

20th Anniversary of Norwood Challenges

16 January 2012

We've organised 47 events in 18 different countries, cycled, run and walked thousands of miles and raised a whopping £16million ... and all this in just two decades! To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Norwood Challenges programme, the Charity is calling on the whole community to go the extra mile to raise vital funds to help make this year's events the biggest and best yet.

The Challenges team has organised special bike rides in Israel – where the first international Challenge was held in 1992 – Sri Lanka, Croatia and, exclusively for younger YN supporters, Sicily. There are also plenty of local Challenges to choose from for fundraisers who prefer to stay closer to home, including the annual Capital to Coast Cycle Challenge for Charity from London to Brighton which this year includes a new 75-mile route starting at the iconic EDF Energy London Eye.

Ian Tate, Norwood's Business Development Manager for Challenges, said: "Norwood was the first charity to organise international fundraising challenges of this sort and we are extremely proud to be unveiling this special calendar of events as part of our 20th anniversary.

"An international Norwood Challenge can be completed in just seven days, but the memories you are left with, last a lifetime. And where else would you be given the opportunity to get fit, have fun and make a difference to the lives of thousands of the most vulnerable people in the community, all at the same time?"

The first Israel bike ride in November 1992 attracted 230 riders and raised more than £600,000 for Ravenswood, which at the time was a separate charity, and the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society. It was the brainchild of Sir Erich Reich and is recognised as having sparked the trend in overseas sporting events in aid of charity. Sir Erich's company Classic Tours organised the trip after being approached by his friend Maurice Collins, whose daughter was a resident at Ravenswood.

"Despite odd problems en route, the event turned out to be an enormous success," said Sir Erich. "The proof being that not only are both Norwood and the EMMS still involved in these challenges, but so are hundreds of charities across the UK."

Each international bike ride features a team of tandem riders which include people who use Norwood's services. It is often the first time Norwood's fundraisers meet the people who benefit from their support and can lead to life-long friendships.

David Lightman, 50, from Finchley, has completed a Norwood cycle Challenge every year since 1992. He said: "I can honestly say that riding for Norwood has changed my life in ways that I could never imagine and I am determined to continue to do my very small bit for this noble and amazing cause. I have met the most astonishing and inspiring people and have ridden through deserts, mountains, jungle and bush.

"Above all else, I have witnessed first-hand what can be achieved with love and determination. I am immensely proud of having done 21 Norwood international bike rides in 20 years and I hope and pray that I can continue to do so for many more."

David was recognised for his achievement during the recent Thailand Bike Ride, alongside Gordon Fox MBE, 75, who helped to establish the Norwood bike rides and completed his 30th international ride, in Thailand. Nigel Trumper, Sport and Leisure Coordinator at Ravenswood, has completed a staggering 42 rides.

David, Gordon and Nigel were joined in Thailand by Michael Kuperberg, 40, from Harrow, who has been supported by Norwood into paid employment at its Deli in Hendon over recent months. Michael, who rode tandem with Ian Tate, said: "I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of cycling in Thailand and it was especially fun riding with Ian! I am so grateful to Norwood for all their help and support – they have been really great to me and I hope to work here until I retire!"

2012 Norwood Challenges Calendar

Sahara Trek	29 January-5 February
London Marathon	22 April
The YN Sicilian Challenge	2-7 May
Croatia Challenge	9-14 May
10 Bridges Walk	13 May
Community Fun Run	20 May
Junior Bike Ride, Toddlerthon & Fun Day	10 June
Capital to Coast Bike Ride	1 July
Royal Parks Half Marathon	7 October
Sri Lanka International Ride	13-22/20-29 October
Israel Bike Ride	3-11 November

For more information and to book your place, visit www.norwood.org.uk/challenges

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