Football — School of Life
Interregional inclusive Children’s festival «Football — School of Life» is a project of the Charity Foundation «Under the Flag of Kindness», which is implemented within the framework of the federal program «Sport — Way of Life» sponsored by Ministry of Sports of the Russian Federation. This program is designed to promote a healthy lifestyle, rehabilitation and social adaptation of children with special needs.
Since 2014, the children’s tournament «Cup of Good» has begun its history. The first match was timed with the centenary of the Christmas Truce in the First World War.

In 2016, the first «Cup of Good» was held among 8 children’s teams, including Russia, Great Britain, India and France. The Russian participating teams included children from families with low-income.
In 2017, a «Spartak-Moscow» team of children with cerebral palsy syndrome took part in the tournament under the patronage of Sergey Shavlo, a Soviet football player, the USSR master of sports of international class, bronze medalist of the 1980 Olympics. Since 2017, the tournament has been gaining popularity. Since then children have been competing for the international cup with pleasure and excitement just like real players, as they really want to be like their football idols.

The Foundation «Under the Flag of Kindness» gave children with the opportunity to demonstrate their football skills and now holds tournaments twice a year — in winter, during the Christmas holidays, combining football and festive New Year’s events, as well as in summer, when it is possible to provide outdoor stadiums for children’s sports games and various outdoor activities with an variable cultural program created by famous musicians, artists, animators and jazz orchestras.

By this year, the children who took part in the tournaments have become friends with each other. The representatives of embassies, executive authorities and prominent artists such as Didier Marouani — French musician, composer and leader of the legendary «Space» group; People’s Artist of Russia, theater and film actor, film director — Evgeny Gerasimov; Edgar Zapashny — trainer and Honored Artist of Russia; Minister of Sports of the Russian Federation (2016–2020) Pavel Kolobkov; ex-football player of the Russian national team, three-time winner of the Russian Football Cup Dmitry Bulykin address welcoming words to young football players.

The international children’s tournament «Cup of Good» has become a tradition for children from Moscow’s social institutions as well as honored guests who support the prestige of socially significant events that promote the harmonious healthy development of children. In addition, the Cup of Good has received the status of inclusive and received support of the Russian Foreign Ministry.

“I am convinced that such competitions will contribute to the development of the physical culture movement, including people with special needs, as well as strengthening trust and mutual understanding between peoples.”

Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, co-founder of the Foundation «Under the Flag of Kindness»
In 2019 the tournament was attended by children from 12 countries. For the first time this year, «Spartak-Moscow» team of children with cerebral palsy won the International Inclusive tournament «Cup of Good».
In 2020, teams of children from Russia, Great Britain, Nigeria, Cameroon, India, Japan, France and Israel took part in the tournament. The accumulated experience and growing popularity of children’s tournaments «Cup of Good» since 2020 has helped to launch a new large program — the inclusive festival «Football — School of life».

With the support of the UEFA Children’s Fund, football master-classes for children with disabilities were organized within the festival in order to expand motor activity, introduce a healthy lifestyle and popularize sports among children. Famous football players, coaches of adaptive sports and specialists in physical therapy joined the Foundation’s project. The performers and artists also directed children’s imagination and offered them a new creative game «Football as Art» in musical, artistic and dance formats.
In 2021, the geography of the «Football — School of Life» project covered 5 regions of the country and united 28 children’s institutions, 150 specialists of various profiles, 250 volunteers from universities and colleges. 1370 children took part in sports competitions, creative contests and cultural programs of the festival. The event traditionally ended with the presentation of certificates, medals and cups to the participants from the Russian Football Union and the holders of the festival.

The program of the «Football — School of Life festival» traditionally includes a variety of master-classes, relay races, various creative contests, dance performances, exhibitions with the participation of show business stars, famous bloggers and media personalities.

The Foundation’s programs are carried out in cooperation with the medical community, teachers and psychologists, football clubs and volunteer teams. It’s activities are supported by honorary cultural figures, famous politicians and athletes.

