

## **"We Support the Friendship of Nations!" sports activities in Russia**

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Russia - Under the theme "We Support the Friendship of Nations!" sports activities took place in many cities of Russia on Nov. 16, 2014, in observance of the UN International Day for Tolerance.

The event was organized by Universal Peace Federation-Russia with the support of a number of organizations: the Gorodok association of student volunteer groups of Transbaikal State University in Chita; the "Hour of Sports with a Star" club in Nizhnevartovsk; the Sphere youth initiative group in Irkutsk; the Primavera dance school in Petrozavodsk; the regional office in Kazan of the Tatarstan Youth Sports Association; the Globe Friends of Peace Club; Secondary School No. 2 in the Karelian town of Kostomuksha; and the Cosmos youth club of the Forum youth organization of Volgograd, among others.

All the participants and organizers were united by one desire: to support the commemoration of the International Day for Tolerance, which was declared by the U.N. agency UNESCO in 1995. Participants distributed flyers that explained the objectives of the project.

### **Moscow**

The Youth Universal Peace Federation, together with a youth initiative group, organized a run in Lyublino Park in southeastern Moscow, despite the cold November weather. A number of runners who joined the event were surprised to learn that one can run not just for health but also in support of tolerance, thus becoming part of the larger campaign "We Support the Friendship of Nations!"

### **St. Petersburg**

UPF representative Tatiana Krasnosumova met with the students of School No. 609 on Nov. 13 to discuss the topic of "Living in peace with others." She introduced the children to the concept of tolerance in order to encourage them to accept different people in all their diversity and understand how to live and interact with others.

At first, the children compared figures made of glass, straw, chocolate and ice and then moved on to comparing human characters. Next they considered the issue of living in peace with others. The pupils offered a variety of options for peaceful coexistence. Then they were offered different situations in which they had to choose, from several options, the behavior that is consistent with the principles of tolerance. The pupils came up with good answers. At the end of the session they made a poster for the International Day for Tolerance, which they used as the background for a group photo.

### **Petrozavodsk**

The Primavera dance school in Petrozavodsk, the capital of the Republic of Karelia, invited various dance groups to take part in a dance marathon under the theme "Hour of Dance for the Friendship of Nations." Nadezhda Ostakova, the organizer of the event, explained: "Culture unites people better than any reasoning. Dance transcends social and ethnic differences. With its movements in all their beauty, it is a universal language. Every nation has its own dances that express their identity and relationship with the outside world."

On November 13, the first participants of the marathon, the Galyorka volunteers group, drew a poster and took pictures with it. Among the participants was the Carpe Diem leadership club. The seven participants first painted a poster and then presented a dance composition. On November 14, the Primavera dance school, the initiators of the marathon, gave a performance with singing and dancing of the salsa and bachata styles of dance. At the completion of the marathon on November 15, the Armageddon team gave a talk about tolerance. The participants came to the conclusion that people were often intolerant, and the Day for Tolerance should help to change them.

### **Volgograd**

In Multinational School No. 71 of Volgograd in southwestern Russia, the Day for Tolerance started with a game. Volunteers of the Space and Forum youth clubs organized a game called "We Support the Friendship of Nations!" in which neighbors live in friendship, mutual understanding and mutual respect.

Afsana, Diane and Julia demonstrated the dances of different nations; Arina showed games of different countries; Galya and Marina helped to draw a poster. The event was divided into three age groups, each of which had interesting activities. The children got to know about their school's sports stars: pupils who are seriously involved in sports and have attained some success. The young athletes took a poster

proclaiming "We Support the Friendship of Nations!" to a football competition, dedicated to the Day for Tolerance, among teen and youth clubs of Volgograd's Krasnoarmeiskii (Red Army) district.

### **Kazan**

In Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, the initiator of the event, the Tatarstan Youth Sports Association, was represented by its leaders, Ivan Volkov and Amir Ismagilov. Participants of the Fifth Regional Well Fitness Convention, held in the Planet Fitness club, readily joined the large-scale campaign and were photographed with a poster proclaiming, "We Support the Friendship of Nations!"

Organizers and participants visited the Universal Temple of local artist Ildar Khanov, which symbolizes the unity of religions, peoples and cultures, not only in Russia but also worldwide. Residents of the city also came to attend the event at this amazing cultural center. At the end of the day the participants attended a festival of Tibetan culture at which Lama Yonten Gialtso was giving a lecture. He gave his blessing to this noble event, adding, "In our difficult times people must do many good deeds."

