

THEY RODE HUNDREDS OF KILOMETERS IN THE DESERT FOR SICK CHILDREN

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The Wheels of Love ride for the ALYN Rehabilitation Hospital in Jerusalem is the original charity bike event in Israel. This year, Wheels of Love would have celebrated its 21st annual ride, bringing together cyclists from around the world for five days of riding in Israel, while raising money to benefit the children of ALYN Hospital. Last year, Wheels of Love raised over \$3 million.



Money raised through Wheels of Love helps fund the vital personalized rehabilitation care which the children at ALYN require as a result of accidents, terror attacks or genetic diseases. ALYN is a private hospital, receiving no government funds. The ride helps cover the financial gap between what the hospital receives from referring agencies and the actual cost of best-in-class rehabilitation services.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, riders from abroad were not able to come to Israel to participate. The ride was adjusted and postponed, with the hope of still having a multi-day ride for a smaller group of Israeli riders. Unfortunately, due to the second lockdown and the ensuing limitations, the modified event was cancelled as well.



Many of the ride's loyal participants – both in Israel and abroad – decided that they were not willing to give in or give up. They wanted to continue riding and fundraising for ALYN. A virtual option, #MyALYNRide, was introduced, allowing cyclists to choose a personal challenge and ride at home or in self-organized independent #MyALYNRide events in small groups.

One such group was a group of 20 Israeli riders, who rode 200 kilometers off-road over a period of three intense days, from the village of Ketura in the Negev to Eilat on the newly-established Israel Bike Path. In view of the restrictions, they did not stay in hotels or enjoy the amenities offered in hotels in a normal year, and instead camped in tents and provided their own food. The goal was simple: to maintain the annual tradition of the ride and to encourage their donors to continue supporting the needs of ALYN Hospital, which are all the more critical this year.

The groups' donors were incredibly supportive and generous. To date, this group of 20 riders alone has raised over \$150,000. Together, #MyALYNRide participants have raised over \$1.5 million – a staggering sum, underscoring the strong bonds which have been established over the years between the hospital, the riders and their donors.

We are hoping that next year, we will return to Israel to celebrate the 22nd annual Wheels of Love ride together.

