

Yekaterinburg, Russia's Urals Half Marathon Runners called I Choose Life

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Yekaterinburg, Russia—More than 60 athletes of different generations took part in the eighth amateur half marathon called “I Choose Life.”

Participants could choose between three distances—21 kilometers (a little over 13 miles), 10.5 kilometers (about 6.5 miles), and 3.5 kilometers (a little over 2 miles). The half marathon was organized by the Run Hour running club and the Ural chapter of UPF.

Every year the event has been held between significant family holidays—International Day of Families (May 15), Global Day of Parents and the Russian celebration Children's Day (both on June 1). This year's half marathon took place on May 28, 2017.

This year 16 children participated, mostly at the distance of 100 meters. Each child ran his or her hundred-meter race next to an adult half marathoner. Many younger children now want to take part in the 3.5-kilometer race, following the example of older children.

All of the small runners received diplomas. According to their parents, some of them, like Milana and Danil, on the next day proudly told their friends in kindergarten that they are now real athletes.

During the awards ceremony, some of the elder participants distinguished themselves by performing dances. The Native Souls group and the family dance project Forever Dance performed as a way of congratulating the athletes.

The event organizers were happy to welcome once again as a guest Gennady I. Valugin, a World Cup winner of a two-day race in the over-60 age category, an ultra-marathoner and a public figure. He greeted the runners and gave the start for the 21-kilometer race.

For five participants of the 21-kilometer race, this was the first half marathon they had ever run. They received special hand-painted wooden "My Half Marathon" medals, made by Svetlana Skvortsova, a master of painting on wood. Such a medal traditionally is awarded for one's first half marathon, for significant contributions to the organization of a half marathon, or for multiple participations in the event.

Lately, many races of this type are being carried out. This is encouraging, and at the same time creates competition among the organizers. Runners can choose between participating to receive bonuses from large companies or for the sake of a friendly atmosphere and declared values.

The "I Choose Life!" half marathon is centered on family values and a healthy lifestyle. The organizers are always happy when runners who participate in other races return to this half marathon because they say they appreciate the atmosphere.