

Yuliya Grishina.
Photos by Aleksandr Voronin.

The Charity Fund currently provides support for 28 talented children in the Shchekino District. Every year, they organise educational tours and master classes for their proteges. As a part of these projects, the kids visited the Interactive Bench Museum and made unique jewellery boxes by hand.

A notable event took place in 2013 in Yasnaya Polyana: a tree was planted by the museum-reserve in memory of doctor Haldor Topsøe, a legendary, world-renowned scientist, talented businessman, and founder of the Danish company, Haldor Topsøe. The event symbolised the unity of three famous families – Topsøe, Tolstoy, and Sokol – to promote peace and growth in society. During the meeting, the parties made the decision to create a Charity Fund of the three families to support gifted children in Shchekino living in underprivileged situations. Thus, in 2013 the Charity Fund of the Topsøe, Tolstoy, and Sokol families came to be. In 2018, the Fund celebrated its 5th anniversary.

The organisation supports children with a true gift, no matter what they dedicate themselves to – sports, science, or art. The fund has provided not only financial help (from buying equipment for classes and paying participation fees in competitions) but also psychological, artistic, and professional support to dozens of kids. Every year, the Fund organises more than 20 captivating trips as well as master classes, lectures, and practices for their proteges. On top of that, the Fund organises vacations for them too. In their summer vacations children can go to the New Generation recreation camp at the Shakhter complex, Aleksinsky District, free of charge.

At first, the Fund took 11 kids under their wing. Today, that number has increased to 25, with three of them already graduates of the fund. They are studying in the best universities in Russia and receive an additional grant from the fund.

When the fund had just been established, it invited children who had made a name for themselves in the district and had participated in local art and sport contests. At the moment, the selection is contest-based. The regional talent show, Light Up Your Star!, has been held annually for four years. The contest determines who of the



Since it was established five years ago, the Charity Fund has changed the life of 28 young Shchekino residents for the better.

The Charity Fund of the Topsøe, Tolstoy and Sokol Families Lights Up Stars

kids will receive assistance from the fund. The judges panel consists of teachers from Tula colleges and music lyceums, as well as members of the Board of Trustees – deputy of the State Duma Nataliya Pilyus, director of the museum-reserve Yasnaya Polyana, Ekaterina Tolstaya, and Vice President of the Gas Chemistry Division of Haldor Topsøe, Peter Vang Christensen.

Kids the fund works with participate in concerts for social institutions held in Shchekino District, cheer up other children living in difficult situations, perform in special kindergartens, and in the Pervomaysky home for the elderly and disabled.

“The assistance offered to talented children in Russia has reached a new unprecedented level,” says the deputy of the Russian State Duma, member of the Board of Trustees



Nataliya Pilyus

Nataliya Pilyus. “Thanks to the governor, Alexey Dyumin, Tula has now got two active support centres for gifted kids. Our Fund makes a considerable contribution to the support given to talented children from underprivileged family backgrounds. In the last five years we’ve

changed the lives of 28 kids. We provided them with extra opportunities for growth and in return they represent Tula Region at national and international levels and share their gift and hard work with the world. Supporting talented children is a complex long-term activity that has become an essential part of my life. It’s nice to witness how it changes these kids.”

On November 10, the Fund organised an event for its proteges at the creative industrial cluster, Oktava: a tour to the Bench Museum and a laser technology master class at the FabLab workshop. Kids got to try their hand at designing and creating unique jewellery boxes. Work-

ing with a graphic designer, the Fund’s proteges developed an engraving to put on top of their boxes. On a special bench, the specialists carefully engraved the designed parts. The kids then assembled everything by hand themselves. They created exclusive boxes with the logo of the Charity Fund of the Topsøe, Tolstoy, and Sokol families. Kids are planning to give them to the founders and trustees of the fund at the next Light Up Your Star! concert. It will be celebrated on December 10 in the Pervomaysky Centre for Kids Art. Applications can be sent in until November 20 to: workers’ settlement Pervomaysky, 16a Ulitina St., tel. 8-48751-9-39-39.

Pupils on themselves and the Charity Fund

Anastasiya Makarova:

“I take dancing classes. Thanks to the Fund, I was able to attend a lot of master classes this year. One of the most memorable was the jazz master class that I attended this July in Sochi. At the start of November, I took part in the Dream Fantasy competition and won its Grand Prix! What’s more, this year I enrolled in the Tula Regional College of Culture and Arts. When I grow up, I want to become a choreographer, teach children, and make my own history.”



Anastasiya Makarova

Ulyana Okladnikova:

“I’ve been playing the piano since I was 5. One of the most vivid events of this year for me was when I performed at the Russian State Duma, at the exhibition dedicated to Leo Tolstoy. I played Tchaikovsky’s Dialogue. It was a great honour for me! This summer I went to the arts camp in Artek and our main topic was The Wizard of Oz. Each group presented a city of Oz, where everything was possible!”



Ulyana Okladnikova

Alina Zeinalova:

“I’ve been doing rhythmic gymnastics since the age of 4. After the first class I realised I didn’t want to leave! In March and September, I went to Saransk to participate in the Youth of Russia social contest. In October I won the third place in the Tula Souvenir competition. The master class in Zaryadye Park was also unforgettable. They taught us interesting chemistry facts. And we even grew our own little plant in biogel.”



Alina Zeinalova

Alyona Matyukina:

“I graduated from music school as a piano player. Right now, I’m in a modelling agency and take singing lessons. When I was 5, I performed my first song at a beauty contest. It was then that I realised that was what I wanted to do! This summer I visited the Shakhter recreation camp in Aleksinsky District and participated in many competitions. The Fund also organised tons of interesting tours and excursions for us. When I grow up, I want to teach children to sing.”



Alyona Matyukina

Gennady Sedachev:

“I attend martial arts classes, sing, play the accordion, and study at the Suvorov School. This year I went to the arts camp at Artek and took part in so many competitions. I can’t even count them all! Support is so important! My parents, three brothers, and sister always try to be with me at concerts and contests. I want to become a military musician. Apart from the accordion, I want to learn to play other instruments as well.”



Gennady Sedachev