Award Ceremony

FINALISTS
Social Responsibility

Jurmala Protection Society

Jurmala Protection Society was founded in 2006 by neighbors living in one of the small streets of the city who agreed to protest against the intent of construction on the coastal dunes of the sea. The organization was supported by their peers from other parts of Jurmala, who had faced similar issues, but were faced with the unwillingness of local municipality to hear and take into account their opinions. Some of those people include a well-known writer and former Ambassador to Finland and Estonia Anna Žīgure, Attorney at Law Lauris Liepa, writer Andris Kolbergs, fellow countrymen Gundars Zaïkalns and historian Rihards Pētersons.

Jurmala Protection Society grew into the organization seeking to maintain things that most residents of Jurmala and its guests value the most – pine trees, coastal dunes and the beach, unique cultural environment with its wooden architectural design. It is also a way to develop civil society and ensure true democracy.

Jurmala Protection Society urges residents to stand up for their rights to live in an adequate environment, promotes implementation of principles that are based on fundamental rights, democracy and justice. A sign of success were the collection of signatures of thousands of residents in support of our ideas during public consultations on the spatial plan.

We believe that the residents of municipalities, similar as it is in the developed European countries, are entitled to more rights to participate in the conduct of local affairs than only the right to participate in the election once every four years. Even if we do not succeed right away, we would like to encourage people to be aware of their rights and keep track of the decisions of their elected local representatives. Based on our views and acting accordingly, we strive to make our country more honest and fair, more socially responsible and altogether a better place to live.”

Uldis Kronblūms, valdes priekšsēdētājs

Raina Boguža, Chair of the Board and Project Manager of Association „Mūsu Ligzda”

Raina works as a Chair of the Board and Project Manager in the Association „Mūsu Ligzda” in the Ezere district. The goal of the association is to promote societal development in the district of Ezere. The main activities of the Association are based on the promotion of mutual cooperation and planning of Ezere’s district administration and the Ezere’s district public and educational institutions identifying and solving problems and initiatives of residents of Ezere district at the same time contributing to their active involvement and promote the development of the district.

Raina has developed the Association as an example of the organization that strives for the development of civil society and charities. Raina has raised funds of approximately EUR 100 000 million in five years. She has managed to implement 56 projects, including 18 projects that have been implemented in 2014 in the total amount of more than 3800 EUR. In 2008 the Association implemented the following projects: “Pa sentēvu pēdām” and “Bērnu rotalu laukums”. In addition, the association has participated in the tender of projects „Labie darbi” and obtained financing for the purchase of high school sports equipment, as well as participated in the tender announced by Caparol and Kurši “Nāk draugi izkrāsot bērniibu” and obtained financial support in order to renew the block of the high school for sports activities in Ezere PII kindergarten “Buratīno”. In 2011 the Association also implemented the project “Mācīties pašiem un iemācīt citiem” with support of SEB bank and Latvian Community Initiatives Foundation. In 2014 the association has implemented the project “Grezna bija tautu meita”.

“I believe in my dreams and that they may come true. I have witnessed that dreams come true when a dream by one person becomes a common dream for many who are ready to invest their efforts in fulfilling it. I helped a very small NGO that hasn't been very active for many years to become visible and assist both people and local authorities. All you need is hard work and willingness not to focus on reasons why so little is being paid for that work.”

Raina Boguža
Association "People with special needs MOTUS VITA"

The Association "People with special needs MOTUS VITA", founded in 2009 in Riga, is an organization which on a voluntary basis provides assistance to people with neuromuscular diseases (ALS / MND) as well as their family members.

The Association’s main activity is to provide support to people suffering from neuromuscular diseases, to defend their rights and interests, to provide socialization opportunities with other people and also to educate patients and their relatives about the disease, treatment options and ways how to solve psychological and social problems.

"MOTUS VITA" is a member of the following organizations: "EURORDIS," "TREAT-NMD," "International Alliance of ALS/MND Associations", Latvian Rare Disease Alliance. Main partners in Latvia are "Sustento" and "Evangelical Lutheran Diaconal Center".

