

# Visit to Kalmykia, Russia Builds Bridges of Peace

*Yuriy Gavrilin - October 31 - November 4, 2019*



Representatives of the Family Federation for World Peace (FFWPU) made a fourth visit to the Russian Republic of Kalmykia from October 31 to November 4, 2019.

This time FFWPU worked in partnership with Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), an affiliated organization, with support of the Angels of Peace, a youth ensemble that performs traditional Russian songs and dances.

The main goal of the visit was to support the traditional family. Our representatives sought to cooperate with local leaders to prepare young people to create strong families, educate existing families, and create a model for solving social problems of families and youth.



All the programs were related to the Russian national holiday Unity Day, which is celebrated on November 4.

On November 1, the Kalmykian Ministry of Sports and Youth Policy was the site of a roundtable attended by FFWPU and WFWP representatives Marina Malova, Tatyana Panichenko, and Alexey Savelyev. Veronika Dandaeva, the head specialist of the ministry's youth policy department, and Elzyat Gakhaev, the curator of the Nilvr young families' club, also attended.



The result of the meeting was a decision to cooperate in creating an active team of young families who will conduct youth and family programs on an ongoing basis.

Also on November 1, we took part in a traditional multinational family festival of friendship and sports in School No. 2 of Elista, the capital.



This event is held to strengthen family traditions and intergenerational ties; harmonize interethnic relations; and foster respect for the customs, traditions and cultures of other ethnic groups.

Welcoming words and congratulations were offered by the guests of honor: Galina V. Vaskina, the deputy head of the City Administration of Elista; Kamil Al. Markeev, the Kalmykian deputy minister of sports and youth policy; Yonten Gelung, the administrator of the Buddhist temple

known as “The Golden Abode of Shakyamuni Buddha”; and Archpriest Yuri Kotinov, head of the Social Ministry Department.



Seven families of different nationalities presented their culinary creations and creative performances. They took part in the relay race "Dad, Mom and I Are a Sports Family." Olga Vakulinskaya, president of WFWP of Russia, introduced the Angels of Peace, who performed the song “In the Chamber” and the dance “Kalinka.” Aleksey Saveliev, director of FFWPU programs, awarded “Exemplary Family” diplomas to several families.

Also on November 1, a Bridge of Peace and Friendship ceremony took place in the recreation center of the village of Troitsk in the Tselinny District. This "Bridge" was a continuation of the program that was held in Moscow on October 12.



Both Kalmyk and Russian cultures were represented in the program. The speakers emphasized the importance of achieving unity beyond religions, nationalities and cultures, as well as the unique role of the Kalmyk people in the formation and protection of Russia over the past 400 years. The Bridge of Peace and Friendship has become a symbol of nationalities, cultures, traditions and, most importantly, people who have established true relations of brothers and sisters with each other.

On November 2, on a frosty morning, a unique program for two young families and other guests was held on Elista Ova (an ancient religious structure made of stones and trees). The planting of the “Kalmykian Ancestral Grove” included a special Buddhist family rite, as well as a program for families to renew their vow of marital fidelity.



All the participants could plant their own family tree. It took a lot of effort, since everyone had to dig a hole and make a special offering to their ancestors. As the root is the basis of the tree, so our ancestors and our attitude toward them determine how the family will grow and develop. Thereafter, in a traditional Kalmyk yurt, Lamas Ceren and Sanal performed a Buddhist ceremony to correct karma and bless the union with Buddhist prayers, after which the Family Federation blessing of marriage for peace took place. All the couples pledged not only to be faithful to their spouse but also to live for the good of others. The program ended with the planting of ancestral trees, symbols of strong, prosperous families.



On November 3, another Bridge of Peace and Friendship was held in the Palace of Culture of the village of Ketcheneroy in Ketchenerovsky District. The Angels of Peace performed, three couples renewed their marital fidelity vows, and one of the families received an “Exemplary Family” diploma from the Family Federation.

On November 4, another “Kalmykian Ancestral Grove” was laid in the village of Evdik in the Ketchenerovsky District. It is symbolic that it was planted next to a Buddhist stupa, which recently appeared in the village.

