

Our history

ECHO was formed in 1983 by Dr Michael Joseph, the first Paediatric Cardiologist at Evelina London Children's Hospital, together with parents of children with heart conditions.

The charity came about from a desire to provide families with emotional support, as well as medical. Often parents felt lonely and isolated, having no one to speak to except medical staff.

Dr Michael Joseph and his brother Peter, a successful businessman, raised over £600,000 towards the first Paediatric Cardiology department at the Evelina Hospital, and to establish ECHO – the Evelina Children's Heart Organisation.



The Joseph Brothers, at the opening of Evelina London Children's Hospital in 2005

In its early years the charity focused on bringing together parents of children with heart conditions, for emotional support through a shared understanding. Over the years the charity has been led and supported by parents and relatives of children who have travelled the congenital & acquired heart disease journey. We are still very proud to have parent representatives on our board and within our staff and volunteer teams.

Dr Michael Joseph was also responsible for creating outreach clinics at regional hospitals, ensuring families gained from the expertise of seeing 'their' consultant without having to travel to London – a system which still enables ECHO to support children with heart conditions treated at any of the Evelina's 19 peripheral hospital clinics across the UK.

In respect of the enormous contribution made by the Joseph Brothers to ECHO – Evelina Children's Heart Organisation – we have recently named two spaces after them. [The Joseph Suite](#) based at our London Office incorporates the Michael Room and the Peter Room – both of which are designed to provide support to families and the ECHO Community.

It's clear that the support ECHO provides today wouldn't have been possible without the pioneering Joseph brothers, as well as the hardworking parents, volunteers and staff who helped to establish and grow the charity.

Over the past four decades ECHO has grown in size, and also in the range of support it provides. We are proud to have helped thousands of families during our 34-year history. We have built and maintained strong relationships with medical, nursing and professional teams within Evelina London networks and are proud to have two respected medics as our patrons. ECHO is regarded by many as a second family and a strong network to be part of at all life stages of the CHD journey. Often people access support in a crisis and again years later as they reach different milestones.