



*“Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty.”**

In September 2014, 84 cyclists assembled in Paris and began the challenging cycling journey of 700km through the French countryside. Six days later, they finished the event on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice greeted by over 60 family and friends waving banners and Irish flags. At the finish line there were tears of elation for many as the enormity of their year’s journey sank in.

Paris2Nice 2014: The Numbers

84 Amateur cyclists – 28 women & 56 men – participated, raising over €607,000 for 18 charities

2014 Fundraising Totals

Charity	Cyclists	Amount
Action on Hearing Loss	1	€6485
Barretstown	5	€16,154.46
CPSI	2	€20,295
CMRF	2	€31,785
Console	10	€134,342.01
Cystic Fibrosis	11	€75,004.18
Arch Club	3	€16,979.47
Fighting Blindness	11	€54,501.07
Headway	1	€6,155.01
Irish Cancer Society	5	€22,179.01
Irish Hospice Foundation	4	€22,061.60
Irish Youth Foundation	7	€41,881
Laura Lynn	6	€50,150.51
Make-a-Wish	3	€16,251.50
RNLI	2	€13,418
Soul of Haiti	11	€58,151
Special Olympics	2	€11,508
Temple Street	3	€9,917
Total Raised:		€607,218.98

Since its inception four years ago, **244** amateur cyclists have cycled from Paris2Nice,

raising over **€1,902,000** for charities throughout Ireland.

Unlike many charity events, Paris2Nice stands out as one that really tests the mettle and limits of participants. While P2N 2014 did just that, for many of the cyclists the 700km cycle has become a very significant achievement in a new life of fitness and dedication to helping those less well off.

Many of the cyclists bought their first bike since childhood in the early part of 2014 and then struggled, sweated, cried and cursed their way over the first few kilometres on early and chilly Sunday mornings.

Encouraged by the Paris2Nice alumni and the camaraderie of other cyclists they achieved milestones in the form of coffee shops, hilltops and remote sounding towns in the Dublin and Wicklow hills. Every following Sunday brought some progress, helped by the good Irish Summer.

After breaking through the 100km barrier by completing the Wicklow 100, they enjoyed a great series of cycling sportives with thousands of other cyclists. Spinning classes, gym sessions, massages, physiotherapy and 6am cycle meet-ups all followed in late summer to help build up the necessary fitness and stamina for the 700km cycle.

“Equal effort into Training and Fundraising”

Unlike many charity cycles, Paris2Nice looks for participants to achieve the seemingly impossible, to put equal effort into training and fundraising. For many the challenge of the cycle was matched by that of the fundraising target. Supported by the P2N alumni, the participants took on both challenges with great focus and commitment. Each cyclist had chosen to fundraise for a charity and for many that decision was simply because of the circumstances of a child, relation, partner or friend. There were eighteen charities involved and through the summer the cyclists became fundraising and training comrades. Alongside the usual emails requesting sponsorship there were dozens of events including barbecues, parties, table quizzes, cycle-a-thons, bucket shakers, golf classics, fundraising dinners and parties.

For the 84 cyclists, the year was dominated by two agendas: cycling and fundraising.

The cycle itself was a triumph for every participant. Each person had paid over €2,000 of their own funds to participate in the event. The actual journey was incredibly enjoyable because it relieved the tension of a summer of training, fundraising and lots of anticipation. The countryside was spectacular, the cycling was tough but the craic was mighty. We went from the flat farming land of the north, including a day or torrential rain, to the beautiful south with the smell of fermenting wine greeting us as we entered each village. The repetition of each day’s routine became our Paris2Nice lifestyle: - breakfast, cycle, coffee, snack, cycle, lunch, cycle, coffee, snack, cycle, hotel, shower, dinner, sleep.



The elated 2014 team at the Finish line!

37 of the 84 cyclists took it upon themselves to take on an additional challenge and probably the greatest cycling challenge they will ever attempt: a day that started with a 22km climb up the “beast of Provence”, the legendary Mont Ventoux, rated as one of the single hardest cycling mountains. After climbing a vertical mile, it was another 110km of cycling to reach the next hotel. A single word “epic” describes that day.

We had plenty of heroes too.....we had three tandem bikes with three visually impaired cyclists (think about that for a moment) and their brave pilots.

On the last day, the Irish cycling hero, Stephen Roche, joined us. Stephen, who generously shared the day with the team, cycled the full 100km with us taking time to talk to each of the 84 cyclists. He also took a turn to pilot each of the tandems for a while!

Over 84 lives were directly changed by taking on the challenge of Paris2Nice. Every single rider said they would recommend Paris2Nice to a friend; there is no greater understanding of the event than to contemplate that.

Those 84 people raised over €607,000. We'll do the maths for you – that's over €7,000 on average per person. While this average hides those who raised many tens of thousands of euros, there were many for whom getting the bare minimum was a huge achievement. In the end we were all a team of cyclists and a team of fundraisers.

***“The credit belongs to the (wo)man who is actually in the arena,
whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood;
who strives valiantly;
who errs and comes short again and again;
who knows great enthusiasms,
the great devotions;
who spends himself in a worthy cause”****

Many thanks to our sponsors who helped make it all possible, the alumni who were generous with their time, financial support and ongoing involvement in fundraising events. Many thanks once again to Stephen Roche and everyone that supported Paris2Nice throughout the year. It is an incredible achievement by all involved and proves that great things can be done through the goodwill and effort of the collective.

**Teddy Roosevelt, President of the USA, didn't take part in Paris2Nice but he sure wrote some suitable quotes.*