Let’s help each other, let’s unite our strength and we will reduce our weaknesses! Only by uniting, we can help each other, after all there is always someone who has a greater need than we do. In difficult times it is important to lean on someone’s shoulder who understands and feels your pain. From person to person, from heart to heart!"

Valērijs Rakovs, Chairman of the Board

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Outstanding Commitment to Education

The subsidiary "Ikškiles Brīvā skola" (Ikšķile Free School) of "Tautskola 99 Baltie zirgi" in Ikšķile was established in 2010 by parents’ initiative. "Ikškiles Brīvā skola" is a great example of how people can make an impact on several social and economical sectors at the same time – education, environment, sustainability and traditional culture. Parents are able to form schools that are supported by the state that allow students to learn all of the above mentioned topics on every day basis. Our school’s educational program is based on holistic education principles. The process of learning consists not only of standard educational curriculum approved by government, but also of creative workshops – music, art and dance classes –, environment education and others both for students, their family members and other citizens.

We are satisfied that we are able to share our experience with other schools and people to inspire others to open more such schools in Latvia. We recently held Open Day already for the third consecutive year to share experience with schools from different regions. People move to our region, often mentioning our school as the main reason for changing the location."

Kristīne Liberta, Founder of "Ikškiles Brīvā skola"
Since June 2011 not only has the ‘Go Beyond’ team grown, so has our scope of activities. In addition to the youth development program, we work on initiatives in the field of education and public health in order to improve the local communities and raise awareness about topics important to youth. Every year the management team of ‘Go Beyond’ grows in numbers in order to ensure the highest quality.

Jānis Jukna, Program Development Manager of “Go Beyond”

Maruta Castrova, Head of the Association “Ritineitis”

Maruta Castrova works as a Head of the Association “Ritineitis” and Deputy Director for Continuing Education and Adult Education of Balvi professional and comprehensive high school. Maruta has established the Adult Education Center in 1999, and the Association “Ritineitis” in 2006. The main achievement of Maruta related to the adult education is a targeted implementation of the adult education strategy in collaboration with other organizations in the Balvi region, ensuring the availability of non-formal education of citizens. Maruta has graduated from the University of Daugavpils with Master’s degree in Public Administration and the qualification of State Manager and Event Organizer from Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music.

In addition to her direct responsibilities, Maruta independently prepares projects, organizes and leads camps for young people and helps disadvantaged people. In 2013 she implemented 38 projects raising nearly 124.000,00 LVL. Also, Maruta is actively involved in the organization of cultural events and promotion of Balvi Manor.

Nowadays it is very important to support people who are socially excluded, people who are not able to educate themselves. They certainly need to be motivated, especially those who live in rural areas. I believe that people in Balvi have realized the importance of adult education and the necessity to develop key competences throughout their lives.”

Maruta Castrova
Exemplary Contribution to Health and Well-Being

“Ronald McDonald House Charities Latvia” Care Mobile

The mission of public benefit charity “Ronald McDonald House Charities Latvia” (RMHC Latvia) is to create, find and support programs that directly improve the health and well-being of children of Latvia. It was founded in Latvia in 2007.

In 2011, to improve availability of primary medical care, the RMHC Latvia created Mobile Health Care Center (Care Mobile) program that provides free medical services for children in Latvia in partnership with the Children’s Clinical University Hospital (BKUS).

Since 2011, the number of consultations provided by Care Mobile has increased from 1713 to 4759 in 2014. We have provided more than 16 000 consultations for more than 13 000 patients. In 2015, more than 1000 consultations have been provided.

The Care Mobile team consists of more than 30 specialists. Usually we treat about 450 children every month, making about 90 trips and traveling more than 22 000 km in a year. Our organization activity is 100% supported by donations.

Timely provided medical assistance and appropriate treatment has enabled thousands of children to recover and avoid serious health problems. Together we can do more!”

