**\*\*EASTER STORY\*\* – amazing BMX loving dad raises over £40,000 for children’s charity in one year following his baby son’s near fatal heart attack**

* Hundreds of BMX bikers dressed as the Easter Bunny cycling through London this Saturday to raise money for small children’s charity [ECHO – Evelina Children’s Heart Organisation](http://www.echo-evelina.org.uk/)
* Superhero dad Stephane Wright has raised over £40,000 for children’s charity ECHO in just 1 year following baby son’s near fatal heart attack  - thanks to his BMX FAN community
* The BMX bunnies will be visiting the Evelina London Children’s Hospital to give Easter eggs to children staying in hospital this weekend

**6-month old Tommy Wright nearly died from a heart attack, but was saved thanks to medical staff at the** [**Evelina London Children’s Hospital**](http://www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/Home.aspx)**. Tommy’s Dad, Stephane, decided he wanted to give something back – in the past year he has raised over £40,000 for charity ECHO – which supports families of children with heart conditions treated at the Evelina London Children’s Hospital.**

**How? With the help of retro-BMX lovers! Hundreds will be cycling and doing tricks across London this Easter Saturday dressed as bunny rabbits in a bid to raise even more money for charity ECHO.**

Tommy Wright was only 6 months old when he suffered a heart attack and nearly died. He was admitted to the Evelina London Children’s Hospital in October 2014. Tommy spent four weeks in Paediatric Intensive Care and the High Dependency Unit. Fortunately Tommy recovered well and was able to return home to his parents, Stephane and Karen, and sister’s Caitlin (6) and April (4). However, Tommy will require further operations as he grows up, so will be returning to the Evelina London in time.

The experience was life changing for his parents, Stephane and Karen, who were so grateful to the hospital for saving their son’s life they wanted to give something back. Whilst the Wright’s had a supportive network behind them they wanted to be there for families who struggle when going though similar experiences, which is one of the reasons they chose to support [ECHO – the Evelina Children’s Heart Organisation](http://www.echo-evelina.org.uk/). ECHO is a small charity that helps families of children with heart conditions who are treated at the Evelina London Children’s Hospital.

**Over the course of a year Stephane has raised an outstanding £40,000+ for ECHO – with the help of his community - BMX Life.** BMXLife sees enthusiasts from all walks of life joining together with a shared interest in 1980’s BMX bikes; sourcing, building and of course, riding. Through BMXLife Stephane has organised various fundraising events – but the biggest have been his BMX Cruises through central London at Christmas and Easter. Last December over 300 BMXers dressed as Santa Claus rode through London’s streets dropping Christmas presents for children staying at the Evelina London Children’s Hospital and raising over £12,000 in one day! Watch [2015 Santa Cruise trailer](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbmSIezmNTc) & [2014 Santa Cruise video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmdby6juT_M) here.

**The next big event is this Easter weekend – Saturday 26th March 2016** – hundreds of BMXing Bunnys are expected to cycle through central London – [route details here](http://goo.gl/tpwbZb) – giving easter eggs along the way to children staying at the Evelina London Children’s Hospital. The group will be BMXing around central London using a mixture of cycle paths and roads on an 8-mile cruise, taking in lots of London’s landmarks and bridges. A BMX bunny hop competition will be held at the Albert Memorial and the cruise will end at [House of Vans](http://houseofvanslondon.com/) with an after party for all taking part.

Stephane is proof of the good that can come from a period of such adversity – witnessing the near death of his baby son. The fact he has managed to get so many people behind him is testament to this, and he shows no signs of stopping any time soon. A busy Dad of three, he also runs his own business, Stephane is committed to raising money for charity for the foreseeable future.

**Stephane Wright** said:

“The whole experience has been life changing but ultimately the Evelina saved Tommy’s life - we decided we wanted to create something special that would raise awareness for the hospital and money for an important charity ECHO, as well as being a fun day out for us old schoolers!”

**Samantha Johnson, Chief Executive at ECHO**, said:

“Wow - what Stephane has achieved in terms of fundraising is amazing – we are so grateful to him and everyone who has supported him - £40,000 is a phenomenal amount and ECHO will make sure it is put to good use.”

* **Stephane Wright welcomes the opportunity to be interviewed about his amazing story –**

to arrange an interview please contact:

Siobhan Morton [**siobhan@echo-evelina.org.uk**](mailto:siobhan@echo-evelina.org.uk)07525 833 210 | 07702 335 185

* We can supply pictures of the event this Sat, and of Stephane, Tommy and the rest of his family – please see attached

ECHO is a small charity – it has only one full-time member of staff – and yet is supports thousands of families of children with heart conditions who have been treated at the Evelina London Children’s Hospital, often from the point of diagnosis (usually during pregnancy) through to teenage years. The HUGE amount of money Stephane has raised will go a long way in providing many of ECHO’s important services, including much needed equipment which cannot be funded by the NHS.

**Notes to editors: ECHO – the Evelina Children’s Heart Organisation**

1. ECHO is a volunteer-led charity dedicated to supporting the families of heart-children treated at the Evelina London Children’s Hospital.
2. Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) is the most common type of birth defect, 9 in every 1000 babies is born with a heart condition.
3. Every year the Evelina London Children’s Hospital, and peripheral clinics across the UK and its associate clinics, treat hundreds of children who have serious heart conditions - all of these children and their families are eligible for support by ECHO.
4. ECHO was established in 1983 by parents of heart children and medical staff at the Evelina London Children’s Hospital.
5. ECHO is a Registered Charity number 1146494.
6. ECHO is independent from the Evelina London Children’s Hospital.

**The support ECHO provides to heart families:**

* Cardiac Family Support Service - supporting families at home during times of distress.
* Music Therapy for families who spend many weeks on the wards.
* Specialist, trained volunteers in the hospital ward, on the telephone and in local communities.
* Valuable information, guidance and signposting to help families on their heart journey.
* Bespoke cardiac antenatal classes for parents whose unborn child has been diagnosed with a heart condition.
* Bereavement support.
* Specialist support for siblings of heart children.
* Toys, crafts & games for children undergoing painful treatment & tests.
* Essential Comfort packs for families who arrive suddenly at hospital by ambulance.
* Vital equipment which cannot be funded by the NHS.
* Annual sponsorship to Ronald McDonald House, providing emergency accommodation to families whilst their children are staying at the Evelina London Children’s Hospital.
* Social events for heart families throughout the year.

*"Nearly three years after Samuel's surgery, ECHO is a very important organisation in our lives. We have made many great friends, who we treasure dearly and hope that we too can offer support to others facing the unknown."*

*"It wasn't until I found ECHO and realised that we weren't the only family going through this, that I began to cope with my son's heart condition."*

**For further information please contact:** Siobhan Morton, Volunteering Manager [siobhan@echo-evelina.org.uk](mailto:siobhan@echo-evelina.org.uk) 07525 833 210 | 07702 335 185