

Mustang Family Makes Millennial's Dream Car Build Come True

JOHN CLOR | Ford Performance | ClubHub@Ford.com | performance.ford.com/enthusiasts



Remember last Christmas when I wrote about how Mustang clubs should include helping people in need within our own Mustang family instead of donating all club proceeds to organized charities alone? With the holidays being a time of giving and goodwill, I suggested that clubs start investing in local random acts of kindness that can help change a person's life. Not only would that help raise community awareness for the club, it could also help the club reach out in a meaningful way to a new generation of Mustang owners and members.

Well, I've got some heartwarming news on how our collective Mustang family has done just that over the past year—and with truly remarkable results!

You'll recall that, in early 2017, I wrote about how we need to pass the Mustang hobby torch to young millennials who are interested in cars. I know some of you took that task to heart to take steps to make last year's club activities and shows more appealing to younger enthusiasts. But other clubs invested nothing in marketing to potential new members.

You both need to hear about how my "Anthony Cuellar Millennial Mustang Initiative" turned out. I had used this space to ask clubs to help young Anthony from Opa-locka, Florida. Anthony lost a beloved 1993 Mustang LX and got stuck driving an import subcompact that his mother gave him to replace it. I put the word out to see if any clubs or MCA members in

Florida could help Anthony get back into a Mustang. I suggested he could return the favor by heading up some sort of "Millennial Committee" to connect the club with young people in the area and encourage them to attend club events and meetings.

Much to my dismay, *no one* responded. So when Anthony wrote me again to say that his mother loaned him \$1,800 to purchase a well-worn 1993 Mustang LX 2.3L but that he needed help getting it roadworthy, I again used this space to ask for assistance. But this young man's plea once again fell on deaf ears. Was there really no one out there in the generous and charitable Mustang club world who cared if his Mustang "Dream Car Build" succeeded or not?

He wrote me a third time after he lost his brakes, then a clutch cable and starter. And worst of all, he got laid off from his job! So just before the holidays last year, I mentioned him in this space once again, saying "You can't tell me there's not a single club or club member in the Southeast who can't see the value in helping out young Anthony with his beloved Fox-body Mustang. After all, charity, my friends, *begins at home!*"

The third time proved the charm. I soon had enough donation offers and responses from club members and friends in the hobby to make me realize that I could not manage Anthony's project while also doing my Enthusiast Outreach work. I needed someone who not only could jump in as program

manager to run the communications with volunteers and allocate donations for parts and shop work, but also someone who is equally passionate about getting Millennials involved as active participants in the Mustang family. But who? How about the Millennial Mustang Registry? So I asked Bradley Belcher, founder of MMR, and his father, Michael, if they could step in. Since Bradley was heading back to college, Michael agreed to take the lead role in what I called the “Anthony Cuellar Millennial Mustang Initiative.”

I’ll let Michael Belcher explain Anthony’s story in his own words:

“For Bradley and me, Anthony’s story started long before we knew Anthony. My Grandma, Maxine Juday, shared her love of cars with me, which I then, in turn, shared with Bradley. That relationship was the key—an older generation willing to share their love of cars with a younger generation.

“Fast-forward to my current monthly ritual of finding the latest *Mustang Times* in the mail. When I get a new issue, I flip to the back in search of John Clor’s Ford Performance Corner column. One particular month, John was giving us a ‘call to action’ to help a Millennial with his Mustang. Bradley and I discussed Anthony’s situation and wanted to help. We agreed to each donate parts to assist getting his Mustang on the road.

“I sent a message to John for him to let me know how we could help. Bradley and I were thrilled when John called back to request our time and involvement by actually taking charge of the initiative. We were honored to be asked to not only donate funds but to actively serve as Anthony’s project managers on behalf of Ford Performance.

“John forwarded his prior communication with clubs and individuals who were anxious to help. The beginning of the project included contact with Anthony so we could get to know each other and get a feel for the project. It was evident that Anthony had ability, ambition, and desire to get his car on the road. He was working two jobs to make ends meet, and his Mustang was/is both his passion and his hobby. He loved working on his car but was struggling to pay for and perform the necessary repairs to make the car safe.

