

LOCAL



Jacob Becktel, a Freeport High School student, works for Costa Enterprises McDonald's. Some of the proceeds from Monday's McDonald's lunch benefit will be used to help pay his medical bills due to leukemia. Donations also can be made at <https://bit.ly/JacobStrong>. PROVIDED PHOTO

Love and support

Costa Enterprises McDonald's to host benefit lunches for an employee

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FREEPORT — Costa Enterprises McDonald's will host a benefit lunch to honor one of its employees, 18-year-old Jacob Becktel, who is being treated for leukemia. • The event will take place from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday at both the Bluewater Bay McDonald's at 4570 State Road 20 E. just east of Niceville, where Becktel was formerly employed, and the Freeport McDonald's at 16392 U.S. Highway 331 near Freeport High School. • Becktel is currently an FHS senior and a member of the varsity basketball team. • A portion of all sales made at both locations will be donated directly to Becktel and his family.

Becktel went to the hospital in early January after having strep throat in December 2021 and continued to have consistent pain even after antibiotics. His mother took him to the emergency room, where the doctors discovered his white blood cell count was extremely high.

He was then taken by helicopter to Shands Hospital in Gainesville, where he will remain to receive chemotherapy treatment for the next few months.

Jacob's doctors believe he has an excellent chance at recovery, but there is still no doubt his family will have to endure a financial burden to cover medical bills, lodging, food, gas and other expenses.

Jacob's parents, Jason and Crystal, have three other children to care for: Bradon, Tyler and Jase. The family asks for continued prayers, positivity and awareness.

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Jacob Becktel is seen with his mother, Crystal. The family also includes his father, Jason, and siblings Bradon, Tyler and Jase. PROVIDED PHOTO

Benefit

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“We have been so overwhelmed by the love and support that Jacob has received and are incredibly grateful for everything,” Crystal Becktel said. “Jacob has brought so many people together, it’s

amazing to see that there is still kindness and compassion in this mess of a world.”

The Costa family is dedicated to taking care of all its employees, especially during the most difficult circumstances. After hearing about Becktel, they knew they had to act and help out in some way.

How to help

As part of their Costa Cares initiative, they invite guests to stop by the Freeport restaurant or the Bluewater Bay location, where a portion of all sales made between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. will go to the Becktel family.

Both locations will also accept cash and personal

check donations for the family. All checks should be made out to Jason or Crystal Becktel.

If you would like to help with Becktel’s medical expenses but are unable to attend the benefit lunch at either location, please visit the Gofundme page at <https://bit.ly/Jacob-Strong>.