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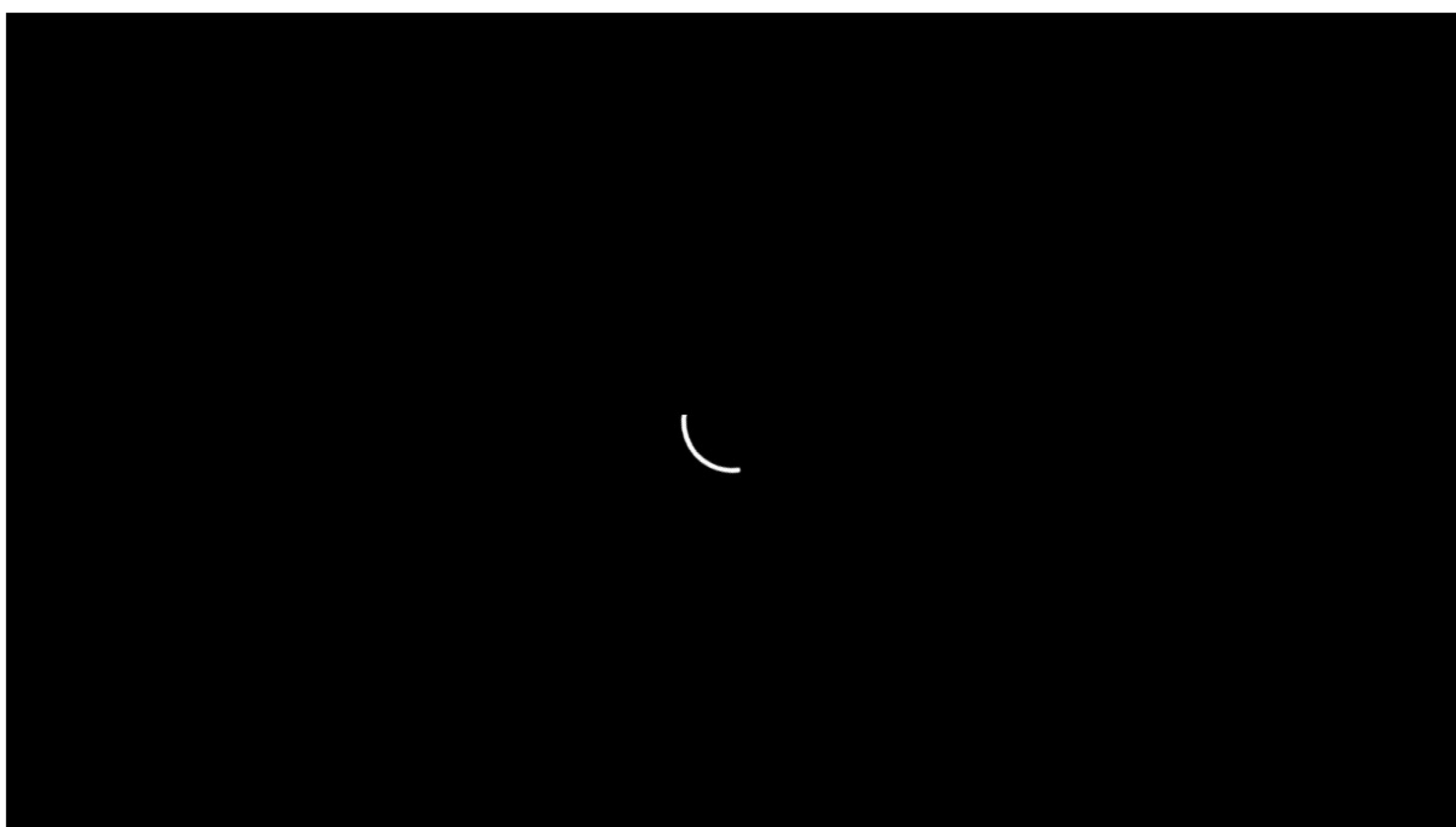
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Barksdale Delivers Blessings to Families

Posted Jan 10, 2015

Jasmine Brown
St. Louis Rams



During football games offensive linemen are often the silent heroes of a well-functioning offense.

But in the community, although still a hero, St. Louis Rams offensive tackle **Joe Barksdale** is anything but silent, especially during the holiday seasons.

For the third season, Barksdale lent a hand of support to families in the community by buying gifts for families in need.

This holiday season, Barksdale went a step further by initiating Barksdale's Blessing.

"Usually I adopt a family around Christmas time every year," explained Barksdale. "I wanted to expand a little bit more. I decided it would be easier to deliver the gifts to them personally."

At the end of November, Barksdale called upon the St. Louis region to identify families in need of receiving a holiday blessing. In an online form through www.stlouisrams.com, nominators described families that deserved an extra bit of cheer this season.

After reading through each submission, Barksdale decided to assist four families in an effort to make their season brighter.

