

# ON THEIR BIKES TO OFFER A HELPING HAND

OFFERING a helping hand, was the theme of a week of giving by volunteers.

Activities during the fifth annual Sewa International event included feeding homeless people and a bike ride from Valentines Park, Ilford to Wanstead.

Sewa, which means to give in Hindi, can be a donation of food, clothes or money or simply lending a hand.

Other events included a seminar on how to become a more effective speaker, a disco, barbecue and a talent show.

Manisha Punj, 13, of Ilford, took part in the talent show, doing a performance of her gymnastics. She said: "It's part of our community. It's good to join all the others."

So far, more than £2,000 has been raised for Redbridge Mayor Cllr Ashok Kumar's chosen charity, Barnabas Workshops, which helps people find employment by improving their skills.

Talking after the bike ride that marked the end of Sewa week on Sunday, one of the event co-ordinators, Ravi Bhanot, said: "We got

people together and encouraged them to ride their bicycles as part of the London Cycle Campaign. It allowed people to let their hair down after a busy week of events. We are in our fifth year and it was great to see so many new faces.

"An Italian man who has just moved to Redbridge, joined the bike ride and told me it was great we have something like this in the UK, where you can just join in."

Following the success of cooking Indian food and serving it to homeless people at Redbridge Night Shelter, York Road, Ilford, volunteers from Sewa have decided to make it a regular monthly service.

Redbridge Council leader, Cllr Alan Weinberg said: "I would like to say a big thank you to Sewa International. This is a marvellous thing you are doing."

"What you are doing is helping the community and the young people of the community."

To help cook or serve food for Sewa International at Redbridge Night Shelter, contact Mr Bhanot on 07956 556613 or email [ravibhanot@aol.com](mailto:ravibhanot@aol.com).



● **ALL SMILES:** Three-year-old Mari Touray enjoyed himself at a fundraising barbecue

