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Burlington resident Marc Rulli, who owns two Gold Star Chili restaurants in Boone County, stands near a display at his Hebron location.

## Helping with chili and heart

By Paul McKibben

HEBRON - Several years ago Jeff McNeil of Burlington walked into Marc Rulli's Gold Star Chili restaurant in Hebron hoping to get some help with a fundraiser. McNeil would end up with more than he ever anticipated from Rulli.

"He has been so gracious. I can't say enough about Marc Rulli," McNeil said.

McNeil and his wife Debbie are involved with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International. This was the ninth year for the Team Zachary Swing Fore a Cure Golf Classic. Team Zachary is named for their son who is diabetic.

Instead of getting gift certificates or a hole sponsorship, McNeil received something even nicer. Rulli offered to serve conies and spaghetti dinner. Rulli has been providing food for years now at the event.

McNeil said Rulli has also put him in touch with some other people that he knows throughout the years who have assisted with the golf outing too.

"He has gone way above any expectations that I would have had just by walking in off the street," McNeil said.

Rulli, a Burlington resident, owns three Gold Star Chili restaurants in Northern Kentucky (Burlington, Hebron and Covington) and co-owns a Lawrenceburg, Ind., location with his sister Doreen Rulli. For years, Rulli has helped organizations in the community. The groups he has helped include schools and his parish Immaculate Heart of Mary in Burlington.

Rulli said you have to be able to give back and become part of the community. He said you have "to be able to, whether you're at Kroger's or you're at someplace else, recognize your customers, say hello to them and make a connection with your guests in your restaurant and make them welcomed."

Mike Fronimos of the Hebron Fire Protection District said Rulli has provided food for the community that shows up at its open house.

"He has such a sense of giving back to the community because the community has been so good to him (and) his family with the restaurant business over the years," Fronimos said.

Rulli said he's active in the community because "it's just the only way that I know how to do it. It's the right thing to do is to work with organizations that ... will benefit from a partnership with a local business."