

## Santa's Helpers/Macon Helps Impacts 307 Kids

Written by Debbie Gregory  
Tuesday, December 18, 2012

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Following in their annual tradition, Santa's Helpers/Macon Helps have brought Holiday joy to 307 area children.

It's that time of the year again, as the Christmas season finds us rejoicing in the wonderful gift of God's love, as it is revealed in the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior. This glorious season, we should all take a moment with our families to ponder the true meaning of the Christmas holidays. The true spirit of this glorious day is about remembering the bright star that shone over Bethlehem so many years ago, and out of gratitude for our redeemer, we should celebrate his birthday by worshipping Him and being especially conscious of those in need.

"For many, the holidays are a happy time of family and friends," said Gary Whitaker, "but unfortunately for many more, it is a time of struggling to bring holiday cheer in the economic downturn that continues to have a grip on us."

"Originally called Shop With the Cops," Gary recalled, "Shelia Lowhorn and I took over the charity event after the police officers realized they didn't have enough time or volunteers to help out with the program, which we renamed Santa's Helpers in 2005."

Gary says that thanks to Macon Helps sponsorship they have continued to raise a tremendous amount of money during the year, with several businesses, individuals and organizations also graciously donating to the county-wide endeavor.

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Once again, on Thursday, December 13, Santa's Helpers/Macon Helps spread the spirit of the holidays to 307 children, whose families needed assistance. Parents picked up toys, clothes and other Christmas surprises for their children at the Sally Wells Building, located at the Macon County Fairgrounds, in Lafayette.

"We raised over \$6,000 in the annual Toy Run and Santa's Helpers roadblock," noted Whitaker, "along with cash donations, including coats and toys from Christina Chamber as well."

"The spirit of Christmas is taking the time to show people that you truly care," said Christina. "To embrace the true meaning of the holidays you should be willing to give of yourself, your time and your love. Do not think of the gifts that you give to others as an obligation but think of it as a symbol of your love during the most wonderful time of the year."

"Macon Helps also distributes food baskets, along with the toy drive," said Valerie Reid, Manager of Macon Helps. "We do our best to help as many families as we possibly can. We would also like to express our gratitude to Doug Holder of Indigo Blues for helping with clothes for all the children."

This time of the year is a wonderful opportunity for everyone to help those who are less fortunate and Santa's Helpers/Macon Helps would like to thank everyone who had a hand in this project. "It would be hard to try and list everybody who helped out in one way or another," said Valerie Ried, "but we would like to thank Mark Gammons, Macon County inmates, the board of Macon Helps & employees, MCHS students and the community."

"God bless you all and Merry Christmas."