



White Loft Studio

Left: A volunteer Santa helps distribute free Christmas trees to families in need. Below: Alex Gramling, one of three Dawgs who established the nonprofit Christmas Tree Santas, poses at a tree lot with his daughter, Emma.



White Loft Studio

O CHRISTMAS TREE

► The holidays will be brighter for families in need thanks to Christmas Tree Santas (CTS), a nonprofit created by Alex Gramling (ABJ '86), Bob Bailey (BBA '85), and Ted Justiss (BBA '84).

CTS relies on a network of volunteers who distribute Christmas trees—along with tree stands, lights and ornaments—to families who are identified through partner social service agencies.

The seed for the program was planted in 2010 when Gramling gave a tree to a struggling family during the holidays, an experience that moved him to do more. CTS was launched the next year, distributing more than 300 free Christmas trees at two locations.

During the past five years, the program has expanded to give away more than 3,500 trees in communities including Atlanta; Athens; Charlotte, N.C.; Houston, Texas; Newark, N.J.; Greater Boston, Mass.; and Detroit, Mich. This year they plan to give away another 1,000 trees.