“Anthony was excited to know that the Mustang family cared about him and his car and wanted to help. So I contacted all who had expressed interest in the project. An account was established to collect the donated funds and to pay all expenses. Checks started arriving from both clubs as well as individuals. It was important that the group make decisions so that no one person was making choices with the donated money.

“Anthony said it was like Christmas when the boxes started arriving. He had made a list of needed parts, including suspension, brake, emergency brake, shocks, door hinges, and other repair items. For the next two weeks, Anthony spent his days off in his driveway replacing parts. It was great to discuss progress with Anthony and hear his excitement grow.

“In the early stages, we had many emails with discussion and input from the group of participants. This was necessary for a common goal and direction. The group decision was to invest the funds into safety first, then mechanical soundness, and lastly on cosmetic improvement if any funds were left.

“Bradley and I requested that Anthony take photos of the car so the group could evaluate its needs. Roy Duke, president of the Mustang Club of Houston, stepped up and invested time into analyzing the photos to identify the car’s biggest needs. He solidified the primary concerns and direction for repairs.

Roy is also the largest financial contributor to the project.

“Roy soon took a personal interest in Anthony’s project. He was always the first to respond to an email and he invested a tremendous amount of time to make this project a success. I truly thank Roy for his involvement and time commitment.

“Mark Patterson, president of the Fort Lauderdale Mustang Club, introduced our group to Marty Winkler, owner of Marty’s Complete Automotive in Oakland Park, Florida. Marty is the single most involved person in this project and has made the most impact on this build. He agreed to spend a Saturday morning looking over the car.

“Marty and Anthony spent the morning together working on a few items that could be quickly addressed and evaluating the work Anthony had done. Marty and I then spent time discussing ‘next steps’ and coming up with a game plan to get the car roadworthy. It was decided that Marty and Anthony would work together another Saturday, and that Marty would coordinate with some of his friends for deals on an alignment and a new exhaust system.

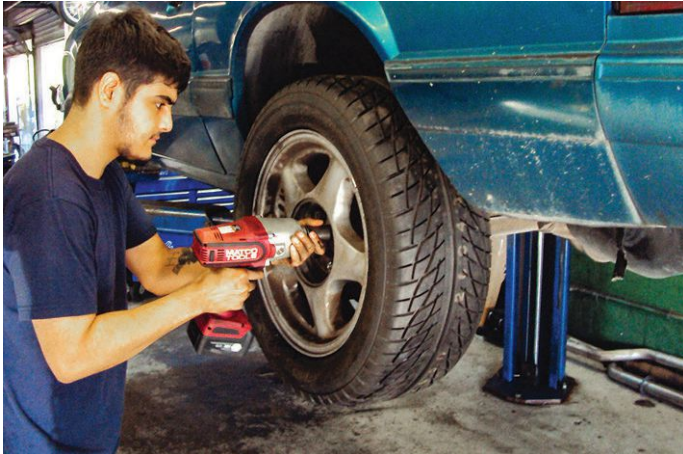
“To date, Marty has donated many hours, multiple days off, and a lot of his own parts. But mostly Marty has provided mentoring and mechanical expertise, plus leveraged his own friendships to get work done quickly and at the lowest cost. The more time and parts that were donated, the more we were able to do for, and with, Anthony.

“All in all, we received donations totaling some \$1,400 from across the country as follows: Roy Duke, \$500; Steve Lucchi, \$250; Ft. Lauderdale Mustang Club, \$200; Michael and Bradley Belcher, \$100; Dennis Osting, \$100; Mustang Club of Mid-Michigan, \$100; Bruce Sawicki, \$100; and John Garner, \$80 (\$50 MCA membership and \$30 for local club membership).

“I believe the entire group benefited from this experience. When Marty spoke to the Fort Lauderdale Mustang Club on the night that we introduced them to Anthony, he gave a moving speech about the need for us all to get involved in helping the next generation of enthusiasts. Marty clearly developed an appreciation for Anthony’s car passion and continues to help this young man with his Mustang, even though John Clor’s initiative has run its course.

