

MIDDLETOWN JOURNAL

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Local Gold Star owner stays involved with city

Shteivi has raised more than \$4,000 for local girl, and says community is his responsibility.

By Jessica Heffner
Staff Writer

2:43 AM Wednesday, May 13, 2009

MIDDLETOWN — One local businessman is doing his part to spice up Middletown through community action.

Hatem Shteivi, owner of the Gold Star Chili at 449 Oxford State Road in Middletown, has sponsored, supported and partnered with area schools, churches, nonprofits and residents for more than 10 years to help raise money for causes and to connect the community. He said he considers it his responsibility as part of a hometown company.

“It’s also the community who supports us day in and day out, and anytime we can help out in the company we do that,” he said.

Most recently, Shteivi sponsored a “Caring For Camilla” event, to help raise money for a local girl’s liver transplant. The event raised \$4,000, and he said he hopes to add another \$1,000 to that through donation jars set up in the restaurant.

But his most memorable event was a cold Christmas day in 2004. Knowing the store is always closed for the holiday, Shteivi said he contacted local churches and asked them to spread the word that if their members had no place to go, they could come to Gold Star for free chili and friendship. About 100 people attended.

“I just figured a lot of people don’t have a family and don’t have the means to have a good meal,” he said. “We all volunteered our time.”

It’s all just part and parcel to being part of a tight-knit community, he said, where he knows the customers by name and “I can’t go anywhere without people saying, ‘Hey, it’s Hatem from Gold Star.’”

Mike Rohrkemper, Middletown native and CEO of Gold Star, said community involvement is important to the company, and Shteivi sets the bar high.

“He’s a top-tier franchisee,” he said. “If all our franchisees were like Hatem, my job would be a lot easier.”

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