

Gearing up for 'Tour de Cure'

A CYCLING legend has revealed how the near death of his young son prompted him to take on a 'Tour de Cure' for charity.

Stephen Roche's nine-year-old son Florian needed a bone-marrow transplant from one of his brothers two years ago after doctors diagnosed him with leukaemia.

Speaking as he launched the Stephen Roche 'Tour de Cure', which will take place in Midleton, Co Cork, on May 8, Mr Roche said that the experience impelled him to give more of his time to charitable work.

"We all think these things only happen to other people but when they happen to you, you realise how thin the wire is.

"Your family's life changes because you now all have one goal and that's to make sure the child comes through and survives," he said.

Florian is now recovering well from the illness, though, according to Mr Roche, he still experiences setbacks from time to time.



Stephen Roche with Scott Whyte, from Midleton, in Cork yesterday. MICHAEL MacSWEENEY/PROVISION

Mr Roche made the trip from his home in Nice, France, yesterday to promote the ride.

It is hoped the event will raise €50,000 for Cork's Mercy University Hospital Foundation, chil-

dren's charity the COPE Foundation, and the Anaphylaxis Campaign, which helps those at risk of potentially life-threatening food allergies.

KEVIN KEANE