“As I reflect back on this project, many things come galloping forward in my mind:

- Mustang is a family and we take care of our family.
- Millennials (and younger enthusiasts) need mentors and those of us who are willing to encourage and help them get interested in the hobby. This help could be financial, but that isn’t the greatest need/want. Time spent sharing knowledge and the love of Mustang is what is most needed and wanted. We can all give back or pay it forward with sharing our love of Mustang with those who will benefit most from it. Teach and share—it will benefit us all for the future of the car we love.
- We more senior ‘car guys’ need the Millennials and younger in our clubs! We need them to learn from us about loving the Mustang so they can experience what we have come to love about owning these cars. Someone shared it with us and it’s our responsibility to share it with them. We need the next generation to carry this forward!
- Not all Millennials fit into the stereotypes. Some, like Anthony, truly do work for what they have and appreciate the support of us older guys. Some, again like Anthony, love their Mustangs. His Mustang is his passion; it isn’t just transportation.



- This was a special experience that every Mustang club can replicate! It helps everyone involved.
- It was very rewarding to serve as a 'project manager' to coordinate the project and be involved with so many new friends to see this through to completion.
- There is a need to continue this kind of program on a larger scale. My idea would be to set up either a new not-for-profit enthusiast group to manage it, or perhaps the MCA could develop a program where our program can be used as a template for other Mustang clubs. If each club would be willing to set aside, say, \$1,000-\$1,500 per 'Garage Squad' style project and donate their time and expertise, imagine how many more young owners and their Mustangs we could engage!
- I can see a program where companies would provide discounts for these projects and get exposure for helping young owners. Clubs could set up a 'vetting system' where young owners could apply for club help—it's not meant to be a path to someone's personal restoration project but rather a way to get a young Mustang on the road. It could require membership in both the MCA and the local club. Perhaps the clubs would consider donating a year's membership in exchange for creating content for a public forum where the projects can be displayed and progress updates can be made.
- Finally, clubs can make this a teaching opportunity. Time and expertise are the most important aspects when taking a young Mustang owner under your wing. Yes, the club can raise funds, but it will take someone who is willing to mentor and work with them to make the program work. This can't become just a cash in and out situation. It can't become just taking the car to a shop and paying someone for work. This has to be one-on-one working together, mentor and mentee.

"I want to personally thank everyone who was involved with this project. It proved very fulfilling and enjoyable to see the difference a few people can make.

"Lastly, I'd like to give a shameless plug for the Millennial Mustang Registry. My son Bradley launched MMR and has witnessed exceptional growth in just a short time, proving that Millennials do love their Mustangs! Check out the website at www.millennialmustangregistry.com or see the MMR Facebook page. If you'd like Bradley to visit your club and perhaps give a presentation or show a feature video he produced on Millennials and their Mustangs, email him at millennialmustangregistry@gmail.com."

Wow! I couldn't have said it any better myself. It amazes me how quickly Michael began to see that this kind of project can truly benefit the Mustang family as much as it does a young owner in need. My original idea for setting up the project for Anthony was simply this: If we can raise money and find enough people in the Mustang community to help rebuild his car, then his payback would not be in cash but via giving back to the Mustang family and the club in any one or more of the following ways:

- Write a story (with photos) about the project car build (to appear in *Mustang Times* and on FordPerformance.com) and about the people who helped make it happen.
- Join the nearest MCA regional club and participate in club activities for at least two consecutive years.
- Attend club meetings at least every other month and bring at least three friends his age along each time.
- Agree to become the club's ambassador to fellow young adult Mustang owners or create a board position with the same role.
- Help the club organize new events to attract fellow young adult owners as new members and promote attendance at said events on social media.
- Develop and manage young adult member recruitment drives for the club.
- Appear at a Mustang show to work a "Meet & Greet" function for fellow young adult members in the club tent (or in my Ford Performance tent).
- Serve as guest speaker at Mustang club meeting or dinner or an upcoming MCA event.

