

COMING UP: 1,200 vehicles headed for annual Stouffville charity show

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STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEN

Erle Hoover of Stouffville and his 1970 Plymouth Road Runner will be part of Stouffville MotorFest 2010 at the Teva grounds Sept. 18 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The free show is a fundraiser for Teen Challenge's Women's Centre in Aurora. Donations will be accepted.

VROOOM, VROOOM

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It may have been named after a cartoon character and featured a horn that went 'beep, beep' but the Plymouth Road Runner was all muscle.

The price tag in the late 1960s was also somewhat affordable. Which is why Erle Hoover convinced his now-wife to buy one from Gordon Page Motors on Main Street.

"(Nineteen sixty-eight) was the first year for them, it was nice in appearance and if you asked my wife, she liked the white interior," Mr. Hoover said. "I went into the dealership, he had that car there. I liked it and I probably twisted her arm to like it too and she did."

Like most young couples, when the family grew, the fun car went.

But in the mid-1990s, when the Stouffville resident decided it was

time to cut back on work and make more time for fun, Mr. Hoover decided to try and restore a vehicle. Not just any car, but a 1968 Road Runner.

Mr. Hoover, however, could not find one, so he settled for a 1969 Road Runner instead.

"When I bought this car, I had a goal, I had a vision," he said.

There was one problem. He had no idea how to do anything associated with vehicle restoration and this car needed a lot of restoring.

With the help of a lot of friends who happened to be experts in one aspect or another of vehicle restoration and his wife, Helen, Mr. Hoover spent 1,300 hours between 1994 and 1997 making his vision a reality.

"I enjoy the challenge and I also enjoy the satisfaction of after a three-year period you can drive it down the road and it performs the way a car should," Mr. Hoover

said. "It makes me appreciate auto manufacturers who can punch one out in a matter of hours without any window leaks and sound interior."

Mr. Hoover is the first to admit he is not a car junkie, but once the Road Runner was back to its original state, he did it again, this restoring a 1971 Dodge Challenger. It was already partially restored when he bought it, so the task was a bit easier.

He ended up selling that car.

Between 2002 and 2008, Mr. Hoover, his wife and friends restored a 1971 and a 1970 Road Runner.

And just last year, Mr. Hoover finally got his hands on a 1968 Road Runner, but it was already fully restored.

When Mr. Hoover found a new hobby in vehicular restoration, he had no idea the kind of world it would open up, especially socially, as he now shows off his restorations at area car shows.

"It's just a fun thing to do," he said. "It's a social thing, it's camaraderie. We share stories."

Mr. Hoover's 1970 Road Runner will be just one of about 1,200 vehicles at this year's MotorFest, which takes place on the Teva Canada Ltd. grounds Sept. 18. Admission is free.

"If we get a good day we could eclipse the 1,200 (vehicles) which puts us at one of the bigger car shows in Ontario," said Brent Snowden, an executive committee member for the event.

Which is a far cry from the first car show, which was held 13 years ago in the EastRidge Evangelical Missionary Church parking lot and attracted about 45 cars.

This is the show's fifth year at Teva and once again it will raise money for Teen Challenge. However, like last year, it is raising money specifically for the organization's GTA Women's Centre in Aurora. Last year the event raised \$15,000.

"It's a charity that gets no government funding. It's all donations and I think it's a charity the church just had a real soft spot for and we just kept it going," Mr. Snowden said.

One hundred per cent of the money donated at MotorFest will go to Teen Challenge.

"We don't charge to display cars. In fact, if you register your car, we'll even buy your lunch," Mr. Snowden said. "If you enjoy yourself, all we ask is that you make a donation before you leave."

MotorFest has grown by about 350 cars a year and you never know what will be on display.

"You get some odd, obscure stuff. I've been a car guy for years and there's stuff I've never seen that shows up out of the blue," Mr. Snowden said.

For more information, go to www.motorfest.ca and www.teenchallenge.ca/locations/tcgta

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