

# Lake City Reporter (FL)

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## Owners of Fort White eatery to host free meal today

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Article Text:

FORT WHITE — Frederick Jacobs has catered to TV show host Steve Harvey, gospel singer Kirk Franklin and “American Idol” winner Fantasia. But this Thanksgiving, he’ll be catering to local residents who are just looking for fellowship and a good meal.

Jacobs, originally from High Springs, owns a catering business and has hosted a radio show on relationships in Los Angeles as “Dr. J” with his wife, Tara Jacobs, known as “Lady J.”

He also owns a chain of restaurants known as Celebrity’s Soul Food, which has locations in California and Florida. They just opened a location in Fort White in June.

Today, Jacobs and his wife will be hosting the First “Red Carpet” Thanksgiving Dinner at the Fort White location. They hope to provide a place of comfort for families who can’t afford to make a meal on Thanksgiving.

Dinner is free from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Options include turkey, ham, chicken, collard greens, macaroni and cheese, sweet potato soufflé, old-fashioned Southern cornbread dressing, cranberry sauce, dinner rolls and a variety of desserts.

There will also be a red carpet and opportunities for photos for those who attend the dinner. There are options for indoor seating, outdoor seating and pickup at the drive-thru. Mrs. Jacobs said the options are unlimited.

“They can choose whatever they want,” she said. “[We want] them to be burden-free financially. People are pressured by the holidays and [we want them to] come enjoy themselves, enjoy some amazing food, relax and be able to give thanks.”

They are expecting more than 400 people during the day. Mr. Jacobs said that the relationship his restaurant has with the community is the most important thing for him as a business owner.

“As a business, I want to create employment in our community and I want to give back,” he said. “Fort White and the surrounding communities need that. We need to come together no matter our skin color or gender.

“People are nervous, and people are divided. Soul food brings people back to the table. It brings family back together, and we can enjoy and fellowship with each other.”

Jacobs said he has done similar events before at his restaurants and he plans to do more in the future here as well.

“It’s gonna be an annual event,” he said. “I love giving back. I wanted to do it not just for those who do not have but to bring families back together here as well.”

The Fort White Chamber of Commerce will have some of its board members volunteering at Celebrity’s as well today, according to chamber president Scott Thomason. He said the chamber is thrilled to have the Jacobses as part of the community.

“Something like this is unprecedented for our little town,” he said. “To have them come in here and want to do something like that, it’s an amazing thing. It’s gonna make a difference. I think it’s gonna bring the community together, and that’s what we want.”

Bambi Liss, vice president of the chamber, said that the restaurant's atmosphere will draw people in if they stop by the restaurant.

"You feel like you're in a different time and a different place," she said. "It's comfortable. You really do feel the love in there. It's not a huge place, but it's gonna be a beautiful place."

Jacobs said he expects to spend about \$3,500 to \$4,000 to provide Thanksgiving meals for local families.

Caption:  
COURTESY

Frederick and Taja Jacobs, known as "Dr. J and Lady J," are hosting a free Thanksgiving meal today at their Fort White restaurant, Celebrity's Soul Food. "People are nervous, and people are divided. Soul food brings people back to the table. It brings family back together, and we can enjoy and fellowship with each other."

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