



## 3-year-old 'Super Luke' battles leukemia

**ST. JOHNS COUNTY, Fla.** - He may not be 6 feet 3 inches tall or have bulging biceps just yet, but it doesn't take long for Luke Bond to fly into your heart faster than a speeding bullet.

On Aug. 15, the 3-year-old was diagnosed with acute promyelocytic leukemia, or APML.

"He's just got this amazing courage," said his mother, Kristen Bond. "I don't know how and I don't know if I could do it, but he's doing it."

Luke is one of nearly 13,000 children who are diagnosed with cancer each year. Sadly, a quarter of them will not survive the disease.

Kristen and her husband, Stephen, were packing for a family vacation when Luke suddenly spiked a fever of 105 degrees and developed little red bumps on his arms and legs.

Kristen says her gut told her something just wasn't right.

"Something clicked in me and I said, 'We need to go to the emergency room right now and see what we can find out,'" she said.

"When she said, 'We think it's Leukemia,' we just lost it," said Stephen Bond. "It choked me up, pretty much. It was hard. I couldn't text it without crying."

To help Luke cope with the surgeries, the poking, prodding, doctor's visits and chemotherapy, his parents turned to his favorite superhero for backup. Suddenly, Luke was ready to show leukemia his alter ego.

"We draped him in his cape when he was laying in his bed on his way to surgery, and he came out with his cape on and it was symbolic for us," said Kristen.

Despite the aches and pains of treatment, "Super Luke," as he prefers to be called, has proven to be a little man of steel resolve.

He doesn't shy away from taking his medicine and puts on a brave face for his real-life Lois Lane -- "Nurse Mackenzie" -- who his parents say knows just how to bring out a smile and a few heroics on those tough days.

"It's not that I don't want to cry, but I know I can't," said Stephen. "It's just having that strength that he's given me, you know. It's amazing. He's given me super powers."

"Super Luke" will undergo surgery on Wednesday to have a port put in place for his treatments, and he is facing five rounds of chemotherapy in the weeks ahead.

The Bonds know the road to recovery may be rocky and have vowed to help other families in similar situations, once Luke is on the mend.

"You don't want to be a part of this club, but we are now, and the best thing we can do is help other families that are going through the same thing," said Stephen.

Faith and a cape -- perhaps the best medicine Luke could ever ask for.

"I think it will always be, you know, an inspiration and something that he'll be able to fight through anything," Stephen said.

A fundraiser for "Super Luke" has been organized for Saturday at The Loop Pizza Grill. Twenty percent of lunch sales between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. at the Deerwood and Mandarin locations will go to the Bond family to help cover medical expenses.