Can you imagine if every club launched an Anthony-style project in 2019 and within the year had several new young people involved with their club's shows, events, and meetings? Using any of the above paybacks as an example, these actions will prove far more valuable to the Mustang community as a whole rather than merely paying back donors in cash. The hours these young people invest in the club as payment for the club's help with their car immediately builds bridges between established club members and the owners just entering the hobby. It's a win-win for all.

So how does Anthony see all of this? Because he's still trying to find gainful employment in the Miami area to support himself and his new wife, I didn't ask him to devote time to the club just yet. Instead, as his payback, I asked him to share with you what it means to him that the Mustang family stepped up to help him get his Mustang on the road. Here's what he wrote:

"My name is Anthony Jasseth Cuellar. I'm my mother's second son and a man who loves his family! I've had a love for cars since the day I was born. I started getting my hands dirty at the age of nine and haven't stopped since—probably never will! I'm now 19 but compared to others my age, I am significantly older!

"For one thing, I take pleasure in being able to pay my bills on time, finding a fulfilling job, and investigating mortgages so that I can own a home someday.

"I met my wife during my freshman year of high school. She suffers from Systemic Lupus Erythematosus, but she doesn't let that stop her. For a time, I was working two jobs and taking on side work as a mechanic to make ends meet because she wasn't feeling well enough to work and I didn't want her to stress. But recently she decided she wanted to give working a shot and started a part-time job at a local pharmacy. Her dream is to go to school and become a paramedic.

WATCHES MADE FROM SALVAGED 1960's FORD MUSTANGS



THE P-51 COLLECTION
RECWATCHES.COM | TDK@RECWATCHES.COM



America's **CONVERTIBLE HEADQUARTERS**

CONVERTIBLE TOP PARTS FOR 1965 & NEWER MUSTANGS



5530 INDEPENDENCE COURT PUNTA GORDA, FL 33982

800-343-4261 941-639-0437 www.hydroe.com

Manufacturer of "Premium Quality" USA made Reproductions

Specializing in NOS & Hard-To-Find Detailing
Parts for 1967 thru 1970 390GT and 428CJ/SCJ
we are the, "The Small Company With a Big Block Attitude"



PCV Intake Tube's
and fittings for
Mustang, Cougar,
Torino, Shelby's
with 428CJ/SCJ,
390GT & 428 PI

PS Pressure Hose
Index Bracket
68/70 Mustang,
Cougar, Torino,
Shelby GT500
428CJ/SCJ,
390GT



Check out our on-line detailing parts catalog at:
<http://www.mansfieldrestorationparts.com>

Mansfield Restoration Parts LLC

498 Stearns Ave., Mansfield MA 02048
Manufacturer of "Premium Quality", 100% USA made reproductions
Dealer Inquiry's Invited, call 508-339-5409

Visa / Mastercard / Orders Shipped UPS within 24 hrs

To Order Call 508-339-5409 Ask for Bill

To Order Call 508-339-5409 Ask for Bill

"The story behind my Mustang is quite unusual. My love for this car started when my brother found a dusty, beat-up 1993 Mustang. It was beautiful to me, not for its flawless appearance but rather for its lack thereof. The car was clearly used and abused with over 300,000 miles, yet its original four-cylinder engine started at the first touch of the key. Yes, it had a few mechanical issues but that car was built Ford Tough!

"At least that's what I thought until my brother totaled it in an accident. I really had a hole in my heart that could only be filled by getting my own Fox-body. As time went by, I missed my brother's Mustang more and more until I just couldn't take it anymore. Something had to be done.

"Fed up with this Mustang-less feeling, my wife convinced me to seek my mother's help. So I swallowed my pride and told my mother that I needed her help to buy a Mustang. After a long search, I became the proud owner of a Reef Blue 1993 Mustang LX and have been fortunate to have some of this world's finest folks help me on my journey to building my dream car.

"It all started with an email to John Clor at Ford Performance asking him to rig a Mustang giveaway contest in my favor (granted, not my proudest moment). I was not expecting a response. But from day one, John has invested in helping me get me behind the wheel of my dream car.

