

Today, Evelin Ilves and biathlete Allar Levandi visited Carl Robert Jakobson Gymnasium in Viljandi, where Rebeca Lotta Aasmäe, who won the Young Athlete's Prize of the First Lady's Foundation of the President of the Republic's Cultural Foundation, studies.

"Learning is as important as sport, but sport should not definitely be a success at the expense of learning," told Evelin Ilves, when meeting with children at the school.

This was also emphasised by Allar Levandi, who said that every athlete should, from the very beginning of his or her career, consider what will happen once his/her time in top level sports is over. "Sports is just a part of an athlete's life. Children who are active in sports while they are young and who also have enough time for other hobbies will cope with everything in their later lives," Levandi added.

Evelin Ilves also inspected the school cafeteria and the school skating competition in Viljandi Skating Rink, giving the school a challenge cup.

It is tradition for Evelin Ilves to visit the schools of recipients of the Young Athlete's prize with some of Estonia's top athletes, thereby paying homage to the recipient of the prize and his/her school.

Background information:

The Young Athlete's Prize is presented by the First Lady's Foundation of the President of the Republic's Cultural Foundation. The prize is intended to acknowledge young, under-21-year-olds with very good academic achievements. The prize is earmarked for covering training and competition costs. The prize is financed by Nordea Bank and is awarded twice a year. The amount of the Young Athlete's Prize is up to 3,195 Euros per recipient. To date, the prize has been divided between three athletes.

Rebeca Lotta (born in 2000) is involved in judo with Taifu Sports Club, Viljandi. Rebeca is a highly versatile young athlete, who has been successful in judo, skiing and track and field. Despite her intense training schedule, she has also achieved excellent academic results. She started with judo at the age of seven and achieved 2nd place in her very first competition. In 2010, Rebeca was elected as the first young athlete of Taifu Sports Club, and in May 2011 she won the title of Estonian Champion of athletes up to 40 kg. She has been skiing since she was a young child and started to attend competitions in 2010, at which she quickly achieved good results. Rebeca is studying in the 5th class of Carl Robert Jakobson Gymnasium, Viljandi; music is also one of her hobbies – she is learning to play violin and flute, and she sings in a choir. Rebeca will use her Young Athlete's Prize to cover some of her competition expenses and to buy the necessary sports supplies.

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