

“A teacher is a person, who plants a small piece of his or her intellect and heart in young people every day like a diligent gardener,” President Toomas Hendrik Ilves said on Friday, when presenting the Cultural Foundation’s Educational Awards for 2008 to Nora Mals, Ülle Liiber and Urve Krause.

“Therefore, I am extremely gratified on the eve of Teachers’ Day to acknowledge this year’s winners of the Cultural Foundation’s Educational Awards. Diligent gardeners, who are truly the promoters of Estonian life,” President Ilves said.

“If, in some other countries and in the mythology of some other peoples, monetary wealth is central to value judgments, then, during the last century and a half, Estonia’s history has established a good education as the primary precondition for a person’s success.

Therefore we collectively think and speak so much about the future of Estonia’s educational system and the necessary changes therein,” the Head of State said. “We are few. To achieve success as a country and a people, we must be the best or at least among the best. Especially in the field of education.”

President Ilves thanked the winners of the Educational Award for their love and dedication, “The work of a teacher is embodied in you as a calling. The annual Cultural Foundation Awards are a small token of the thanks and acknowledgement that you have earned with your work and disposition from students, parents and colleagues.”

Nora Mals is a Russian language teacher at the Tallinn Secondary Science School; Ülle Liiber trains geography teachers at the University of Tartu; and Urve Krause works as the director at the Pärnu Kuninga Street Basic School.

The President of the Republic’s Cultural Foundation, with Indrek Neivelt as Chairman of the Supervisory Board, is presenting the Educational Awards financed by Swedbank for the sixth year. The Cultural Foundation was initiated by the Head of State in 1993 and collects monetary donations from individuals, companies, organizations and associations to support Estonia’s cultural, educational, and research activities.

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