

HELP US CELEBRATE MODEL A YOUTH MONTH THIS MAY

This article appeared in the Model A News, a publication of the Model A Ford Restorers Club

Since the 1950s and 60s, the Model A hobby hasn't been exactly overwhelmed with young folks. Well, sir, MAYRA is trying to correct that. We are looking to expose as many kids to the Model A Ford as possible, around the country and abroad. We feel that the Model A experience can still appeal to today's youth IF they are exposed to it. With the support of both national organizations – MARC and MAFCA – we are declaring May 2022 as the inaugural **Model A Youth** month and we ask ALL clubs to do an event that focuses on children and teens but encouraging mom and dad to attend, too.

To appeal to them, the experience needs to be sensual – the kids need to hear, smell, see and touch the cars. The automobiles need to be in context historically – in many cases as cars their great or great-great grandparents may have driven in an era when a new car cost as little as under \$400 (but 64% of the population made under \$5,000 per year!) And the vehicles should be presented as functional cars and trucks, not museum pieces.

Activities for MAY (Model A Youth month)

We're off to school – try to gather a half dozen or so 'drivers'.

Elementary and high school – Arrange a visit with the principal and the teacher. Work with them to plan a lesson around your visit. It could be history (the [prominent part Ford automobiles played in early transportation), or art Coloring pages for the younger set, sketching the Model A for the older kids), economics (importance of affordability in the late twenties into the early thirties) or whatever. Show the group how to start the car. Have them honk the horns. Allow the kids to sit in them behind the wheel and take a picture. One club in Florida even drove alternative education students from one side of the high school to the other and dropped them off to a line of parents who applauded their individual arrivals. Try to repeat the visit on an annual basis. Set the seed, then nurture it.

High school auto shop – Arrange with the shop teacher and administration. The audience will allow for more technical talks about how the engine runs Let the students experience all the senses of the Model A. Demonstrate timing, firing order, the metallurgy of the Model A. One club who has a member that rebuild engines, with the help of the shop teacher has also engaged the class in tearing down the engines (source of cheap labor!)

MAFCA has a program that allows a student to join for \$5 annually and they offer "The Restorer" to high school libraries at no charge to the school.

How about other venues where you may find kids?

Boy and Girl Scouts – augment an event they may be having at a park or perhaps assist a scout earning a merit badge. Participate in a car show they may be sponsoring. Scout leaders are always looking for other activities. Check with them. Other youth organizations include Police Athletic League, 4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs among others.

Church or temple youth groups – Once again, the leaders tend to look for different activities. Check with them and partner up for a fun, informative session. Imagine the added access that the early cars gave to folks who wanted to attend church services, but distance was a deterrent. What other relationship might automobiles have with church?

Your local Ford dealership – A natural partner! Team up with them for a “Then and Now” weekend event, staging a Roadster next to a Mustang convertible or a Depot Wagon next to a van. Tap into some of their advertising to promote the event. Make sure you have something for the children to take home. How about including the Model T club in your area?

...along the same lines **CELEBRATE A LOCAL BUSINESS HAVING A SPECIAL (80 or 90th) ANNIVERSARY** – is a restaurant, jewelry store, or any locally owned establishment passing a significant milestone? Stage your cars outside the business and serve as docents to the era when the business was founded. Be there to give guided tours back in time.

CARS SHOWS, CARS AND COFFEE – Too many times we shun car get-togethers. Let’s start getting out to them. A stock Model A just may stand out among the GTOs or slammed Civics. Many of the Cars and Coffees are but a 2-3 hour commitment on a Saturday morning.

LOCAL COMMUNITY MUSEUM – Often overlooked, virtually every community has a museum heralding the history of the area. Set it up that your cars become museum pieces themselves, but still capable of driving on the roads. Let the youngsters sit in the cars, get pictures taken, honk the horns and listen to the unmistakable sound of the engine.

Please do not mistake the above suggestions as gospel, but that hopefully, they will help you come up with some ideas of your own for an event in May. Here, we are simply trying to stimulate the thought process. Every club in every community is different and will approach the Model A Youth month in a different fashion. The main thing is to do SOMETHING. One common element – appoint a Youth czar, an individual interested in youth and let him or her run with it! We’ll look forward to seeing the great events you will present in May!

Attached you’ll find a list of resources that you can use and add to if you have your own.