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Ride to break the cycle of homelessness

The Santos Great Bike Ride for Charity 2012 will hit Perth's streets on Sunday 25 November with funds raised from the event going to support St John of God Horizon House.

The event, which is now open for registration, attracted 3,500 riders last year - with more than \$120,000 in fundraising split between the three nominated charities (Horizon House, The Heart Foundation and Hope for Children).

The iconic ride stretches from Perth to Fremantle, running along the Swan River with avid cyclists able to choose between legs of 106km, 53km or the 10km family ride.

Cyclists can win a range of prizes and fundraisers can ride for free if they raise \$250 or more.

The Great Bike Ride charities are seeking the support of around 300 volunteers who can get involved in the lead up to the event, packing and distributing riding kits, or on the event day in a variety of roles.

"The Santos Great Bike Ride for Charity is a great community event and we are very grateful for the support this brings to Horizon House," said Mike Board, Group Manager for Youth Services at St John of God Health Care.

"Horizon House is dedicated to helping young Western Australians break the cycle of homelessness and every dollar we receive will help us provide long-term accommodation, stability, and support for education, training, and employment. We also develop young people's essential life skills so that they are ready for independent living when they leave Horizon House.

"Homelessness is not a choice and more than 40% of homeless people in WA are below the age of 25. That is one key reason why Horizon House supports young people (aged 16 to 22) with the aim of preventing young people returning to a situation of homelessness," Mr Board said.

About Horizon House

St John of God Horizon House has been a beneficiary of the Santos Great Bike Ride since its inception in 2004. The service, established in 1999 provides housing,

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education and emotional support to young homeless people at ten locations across Western Australia and Victoria.

There is no maximum stay in Horizon housing and residents are welcome until they are prepared to live independently, with many residents having experienced extremely challenging situations, including physical harm, mental abuse and family breakdown.

Horizon House has expanded this year to include an antenatal and postnatal accommodation and support service – Horizon House Dianella – in response to the needs of pregnant young women who are homeless in Perth.

For more information and to register online for the Santos Great Bike Ride see <http://www.greatbikeride.com.au/>

Volunteers can register for this event at <http://www.greatbikeride.com.au/contact/volunteer>

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NOTES

St John of God Health Care is a Catholic not-for-profit health care provider. We provide Social Outreach and Advocacy Services which reach out to people experiencing disadvantage to improve health and wellbeing as well as hospitals, home nursing and pathology services.

We strive to serve the common good by providing holistic, ethical and person-centred care and support. We aim to go beyond quality care to provide an experience for people that honours their dignity, is compassionate and affirming and leaves them with a reason to hope.

Social Outreach and Advocacy Services provide significant care and relief for people experiencing disadvantage throughout Australia, New Zealand and the Asia Pacific region, particularly in areas where gaps in health and wellbeing services have been identified. Our Social Outreach and Advocacy services are located in the community and can be accessed free of charge or at minimal cost.

More information is available at www.sjog.org.au/outreach