

# BMXLife's London Santa Cruise 2022



Over 800 BMX riders in fancy dress are expected at “Santa Cruise 8”, a fundraising BMX ride through Central London on Saturday 10 December to raise money for the Evelina Children’s Heart Organisation (ECHO).

49-year-old dad Stephane Wright has been organising the fundraising ride for the last 8 years to help the charity after his son Tommy had a near fatal heart attack when he was a baby. His wife Karen, and children Caitlin, 13, and April, 11, wanted to help other families who are going through similar experiences “We feel so lucky that Tommy survived. I don’t think I can ever repay the help we received when he was a baby,” said Stephane.

Over 800 BMX riders in fancy dress are expected for this year’s fundraising ride, which starts at London Waterloo at 1030am. In 2021, over 800 BMX riders took part, mainly dressed as Santa, but also including elves, reindeer and the odd grinch! Olympic BMX Freestyle bronze medalist Declan Brooks will be one of the riders taking part.

The BMX riders will stop at the Evelina London Children’s Hospital, where presents and sweets will be given to the children staying at the hospital. They will then BMX around central London on an eight mile route taking in many of London’s landmarks and bridges.

Tommy Wright, 8, who inspired his dad to organise the fundraising ride, will be taking part in the ride for the first time this year. Tommy nearly died of a heart attack when he was six months old. Surgeons were unable to operate on him until he was older; when he was three years old, he had keyhole surgery to fix his heart. He made a full recovery and is now an energetic eight-year-old who loves cycling! Stephane and Tommy are travelling to London from their home in Derry, Northern Ireland next weekend to take part.

“I asked the doctors and nurses what charity they recommend and they all said ECHO,” said Stephane. “My wife stayed in hospital for a month with my son and the stuff ECHO did – providing a cosy room, arts and crafts for the kids, cake for parents – they all made a difference to help her through those difficult weeks.”

Over the last eight years, Stephane and the BMX community have raised over £120,000 for ECHO, which has made a huge difference to the small charity, especially over recent years with Covid impacting many of their fundraising events.

“We are hugely grateful to Stephane and the rest of the BMX community for their amazing support over



the last eight years. They have raised a phenomenal amount of money, which has allowed us to support thousands of children with special hearts and their families,” said Samantha Johnson, Chief Executive at ECHO.

**View the event details for more info:**