Vija Tirzmale, Development Director and Board member of RMHC

Dr. Dace Rezeberga

Dace Rezeberga works as a Chief Gynecologist at Riga Maternity Hospital. She is also a Professor and Head of the Department of Obstetrics and gynecology at Riga Stradins University. In addition, she is a specialist in obstetrics and gynecology at Riga East Clinical University Hospital and at the Ministry of Health of Latvia.

My father wanted me to become a pianist and sent me to study at a musical school. Although I graduated the school with flying colors, I chose to follow my mother’s footsteps and become a doctor gynecologist and obstetrician. I knew I would be forced to study all my life and work hard, but I am still convinced that this is the best I can do. In my professional development I am grateful to my teachers who taught me and encouraged me to do a little more than I thought I could. Now it is my time to teach the next generation – young doctors, teachers, scientists. I care about maternal and child health - I am support a clear and straightforward healthcare system and high standards in healthcare, not only in my workplace, but throughout Latvia. On behalf of this objective I continue to live, love and learn to do the right things in the right way.”

Dr. Dace Rezeberga
We live in a world of endless opportunities and one idea or one decision can change everything. In my daily life and activities I’m focusing on relishing my potential and helping to explore the potential of other people. For the society to survive and develop, it is both equally important to help those who have difficulties and those who want to fulfill their dreams. I’m trying to contribute to the second part of an equation by leading by my own example.”

Andris Ėeksters
Edvīns Samulis

Edvīns Samulis is an entrepreneur, patron, and Doctor of Economics. He has always been assigned to leading roles and positions. Since 2010, Edvīns Samulis is a contributor to Vītolu fonds. Every year he supports three diligent and capable youngsters who would not be able to study without this support. Not only does he allocate scholarships, but also organizes the event Scholarship for Excellence and honors best students from various universities from 2007, awarding 16-20 Scholarships of Excellence annually.

Thanks to Mr. Samulis, each year Latvia becomes richer with educated, professional young people. During the last eight years, 205 scholarships have been disbursed worth more than EUR 100 000.

Young people whom I support have shown outstanding results. They are the engine of our future and they want to stay in Latvia. One should not only be proud of such people, but also support them and they really appreciate this support. I am happy when I receive letters from these youngster, and even more so when they are handwritten."

Ilze Golvere, Managing Director of the Association

The Latvian Foster Family Association was founded in 1994, with the goal of supporting families that raise children who have been left without the care of their biological parents within a family environment. During the past 20 years LFFA has supported more than 300 families and since its inception LFFA has assisted the new generation of foster families.

The main objectives of the Association are:
- To promote the social inclusion of children and youth under the care of foster parents and guardians;
- To provide assistance to foster families and guardians;
- To serve as a platform for the exchange of experience and knowledge among its members and partners;
- To promote cooperation with the state and regional authorities, NGOs and the private sector in raising awareness about alternative child care and to achieve a positive change in family policy;
- To raise awareness of the work of foster families and guardians.

We are proud that the Association has been able to function for the past 20 years and to provide quality foster care assistance to foster children and parents. We have always been successful in finding people who understand, appreciate and support our efforts.*

Ilze Golvere, Managing Director of the Association
The Children’s Hearing Center rehabilitation department was established in 1997 thanks to the initiative of Sandra Kušķe. Sandra has done a great job for deaf children and children with hearing impairments in Latvia, thus they are able to get the same opportunities as children elsewhere in the world. Sandra was the one who initiated hearing implant surgeries and improvement of quality of the hearing aids for children.

Sandra has a compassionate heart and she is a real enthusiast of her work, who has contributed to the introduction of high-quality diagnostics and the involvement of foreign specialists and consultants. Sandra ensures timely diagnosis and high quality treatment for children. It is a progressive and targeted educational effort to integrate children with hearing impairments and deaf children in the community.

Sandra Kušķe, Head of Children’s Hearing Center

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