

Fundraiser this weekend for sick children in Poland begins with motorcycle parade

Edinburgh's Polish community will be out in force tomorrow as they bid to raise thousands of pounds for sick children in their homeland.

The city is staging a series of events throughout the day as part of the global initiative The Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity (GOCC).

Poland's biggest charity was founded by Jerzy Owsiak in 1993 and has since raised more than 250 million Euros for the healthcare system from annual events around the world, all staged on the same day.

The day-long public fundraiser is held in Poland and every country where there is an active Polish community.

Edinburgh's day of festivities begins with a motorcycle parade from Queens Drive at Holyrood Park up the Royal Mile and then down to Market Street and St Mary's Street and back to Holyrood.

Scotland's largest Polish fundraising event then heads to La Belle Angele in the Cowgate where doors open at 4.00pm for a feast of live music.

Seven bands, including singer Zuzanna Feliszek, BRUK and Davey Sloan and The Rattlers, will entertain the crowd before the evening takes on more of a club feel from 11pm-3am with Mandala Sound System, Mad Caravan, Samedia Shebeen and DJ Cuba

spinning the discs.

The Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity fund-raising is managed by local collection centres, with 1700 around the world staffed by 120,000 volunteers.

Ahead of the 28th annual staging of the global event, Katarzyna Didyk, member of the Edinburgh GOCC Collection Centre, said: "Our main goal is to support Polish children's hospitals by raising money so the charity can purchase modern medical equipment. The charity also finances six medical and one educational initiative.

"Thanks to the money raised around the world since 1993, the charity has donated over 60,000 pieces of medical equipment.

"We're really looking forward to this year in Edinburgh and hopefully we raise a lot of money again. The support we get from La Belle Angele is invaluable and we can't thank them enough."

Donations will be accepted on the night, while there will also be an auction featuring signed items from musician Ziggy Marley, son of reggae legend Bob Marley, and Edinburgh-based illustrator and 3d artist Andrzej Kuziola.

Matt Justice, manager of La Belle Angele which has hosted events for the last last two years, said: "Edinburgh has a huge Polish community and we're only too happy to try to help them make a success of their big day."

Aberdeen and Glasgow are also staging events tomorrow.



Photographer Jarosław Szewczyk