

Hit the road with Optimists to support local kids in need

If you like to spend your weekends in the great outdoors, on the open road, and exploring the community around you, rev up your engines for the Optimist Club of Aurora's second-annual Road Rally Scavenger Hunt.

Set to take place throughout Aurora, and into Newmarket and Richmond Hill, on Saturday, May 23, it is billed as a fun team scavenger hunt competition with proceeds supporting programs for Aurora youth.

The Optimists held their first Road Rally last year to mark their 40th anniversary in the Aurora community and the inaugural event was such a success they knew they needed to do it again.

"Everybody had fun and we really enjoyed it," says Optimist Club member Carol Bartlett, noting the 25 registered vehicles brought 90 individuals into the Rally. "There were about 40 points of interest on the Scavenger Hunt, and we advised our participants that they didn't have to hit all 40, there were no points for speed, just points for whatever you could get done.

"The beauty of this was they could choose something that they were interested in. We had them look for a rotary phone, and they had to snap a photo with a teammate beside it. They had to find the current exhibition in the Great Hall Gallery at the Aurora Cultural Centre. We had them find Optimist Park and take a team photo. They had to go through a drive-thru and take a picture of the employee serving them. They had to find one of the five parks in Aurora that had pickleball courts?"

In short, there was a lot of Aurora to see during the inaugural Rally and Bartlett and event co-chair Sandra Watson are hard at work to make sure this year's Scavenger Hunt list is fresh, fun, and could even take participants further into Newmarket and Richmond Hill.

Last year's event raised \$9,500 for the club, which went directly back into their youth programs, including initiatives focusing on improving food insecurity being experienced by kids, supporting local sports teams and arts programs, and individual children in ways as varied as a youth who needs new glasses, a snowsuit, or whatever the need might be.

"We'd like to improve that number, and we're all about it being a community event first and then a fundraiser second," says Bartlett. "We've done really well with sponsors this year and Highland GM is back on as our Premium Sponsor. Everything will take place at the Highland dealership."

Indeed, the fun gets underway at Highland GM with registration at 9 a.m., the Rally commencing at 9.30 a.m., and teams due back at Highland by 12.30 p.m. for lunch and prizes.

The cost per car is \$50 and this fee includes lunch.

"Come on out? it's a feel-good event, meet some Optimists, meet some people from the community," says Bartlett. "All the participants aren't necessarily Optimists, it's your community. It's a great way to come out and see what the Optimist Club is all about."

For more information on the 2026 Road Rally, including registration, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/2026-optimist-club-of-aurora-road-rallyscavenger-hunt-tickets-1985319151024. For more on the work the Optimist Club of Aurora carries out throughout the year, visit www.auroraoptimist.com.

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