"The four cases that I chose were the ones that stood out to me the most," Barksdale answered when he was asked about the selection of the families that he helped.

When each family was contacted, Rams front office staff kept the secret of who was purchasing and delivering the gifts.

All in one day, he delivered gifts to each family. As Barksdale approached each home, excitement and shock filled the children's faces.

Grandparents with two little boys whose mother passed away in the fall saw joy spread across their grandsons' faces as Barksdale brought in many wrapped packages of toys and clothes.

"My daughter had a massive heart attack and subsequently developed brain damage," explained Stanphany Stewart, grandfather to 9-year-old JaiVaughn Jones and 4-year-old Jeremiah Cook. "Over a short period, approximately three weeks, she did eventually pass away."

Their grandsons are nine and four years old, and the oldest was having a hard time coping with the recent loss of his mother. Stewart provided Barksdale with a wish list for the two boys and Barksdale was able to buy them much of what they wanted for the Christmas holiday.

"We didn't expect this," said Stewart. "We shared the things that they would be interested in, but never-the-less, it looks like Joe has gone way over the top. It looks like the boys have what they wanted and a lot, lot more and we appreciate it all!"

A mother whose daughter just recently won a long fought battle of sickle cell disease was very pleased to see her daughter receive wrapped presents, as it was going to be hard for her to provide such a holiday due to the financial burden of multiple hospital visits and treatments.

"It's my first Christmas being healthy," said 16-year-old Andria Lloyd, excitedly. "I have a lot of gifts and I might need someone to help me open the gifts. But all I really want for Christmas is my family's happiness."

Lloyd has been in and out of the hospital over the course of the disease. She is now celebrating that she has recently become sickle cell free and is recovering well from the treatment.

Visit Lloyd's [GoFundMe page](#) to learn more about her journey. You may also leave a donation to help Lloyd and her mother with finances.

A father of seven children saw excitement on each child's face as Barksdale walked into the house with bags of gifts for each child. The passing of the children's mother and a recent house fire has created quite a struggle for the father.

"We couldn't wait," explained 15-year-old Kyla Ewell. "We were all hoping that a football player would come, especially my little brother, who plays football."

A father of two boys witnessed his children smile, and their shyness, as a big football player named Joe Barksdale walked into their home and started emptying bags of gifts on the living room couches. His sons are eleven and nine years old. Their mother just passed away on Thanksgiving Day.

"I'm really happy that I'm in the position to do this, but I didn't imagine that I would be in this spot to help people out like this," explained Barksdale.

Even though the Barksdale's Blessing delivery day turned out to be a rainy day, Barksdale enjoyed being able to provide gifts to each family.

"You get caught up in a lot of what's going on in your life. Just being able to take a step back for a second and help someone else that really needs it is pretty cool," said Barksdale. "It means a lot."



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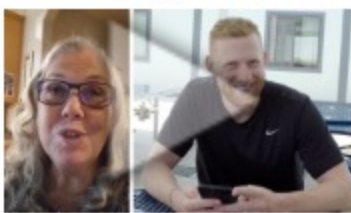


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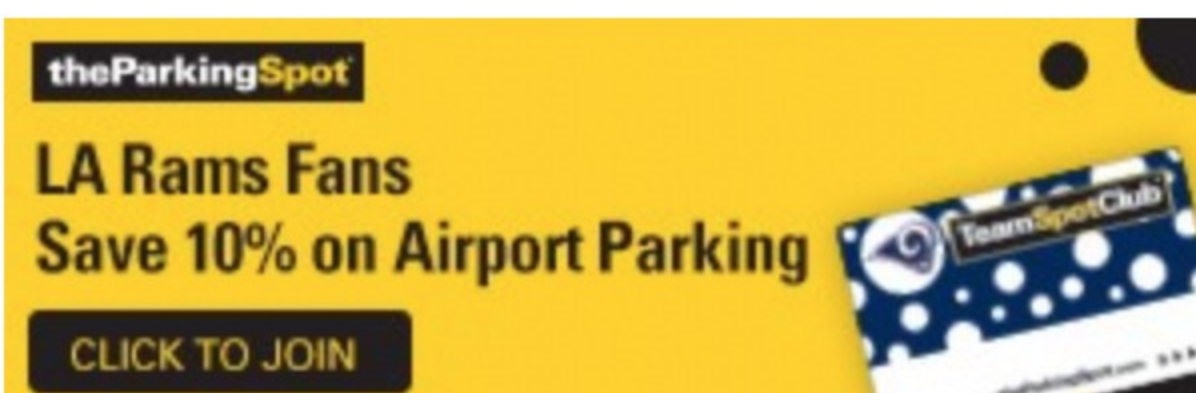
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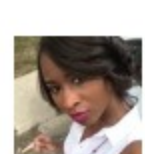
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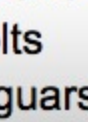


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