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### Jaguars in the Community

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University Park, IL,  
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# Jaguars in the Community



[Governors State](#)

[University](#) (GSU) student-athletes, coaches and administrators were involved with numerous community service projects during the 2019-20 school year, which afforded GSU [Athletics](#) the chance to engage in NAIA Champions of Character initiatives.

The NAIA Champions of Character program promotes five core values: integrity, respect, responsibility, sportsmanship and servant leadership. Going out into surrounding communities, Jaguar student-athletes modeled those values by performing hours of service projects.

The efforts kicked off last summer even before the academic year began when the [women's](#) and [men's](#) cross country teams took part in the World Vision 6K run that generated funds to help underdeveloped countries get access to clean water. "It was our honor and privilege to donate a few hours of our time for such worthy and emotional causes," said cross country coach [Kevin Kredens](#).

GSU's nine varsity sports teams commit to two community service projects a year, but some programs—such as [women's basketball](#)—take on additional opportunities. During the holidays, coach [Tonishea Mack](#)'s squad helped a local charity purchase presents

that were distributed to families in need in the area. The team also partnered with Action Love-Monee to assist a family in crisis with house and lawn maintenance.



Mack also participated in an All Girls Matter Expo, presented by America's Big Sisters, which was held in conjunction with NBA All-Star Weekend. She served on a star-studded panel that delivered words of inspiration to over 400 high school girls in attendance.

"It was a privilege to join a group of remarkable women who serve as great role models," said Mack. "It was a great opportunity to spread the message of empowerment."

The [men's basketball](#) team took time to volunteer on the morning of an afternoon road game during GSU Athletics' annual Service Day. A record turnout of Jaguar [student-athletes from eight sports teams assisted Victory Association with its Thanksgiving Food Distribution project](#). "We were able to take 175 turkeys off the truck and create over hundred bags of food. For everyone who helped out, we're proud to be a part of the Jaguar Family and to be able to give back to our communities," said [Tony Bates](#), head men's basketball coach and GSU's Director of Athletics.