The festival provides medical, psychological and pedagogical support, as well as the best regional practices and methods in the field of adaptive physical education and sports which are promoted during the event.

The Chairman of the Expert Council of the Foundation «Under the Flag of Kindness» V. N. Shestakova, Honored Doctor of Russia, Doctor of Medical Sciences, Professor of Smolensk State Medical University.
The Charitable Foundation was established by the organizers of the All-Russian campaign «Under the flag of Kindness» in order to provide financial support to seriously ill children. Fundraising is an essential part of the football matches «Under the flag of Kindness»: since 2005, financial support has been provided to 6556 seriously ill children in the amount of 371,745,712 rubles thanks to the charity programs of the Foundation.

Together with specialized medical institutions, the Foundation «Under the Flag of Kindness» provides financial support to children suffering from severe disabling diseases, as well as organizes cultural and sports events with the participation of children in difficult life circumstances and with limited health opportunities to facilitate their comprehensive socialization, rehabilitation and integration into society using a mentoring system.

Alexander Zhukov,
First Deputy Chairman of the State Duma
of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation VI, VII, VIII convocation

Arkady Dvorkovich,
President of the International Chess Federation (FIDE), Co-Chair of the Skolkovo Foundation

Andrey Sharonov,
Founder of the fund «Under the Flag of Kindness»

Natalia Davydova,
Director of the Foundation Member of the Council under the Government of Russia on guardianship in the social sphere, member of the Expert Council of the Circle of Good Foundation, member of the Expert Council of the Agency for Strategic Initiatives (ASI). In 2008, she was awarded the badge «Mercy» by the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation
An important part of the Foundation’s work is the training and methodological support of socially oriented NCOs and volunteers working with children from disadvantaged environments. Within the framework of the «Socialization of Orphans» program created by the Foundation, about 3,400 volunteers have completed the training program. Since 2010, more than 6,000 volunteers in 27 regions of the Russian Federation have participated in about 500 events.

The Foundation cooperates with state medical institutions, as well as the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation on the effective use of charitable funds.

For more than 12 years, together with the «Siberia» Airlines, the Foundation has been providing support to seriously ill children, undergoing treatment at the V.I. Shumakov Academician Federal State Budgetary Institution «Federal Scientific Center for Transplantology and Artificial Organs» of the Ministry of Health of Russia. As part of this work, 3,890 flights have been organized for ill children and their parents since 2009.
The interregional inclusive festival «Football — School of Life» is spreading the practice of holding inclusive football festivals in 5 regions of Russia, using the successful experience of the Charitable Foundation «Under the Flag of Kindness», in order to increase the number of participants — children with disabilities. The project is focused on expanding the physical activity of children and adolescents with disabilities, introducing healthy lifestyles, popularizing sports through football events and creative competitions.

At such events we show an example of achievements through sport and hard work, hard training and love for an active healthy life! The most important thing is attention for children. We see how they smile, laugh, we see their shining eyes — how humanly happy they are! We become happier with them at these moments too! Such events give great motivation to play sports, go forward, charge with the right positive attitude to life.

Dmitry Sychev, Russian football player

I express my sincere gratitude to the organizers, partners and those who support our project. Such programs bring good to those who deserve it, to those who really need it. I wish all the participants of the project could play football all their lives, stay healthy and continue this wonderful tradition together with us.

Arkady Dvorkovich, President of the International Chess Federation (FIDE), Co-Chairman of the Skolkovo Foundation, co-founder of the «Under the Flag of Goodness» Foundation

The competitions organized by the charity Foundation «Under the Flag of Good!» make a useful contribution to the popularization of «sport number one», contribute to the rallying of youth representatives from different countries based on the values of a healthy lifestyle. The work carried out within the framework of the tournament, aimed at real support for those who need it badly, also deserves respect. I am convinced that the competitions will contribute to the development of physical movement, including people with special needs.

