

GOODFELLOWS ANGELS

Ford fans in Omaha club say giving to charity a 'no-brainer'

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Every year, a regional council of car clubs puts on a huge swap meet at the Lancaster Event Center in Lincoln.

If it deals with wheels, it's probably at this gathering: memorabilia, parts, information on restoring vintage cars and much more.

"It's one of the largest events that the Lincoln Event Center puts on," said Dennis Eaton of Council Bluffs, president of the Early Ford V-8 Club's local chapter.

Members of the council's various car clubs work at the meet, handling parking and other tasks. Then the clubs get a cut of the event's proceeds.

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Some clubs need every penny to keep going, but others donate a portion of their take.

The Early Ford V-8 Club in Omaha, for example, has given nearly \$1,750 to The World-Herald's Goodfellows charity since 1999.

In part, those gifts are a thank-you. Eaton said the newspaper has printed stories about the club's activities over the years.

"The World-Herald helps us out. It's a no-brainer that we would give back."

With its donations, the club assists the charity in providing one-time emergency aid for struggling people in the Omaha metropolitan area. Goodfellows also distributes holiday meal certificates each year.

The Early Ford V-8 Club was founded in California in 1963 for fans of Ford vehicles built between 1932 and 1940. The club later recognized all Fords up to 1953. All you need for membership is money for dues and a love for Fords.

"You don't have to have a car of that vintage," Eaton said, "but lots do."

Eaton, for instance, owns a 1951 two-door Ford sedan.

The local group currently has about 20 members, but "we're trying to build it back up," he said. Membership benefits include meetings, a bimonthly magazine and access to other members with knowledge of cars and restoration.

Members of other clubs have started taking their cars to display at nursing homes. Eaton said he hopes to start that here, because it's popular with residents.

Every cent donated to Goodfellows goes directly to those in crisis, because The World-Herald pays all administrative costs.

Eaton said he's glad his club can help less-fortunate people in the area.

"The need is there, obviously."

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