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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Newsroom" (2010). *Newsroom*. 921.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom/921>

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Georgia Southern University Community to Fulfill Holiday Wishes

NOVEMBER 1, 2010

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Georgia Southern University will light its annual Holiday Helper Tree for the 17th consecutive year during a kick-off event at 10 a.m., Wednesday, Nov. 3, in the Russell Union Commons.

The tree holds the holiday wishes of more than 800 people who would not receive gifts without the compassion of faculty, staff and student volunteers. Individuals are sponsored by 18 local social service agencies in the Statesboro area. Each year, more than 200 University volunteers fulfill the needs and wishes of these children and adults.

"Programs like this prove that Georgia Southern operates hand-in-hand with the local community and together we are able to meet the needs of so many people," said Eileen Sconyers Smith, who founded the University's Holiday Helper program 17 years ago. "The most wonderful thing about this program is its simplicity. Some of the needs seem so trivial to us — a pair of pink slippers, a gift basket of toiletries, a box of cookies — but to these people that small, inexpensive gift means the world. It both warms and breaks your heart at the same time."

Interested individuals or groups are invited to choose one or more tags from the tree. After purchasing the gift(s), they return them — wrapped or unwrapped and with the tag attached — to the Russell Union Commons, where they are given an ornament to place on the tree.

The Holiday Helpers campaign is sponsored by Georgia Southern's Office of Student Leadership and Civic Engagement and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

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