

# Riding the route of charity

NEWS

Words: Sarah Kobal | Photos: DO IT NOW Media

## **Involved** **Motorbiking**

Now in its 10th year, the Quads4Quads (Q4Q) charity event took off yesterday from Carnival City, Johannesburg. Known as the 'Down Run', riders leaving from Johannesburg are expected to arrive four days later at Cane Cutters in Ballito on Sunday, 29 September 2013. These riders then have the option to ride back to Johannesburg, as part of the 'Up Run', with the riders from Durban, who will leave Ballito on Thursday, 2 October and arrive at Carnival City on Sunday, 6 October. This 2,000 km, 10-day round trip is held as a way to raise funds for the Quad Para Association of South Africa (QASA).



QASA is an organisation that strives to support the lives of quadriplegics and paraplegics in South Africa. QASA aims to prevent spinal cord injury, as well as protect the interests of people with mobility impairments. This association ensures the full potential and quality of quadriplegic and paraplegics' lives. Ari Seirlis, National Director of QASA, will be riding for his 8th time today, while Glenn Foley and Corrine Andrews, founders of Quad4Quads, will be riding this event for the 10th time and Foley says they will never get bored with it.

“This event started ten years ago, where the idea was to have fun and raise money for QASA,” Foley explains. “It was started by Corrine [Andrews] who had an idea to go on a ride and then donate the money raised to a foundation.” On the first ride, Foley, Andrews, and about 230 other riders all met under a tree near Ballito and rode to Johannesburg. On this first ride, Foley and Andrews managed to raise a whopping R200,000 which has grown to around R1 million a year.

From 230 people participating in this charity event, Q4Q has grown to more than 1,000 riders and this number is still growing. There are now teams as big as 30 or so riders participating in this adventurous ride. Although Q4Q offers the Down and Up routes, about ten people are riding both ways. This event included quad bikes, off-road motorbikes, and customised side-by-side quad bikes for the quadriplegic participants.

This event is the biggest off-road ride of its kind in the world. The entire route is off-road and riders are privileged to go on routes that most people in South Africa never get to see. “We go to the most beautiful places you have ever seen,” says Andrews. “We change the route every year, so that return riders experience new routes, as well as variety. The terrain includes thick indigenous forests, rocky mountain passes, dams, rivers, farmlands, and the hills of KZN. Riders will travel for about 250 km per a day, with fuel stops situated 100 km apart, ensuring that no rider runs out of petrol. Camping facilities are arranged by the event organisers throughout the event, which means participants can fully enjoy the experience and don't have to worry about not having a place to stay that night or the next.”

Organising the Q4Q is not an easy task. Andrews explains that she arrived in Johannesburg last Sunday after spending six days marking the route. “Although it's really tiring to do this side of the event, it is well worth it because the riders know where to go, when to slow down, and where there are dangerous parts, which are all marked with different signs. Although everyone is briefed before the race concerning safety, there are also five medics at the event, with three of them riding along with the participants to ensure everyone's safety. If there is a serious accident, the injured can be flown to hospital,” she said.

Adds Andrews, “There is no event like this; everyone always helps each other. If I get stuck, for example, there is always someone who stops to help out. These guys will do anything for you, and it is this camaraderie that makes this event so special.”