

Evelin Ilves and discus thrower Gerd Kanter today visited Harkujärve Basic School to acknowledge swimmer Anette Rimmelg in front of her school family. Anette won the Young Athlete Prize of the First Lady's Foundation of the Cultural Foundation of the President of the Republic this week.

Evelin Ilves said that all the athletes who have been awarded the Young Athlete Prize are exceptional – both in chosen sports and in studies. "But a person with special needs has to work even harder to excel. Anette is a shining example of how it is possible to both study well and be successful in sports, while also being involved in singing and painting," told Evelin Ilves.

Discus thrower Gerd Kanter spoke about his athletic career to the students and recommended that the children try out different fields and hobbies: "You must do many things as a child to know what you really want and can achieve as an adult. Never lose faith in yourself or give up; everything is then possible. The higher the goals you set for yourself, the further you will go." Gerd Kanter also acknowledged the Young Athlete Prize: "The value of the help you receive from others at the right time is like double assistance. This is the biggest value of this prize."

The children of Harkujärve Basic School introduced a new sport to Evelin Ilves and Gerd Kanter, which involved the children performing different combinations with a skipping rope while listening to music. "I am happy to see how you have found such a novel way of enjoying sports," told Evelin Ilves, in acknowledging the initiative of the school.

Evelin Ilves traditionally pays a visit with some of Estonia's top athletes to the schools attended by the recipients of the Young Athlete Prize to acknowledge both the recipient and his/her school.

Anette Rimmelg 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 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.

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).

This year, 75 applications were put forward for the award.

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

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