### **Yekaterinburg**

On November 16, an event called "Run Hour for the Friendship of Nations" took place in the center of Yekaterinburg, Russia's fourth-largest city, organized by UPF-Urals together with members of the Run Hour club. The night before, Eugene Skvortsov and his family and guests made a poster and a video clip, inviting people to join the event. Despite the cold weather, 12 adults and six children came to the event and ran about 2 kilometers. At the end they made photos holding a banner with the motto.

### **Chelyabinsk**

Aigul Komelkova from the Urals city of Chelyabinsk joined the marathon entitled "We Support the Friendship of Nations!" She independently organized the event on the Day for Tolerance. Wanting to tell others about her experience, she found the Universal Peace Federation and was pleasantly surprised that she has so many associates in different cities.

Middle-school students of School No. 131 in the Chelyabinsk region town of Fyodorovka came to the Brigantine Palace of Culture on November 14 as part of the campaign "For a Healthy Lifestyle." Svetlana Khisamutdinova, Ph.D., a well-known poet who is also an Ambassador for Peace, gave a presentation on "The Running World." Looking at the famous athlete, no one would believe that she is 70 years old. The children learned about her life by watching the film "The Pearl of Kursk." Then she shared her secrets of a healthy lifestyle and the way to enhance the positive qualities of one's character.

At the end of the event, a dance of friendship was held next to the palace of culture. A Torch of Peace was lit, which Svetlana Khisamutdinova solemnly handed to Galina Elagina, director of the palace of culture; then the torch went round the circle, symbolizing unity and freedom.

### **Nizhnevartovsk**

In the Urals city of Nizhnevartovsk activists of the group "An Hour of Sports with a Star" held an event called "Sport Unites" and "Nizhnevartovsk Supports the Friendship of Nations." The event was attended by representatives of the City Cossacks Society, the Slavs of Siberia association and other national diasporas. There were also our regular participants: the NGO Drug-Free Nizhnevartovsk and the project Sparta of Nizhnevartovsk! Karate instructor (1st dan black belt) Fedor Leonidovich Dyushor of the Phoenix sports school led the warmup before the run. Slavic dances were followed by the classic run, which ended with friendly water dousing.

### **Novosibirsk**

In Novosibirsk, the third most populous city in Russia, an "Hour of Dance for the Friendship of Nations" was held on November 16. The participants performed Irish, Gypsy, Spanish, country, Egyptian, Russian, Georgian and Indian folk dances. It is no secret that a folk dance, with its characteristic movements, national music and atmosphere, characterizes the very nature of each nation. Through this, one can understand the people and feel the national history. Xenia Tolmacheva commented that preparation for the Dance Hour was a good opportunity to escape from everyday worries. "We hope that next year there will be more participants, but we are grateful to those who came," she said. Dima Tooth said, "I learned a lot of different dance steps. I think it's great to get acquainted with the cultures of different nations through dance." Marianne Lavrenteva said: "This is a really good event, in which anyone may participate! Now I am proud to tell my friends, 'Look what we have learned in just one hour!'"

### **Irkutsk**

An event called "Run Hour for the Friendship of Nations" took place in the Siberian city of Irkutsk on November 16. After a warmup, the participants started the run, chanting, "Run Hour for the Friendship of Nations!" and "If you want to be healthy, run an hour!" The "Run Hour" was followed by a "Dance Hour," and everyone loved it! Participants suggested organizing a "Football Hour" for friendship of nations and "Two hours of cinema for the friendship of nations!" Finally, they took photos near the Eternal Flame!

### **Chita**

Volunteers from the Gorodok open association of volunteer groups, together with the municipal Education Committee, held an event called "Run Hour for the Friendship of Nations" in the Siberian city of Chita on November 16. Traditionally, the initiator of the "Run Hour" was the Towards Life volunteer group. Despite the cold weather the 40 participants actively took part in sports, and prepared and conducted a remarkable dance exercise. In long jump, the best among the girls was Elena Levina with 2.21 meters; among men, with the result of 2.28 meters, the winner was Evgeny Chizhov. At the end of the event, all the participants received certificates and small prizes.