"From trying to find a Fox-body, to helping me get mine back to roadworthy condition, to introducing me to wonderful folks in the Mustang family, it's all quite amazing. Having the Fort Lauderdale Mustang Club connect me with Marty Winkler has made the dream work. Marty has been a huge part of this project, helping me and teaching me to do the labor needed to repair the car. And he's still helping!

"Then there's Michael Belcher, who has been overseeing and running the operation along with his son, Bradley. Mark Patterson, president of the Fort Lauderdale Mustang Club, led me to the help I needed here in Florida. And there was the generosity of Roy Duke, president of the Mustang Club of Houston, plus the other donors. They saw someone with a passion for Mustang and reached into their wallets to help make my dream a reality! I've learned how Mustang club people look out for each other.

"After getting my Mustang running, I got to meet some of this wonderful Mustang family on November 7 when I finally met John Clor and Mark Patterson for the first time at a Fort Lauderdale Mustang Club meeting at Grieco Ford. At some point while sharing my story with them, and hearing theirs, it struck me—I am now part of this extraordinary group! They've made me part of their Mustang family!

"The energy I felt at that club meeting was transformational. Many of the members asked about my plans for my Mustang, which aren't completely clear right now. If I can land the right job, maybe a 2.3 turbo from an SVO, a remanufactured transmission, and Cobra-style wheels—those ideas come to mind. I do know that my Mustang has a long



way to go, but it has also come very far from where it was.

"It's hard to talk about myself but I can tell you what others have said about me: I'm driven, I catch on and learn things quickly, I'm a hands-on kind of guy, and I believe anything in life worth doing is worth over-doing. Yes, I'm also a dreamer, and I now believe in people more than ever. Who would have thought that from a single email to Ford that I'd get connected with a bunch of like-minded club folks helping me with my Mustang dream? Please accept my thanks for your kindness in this journey and for making me part of the Mustang family!"

How's that for making a difference? For my part, I gave a fun Mustang presentation at the Fort Lauderdale Mustang Club meeting that night and introduced the major players in this project. I awarded Michael and Bradley Belcher, Marty Winkler, and Mark Patterson (as well as Roy Duke) with an official Ford Performance "Certificate of Appreciation." I even presented Ford Performance staff shirts to Marty and the Belchers for their outstanding work on behalf of Ford Motor Company. It was a great night that I wish every club could experience.

As for Anthony, I'm now attempting to hook him up with a Miami-area sponsor to try and secure a scholarship for him to attend the new Ford Technician Training program so he can become a certified Ford tech at a local dealership. I have a feeling that if he can use his love for cars to make a good living for himself and his wife, we could someday be looking at a very nicely restored 1993 Mustang LX 2.3 owned by one Anthony Cuellar. And perhaps we'd also be looking at a future Mustang club president as well. I guess I'm a dreamer too.

So how about it? Is your club willing to make a dream come true for another "Anthony?" As I've said before, we can't just say we want young people in our hobby without *acting* to make it happen. All of the effort noted above was done to show you that your club can make a Millennial's Dream Car Build a reality the same way we did. After all, it's *family*. That's the way we roll: It's the *Mustang* thing to do!

Editor's Note: Veteran journalist John Clor has owned, raced, worked on, and written about Fords and Mustangs for nearly 40 years. After a 15-year career at *The Detroit News*, Clor shifted to automotive journalism with stints at *AutoWeek* and later *Edmunds.com*. He joined the Ford Special Vehicle Team in 1995 and spent the better part of the next decade working on SVT Communications, PR, and Marketing. Since 2007 he's been managing a club outreach program and enthusiast communications for Ford Racing, a job he now does for Ford Performance, as well as managing enthusiast content on *FordPerformance.com*. Clor is an Iacocca Award winner, author of the book *Mustang 2015 plus Mustang Dynasty (2007 & 2009)*, editor of *SVT Enthusiast* magazine, and host of his own local cable-access TV show, "Cars In Context." He's also a member of several Ford-based car-clubs, and is the proud owner of two 1970s era Mustangs, including one he calls "a long-term project." The views and opinions he expresses here are his own and do not necessarily represent the MCA or the Ford Motor Company.