

TS Netherlands Employees Trek for Children

Avnet Technology Solutions (TS) EMEA is always looking for a great cause to support in the region. Helping autistic children is one of them. Acting on the advice of John Everett, a product specialist, the Netherlands team decided to support a little school called the Droomboom. Only open for about a year, this school is leading the way in educating autistic children with a U.S.-led method called ABA. The school is completely self-financed and is set up as a charity.

Everett realized he was not the only employee riding his bike to school. In fact, this little community was growing. The decision was made to put on a two-day cycling event on the 340 km Zuider Zee route, which encircles the IJsselmeer inland sea.

In October, 10 TS EMEA employees departed from the Droomboom School in Blaricum to begin the 170 km first leg of the ride. "The wind was NW 4, which meant we would ride into the wind the whole day," explains Everett. "Luckily, we had two very strong cyclists – Stan Van Wissen and Rick Van Dorn. Each section of the ride was broken into 50 km stops where we had a support bus manned by Aartjan Wegink."

On day two, five more cyclists joined the team. These were parents from the school. The ride began with another 170 km jaunt. Competition quickly came into play. One of the parents was a strong cyclist and decided to set a fast pace. Ten riders with weary legs followed and a small race began, with speeds reaching 42 km per hour.

In total, the team spent 14 hours on their bicycles. All 10 TS employees completed the ride, and lost 7,500 calories in the process. Money pledged by sponsors totaled 19,000 euros, of which Avnet sponsored 5,000 euros. Vendor sponsors were LSI Logic, Emulex, Kingston and Sun Microsystems.

All money raised will go to rebuilding a portion of the school, which will open up six more student spots.