

Russia's Peace Road 2016 concluded in Moscow after more than 1,400 kilometers

Dmitry Samko
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The start of the marathon in central Moscow near Red Square. The banner proclaims, "I Choose Sport!" and shows the route that the runners will take. At left is the UPF regional chair for Eurasia, Mr. Katsumi Otsuka.

Moscow, Russia—After running more than 1,400 kilometers (almost 870 miles), Russia's Peace Road 2016 concluded in Moscow on June 26.



UPF-Moscow Secretary General Dmitry Samko speaks at the closing ceremony at Moscow's Victory Park with the World War II museum in the background.

Running under the motto “Children against Drugs—I Choose Sports!” the super-marathon started on June 12 in central Moscow, in the shadow of the Kremlin. It finished in Victory Park on Moscow’s Poklonnaya Hill.

At the closing ceremony, medals were awarded to the participants by Col. Sergei Fedorov, deputy chief and executive secretary of the federal department Associated Editing House of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, and by Col. Vitaly Khmel'nitsky, head of interagency cooperation at the Chief Drug Control Management, Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Among the participants were 35 children between 6 and 16 years of age, and 15 coaches from different regions of Russia, as well as Belarus and Kazakhstan.

In 14 days the team traveled through eight constituent entities of the Russian Federation, promoting a healthy lifestyle, physical culture and sports. Every day the marathoners ran 70 to 100 kilometers (43 to 62 miles), passing the baton.

The route passed through Moscow, Sergiev Posad, Kalyazin, Uglich, Myshkin, Rybinsk, Demino, Tutayev, Yaroslavl, Kostroma, Volgorechensk, Furmanov, Shuya, Palekh, Pestyaki, Chkalovsk, Zavolzhye, Gorodets, Nizhny Novgorod, Suzdal and Elektrostal before returning to Moscow.

Sergei Suprunyuk, director of the Moscow regional public organization Super Marathoners for a Healthy Lifestyle, who is an Ambassador for Peace, said: “Through this race we want to attract the attention of children and adolescents to a healthy lifestyle and sports. By the example of our members we would like to show that there is an alternative to destructive passions such as drugs, drinking, and smoking. It is sports, travel, studying the history of their country.”

Mr. Suprunyuk continued: “Participants of the marathon met young people and children, representatives of the anti-drug units of the Russian Interior Ministry, representatives of the authorities, and public organizations. The route included a significant part of the Golden Ring of Russia, so the participants had a good opportunity to learn more about the cultural and historical heritage of their motherland and communicate with their peers, feeling the very heart of the country.”

This year, in addition to the race, a campaign promoting the Peace Road program was initiated. Konstantin Krylov, regional secretary general of UPF-Eurasia, explained that the program was aimed at dissolving the boundaries between people so that humanity becomes one world family.

Dmitry Samko, secretary general of UPF, Moscow chapter, said: "This year, such a great initiative as the Peace Road is being carried out simultaneously with the relay race. The idea is to connect cities, countries, nations, and continents by a road of peace.

“There are so many borders that separate us,” Mr. Samko said. “Meanwhile, sports and roads are designed to connect us. From city to city, from village to village, we sought to convey our love. The idea is to show our involvement, to prove that we are interdependent, that the road toward peace is vitally important to us. This is one of the ideas of the Peace Road. We tried every way to promote the idea of the hospitable Russia, where the roads lead to peace.”



In Yaroslavl, the participants visit the memorial to 19th century Russian poet Nikolai Nekrasov.