans Day.

"Veterans Day is a reflection on the things that have been accomplished not only through my actions of serving but also the actions of my peers to accomplish the mission, and most importantly those who came before me, who fought for the freedom I enjoy and who gave me the opportunity to serve," said Michael Hess, U.S. Army veteran.

This is the first time the Center has hosted a Veterans Day event to show appreciation to veterans in our community who have served. The event has been in the works for several months and the Center plans on continuing this celebration.

"The Military and Veteran Student Center is very proud to host the Georgia Southern University Veterans Day Ceremony," said LTC Roberts. "This will be a great opportunity for us to salute and celebrate our Service men and women who have served our nation so well."

The Military and Veteran Student Center, located in the Russell Union, serves as a resource to assist military members, veterans and their family members in making a successful transition to the student community. The Center also helps military and veteran students become contributing members of the University community, and helps them on their path to graduate with knowledge and the tools necessary to continue being a productive member of society.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers more than 125 degree programs serving 20,674 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered and hands-on approach to education. GeorgiaSouthern.edu.