

Joel Jeremy Memorial event comes to Bakers, White Lake Inn

By Alison Bergsieker
Staff writer

For live music, dancing and the chance to see Chris Baker sing "Brown Eyed Girl," make plans to attend or sponsor one of two Joel Jeremy Fund events in February - and you'll be donating to a great cause, too. This year, Bakers of Milford will host its first Snowball Dance, an event in its 14th year at White Lake Inn. Proceeds will go to the Joel Jeremy Fund, a local non-profit organization that assists families who need help with non-medical expenses that aren't covered by insurance, including travel, transportation, temporary housing and doctor-recommended household improvements.

The fund is named for Jeremy Arce, 13, and Joel Rabideau, 16, both of whom died of terminal illnesses in 1991. The two boys' fathers, Mike Arce and Mike Rabideau, founded the nonprofit Joel Jeremy Memorial Fund with J.R. Henry and Robert Miller.

"We've helped over 100 families with over \$150,000, covering things that aren't covered by health insurance," Arce said.

The dance at Bakers of Milford takes place Feb. 15 and 16, and the event at White Lake Inn takes place Feb. 22 and 23, both from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Guests can expect performances from The Snowball Band, which consists of Jim and Nick Kish, Carl Curtis, Eric Kot, Mike and Nick Arce, Pat Prater and Marv Slocum, with special guest singer Chris Baker at the Milford event.

There will be celebrity bartenders all four nights. So far, Thomas Motley, owner of Arms Brothers Store for Men, will bartend at Bakers. Admission is \$5, and there will be door prizes and a 50/50 drawing, where 400 tickets will be sold for \$20 a piece with \$2,700 in prize money, Arce said.

"Mike has done such good work with the fund, and it's become one of the main gigs in the Highland areas as far as fundraising," Baker said. We're bringing it here to try and expand it into the Milford area and a larger part of the community."

And even though White Lake Inn has new owners, a strange coincidence will keep the tradition alive again this year. As it turns out, new owner Paul Caldwell coached Jeremy Arce's baseball team 20 years ago and still remembers the family.

Lakeland High School students also are working on a documentary of the Joel Jeremy Fund to promote the organization's message throughout the community.

"It basically to explain the Joel Jeremy Memorial Fund and how we operate and help fund and how to apply for assistance," Arce said. The organization accepts sponsorship year-round. For both events in February, gold record sponsors donate \$75, platinum sponsors donate \$150. Gold record sponsors will get their name on a sign to be posted at both Bakers and White Lake Inn on the weekend of the dance. The names of platinum sponsors will appear on the signs, along with an Internet link to their business on the organization's web site.

For more information on the Joel Jeremy Memorial Fund, visit www.joeljeremy.com.