

Evelin Ilves in the Office of the President today awarded, for the sixth time, the Young Athlete prizes to three fine young people – the athletes acknowledged for their achievements were swimmers Anette Remmelg and Roberta Mikk and track and field athlete, Kaur Kivistik.

"Acknowledgment is very important for young athletes. Also, the understanding of being an example for one's peers. You can no longer give up; you have to keep improving. I hope that the prizes will be an inspiration for our young athletes," told Evelin Ilves.

According to Evelin Ilves, it becomes tougher and tougher to choose the recipients of the prize. "This time, we received 75 applications. Those we have chosen have passed a close screening and apart from being interested in sports, all the recipients of the prize must be very good students. And indeed, all the applicants had excellent academic results," told Evelin Ilves.

"You also need to be mentally strong to be successful in sports," stated track and field athlete Kaur Kivistik, who represented the young athletes. He emphasised that learning and striving for good grades is very important in this regard.

According to the representative of Nordea Bank, Piret Reinson, she was pleased to see such fine, bright young people and it is even more pleasant that Nordea Bank can make a small contribution to support the efforts of young people. "Money is important, but in reality the values that inspire you and contribute to your progress are even more important. Life is full of both highs and lows, and other values, not money, together with the people close to us keep us going in difficult times. One of the values followed by both Nordea Bank and Gerd Kanter, whom we also support, is honesty," Reinson added.

Anette Remmelg (born 2000) is an 11-year-old girl with a physical disability. Regardless of – or maybe due to – Anette's needs, her parents started to look for sports that would aid her during her early childhood. At the age of 5, Anette started swimming classes at the recommendation of doctors and physical therapists. Anette attends Harkujärve Basic School, where she has consistently taken part in different subject Olympiads and excels in her studies. She goes to Tallinn Art School twice a week and her drawings have been awarded first prizes at competitions for students that have been organised by the rural municipality.

Anette will use the prize (600 euros) to participate in an open championship in Germany, where she can receive her IPC (International Paralympic Committee) classification or, in other words, be assigned a competition class that matches her disability. The classification is needed for Anette to participate in other IPC competitions that will prepare her for the 2016 Paralympic Games.

Roberta Mikk (born 2001) is a talented young swimmer from Hiiumaa, who has been training since the age of three in the Hiiu Hüljes (Hiiu Seal) swimming club. She is among the best in her age group and has won mostly first places in competitions in the past year. Roberta was elected the best athlete of Hiiumaa in the T-16 age group in 2011. At the age of 10, Roberta met the time limits in different swimming distances at the Estonian Championship. Roberta attends 4th grade at Käina Gymnasium; she is an A-student and the proud owner of a number of letters of praise.

Roberta will use the prize (600 euros) to cover training and competition expenses and to buy some equipment.

Kaur Kivistik (born 1991) is a track and field athlete specialising in the steeplechase, and he has made it onto the Estonian team. He began regular training six years ago. Kaur has consistently been a member of the Estonian Youth team and won the 3,000 metre steeplechase as a member of the adult team at the European Team Championships in 2011. This year, he broke the Estonian record for a youth half marathon. Kaur has set himself the goal of doing well at international championships from the European championships up to the Olympic Games. Kaur graduated from the sports-based class of Ülenurme Gymnasium and is now a sophomore at the Faculty of Exercise and Sports Sciences of the University of Tartu.

He will use the Young Athlete Prize (2,000 euros) to participate in training camps abroad and to take part in foreign competitions.

The Young Athlete Prize of the First Lady's Foundation of the Cultural Foundation of the President of the Republic is a prize intended to acknowledge under-21-year-olds with very good academic achievements. The prize is earmarked for the recipients' training and competition costs. The Young Athlete's prize is financed by Nordea Bank and is presented twice a year. The Young Athlete prize can be 3,200 euros per recipient. To date, the prize has been divided between three recipients.

The recipients of the prize will be chosen by the advisory board of the First Lady's Foundation, which has the right to involve other experts in getting advice about awarding the prize. Members of the Advisory Board include Gerd Kanter (discus thrower), Anu Kaljurand (Estonian Olympic Committee), Õnne Pollisinski (Sports Club Meduus) and Heli Suvi (Office of the President).

For additional information about the prize, see: www.president.ee/en

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