

The Head of State, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who is also the patron of the voluntary movement, today congratulated this years' volunteers in Tartu.

“In Estonia, we are seeing an ever-developing third sector and volunteer movement, which has always been characteristic of our nation and country. I have the pleasure to say – ‘thank you’ – to the many third sector mentors, who are the organisers and leaders of our volunteer movement, “ said President Ilves.

This year, above all, the volunteers who comprise of mentors, tutors, or organisers are being acknowledged for their contribution to the development of voluntary activities in Estonia.

The following volunteers were acknowledged for their work: **Ms Jekaterina Gvirdzisvili** from Narva – for work with the youth of Ida-Virumaa;

**Mr. Taavi Rauniste**

from Saaremaa – campaign “Support Saare Children with Mental Disabilities”;

**Mr. Tom Rüütel**

from Saaremaa – campaign “Support Saare Children with Mental Disabilities”;

**Ms Helve Tellei**

from Läänemaa – teaching handicraft in Rõude village society, incl. the unemployed;

**Ms Helgi Õismets**

from Tallinn – a multitude of activities at the Self-Help and Advisory Centre for Senior Citizens;

**Ms Kärt Hüdsi**

from Tartu – a volunteer at Foundation Children’s Fund of Tartu University Hospital;

**Ms Sandra Liiv**

from Tartu – co-ordinator of volunteers at the Foundation Children’s Fund of Tartu University Hospital;

**Ms Mairi Lilleleht**

from Pärnumaa – guiding the volunteers of MTÜ ( non-profit organisation) Anni Akadeemia (Anni’s Academy) and work with the young;

**Ms Alice Leetmaa**

from Hiiumaa – MTÜ (non-profit organisation) Agapäeotsa Selts, promotion of village life;

**Ms Elo Naaber**

from Saaremaa – work to support Saare Maakonna Invaühing (Association of Handicapped People of Saare County);

**Ms Külliki Mattus**

from Võru – a voluntary leader of the young at special Defence League Organisations: the Young Eagles and Home Daughters;

**Ms Aigi Irs**

from Tartu – a volunteer at Tartu Nägemisvaegurite Arenduskeskus MTÜ (non-government organisation Development Centre for Visually Impaired People of Tartu);

**Ms Reet Allikvere**

from Harju county – development of a system for assisting homeless animals in MTÜ (non-profit organisation) Kassibi;

**Ms Riina Varts**

from Tallinn – Chairman of Executive Board of PARE, Estonian Association for Personnel Development, development of the sphere of leading people; and

**Mr. Heikki Mutso**

from Läänemaa – developer and organiser of scouts movement in Läänemaa.

The volunteers of the year were chosen from among 40 nominees by a nine-member committee, which consisted of the representatives of non-government organisations and the public sector.

A recording of a radio programme, Radio Night University, took place within the framework of the event. The President of the Republic, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, a Volunteer of the Year, Ms Riina Varts, the Head of Palupõhja School of Nature, Mr. Robert Oetjen, and Mr. Marten Kaevats from Uue Maailma Selts (the New World Society) participated in the discussions.

The international day of volunteers is celebrated every year on 5<sup>th</sup> December. In Estonia, the tradition of celebrating the day began back in 2005. 2011 will also be a year dedicated to voluntary activities in Europe.

Office of the President  
Public Relations Department  
Phone +372 631 6229