Sergey Lavrov, The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Co-founder of the Foundation «Under the Flag of Good»

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The festival in Taganrog was held with the support of the City Administration and brought together families raising children with disabilities, medical community, specialists of creative professions, athletes, coaches and volunteers.

On May 27, 2021, more than 150 children with special needs and health restrictions, young football players and volunteers took part in master-classes held by Soviet and Russian football player Dmitry Gradilenko and athletes of FC Forte Taganrog Igor Nechai and Nikita Pishchulin.

Within the traditional All-Russian charity event «Under the Flag of Kindness!», 40 children with severe diseases of the central nervous system and musculoskeletal system, diabetes mellitus, oncology and other complex pathologies received targeted assistance of 2,263,000 rubles. All the children received medical treated.

Certificates were presented to the participants by the co-organizers of the event: Head of the Taganrog City Administration Andrey Lisitsky; Mayor of Taganrog Inna Titarenko; «Man of the Planet», Guinness Book of Records record holder, Paralympic athlete Sergey Burlakov; multiple world and European champion, Paralympic athlete Alexander Skaliukh; deputies of the City Duma of Taganrog.

Doctors, representatives of FC Forte handed over certificates for treatment worth more than 950 thousand rubles to 17 families.
On the International Children’s Day — June 1, 2021, within the framework of the All-Russian Forum «Vector of Childhood» and with the support of the Council for Guardianship in the Social Sphere of Kuzbass, the «Football — School of Life» festival was held at the Kuzbass Ice Palace.

According to the tradition of the festival, football stars and veterans held matches, demonstration master-classes and creative competitions for children: Master of Sports and TV commentator Dmitry Gradilenko, candidate for Master of Sports, member of the Olympic team of Russia and the youth national team of Russia Alexey Shiyanov, Soviet football player, striker, master of Sports of the USSR, top scorer of the USSR First Football League, honorary citizen of Kemerovo Vitaly Razdaev. The basic freestyle exercises were taught to children by the record holder of Russia and the world in the discipline of Lowers, as well as the famous freestyle skier, Dmitry Bogachev.
International Children’s charity tournament «Cup of Kindness» in St. Petersburg

In 2021, the traditional All-Russian charity event «Under the Flag of Kindness» was held on Russia Day — on June 12 in St. Petersburg. This time, teams from Russia, England, Spain, South Korea, Ireland and Australia took part in the tournament.

Thanks to the support of the Russian Football Union, a children team from the Absolut boarding school in Serpukhov achieved an opportunity to participate in the tournament and win gold medals. Tickets for the match of the National team «Russia — Belgium» of the Euro 2021 tournament became a gift for children.

This is the first experience of performing at an international tournament in St. Petersburg for the football team of the Absolut boarding school, and, as it turned out, priceless. The tournament became a real holiday for children, where they showed their best game and won well-deserved awards. The guys also got an unforgettable impression from watching the match of the European Football Championship between the national teams of Russia and Belgium. For any young football player, this is an important and unforgettable event that will stay with him for a long time.

Yuri Mikhailovich Baranov, Coach of the Absolut team

I am the mother of a very capable 7 year-old boy, whom I love madly. And today he has a great opportunity to learn about the values of sports. Different teams were able to share their experiences with each other in this tournament. Our children enjoyed not only football, but also a pleasant, friendly atmosphere. Thanks to Natalia Davydova and the Russian Charity Foundation «Under the Flag of Kindness» for giving us the opportunity to take part in this event.

Sincerely, Laura Garcia, the mother of one of the participants of the tournament from Spain
The festival was co-organized by the Department of Sports and Youth Policy of the Tyumen City Administration.

The events were held in a remote format and brought together more than 600 children and volunteers, including those with serious illnesses and health and development limitations, from schools No. 5, 72, gymnasium No. 49, kindergartens No. 36, 101, 112, «Gorizont» boarding school, «Suhodolye» sports club and «Unior» football school.

The children managed to express themselves in the creative competition: «Dunno and the Shorty football team», based on the novel by Nikolai Nosov, where they drew their works on the theme «Football As Art». Football trainings and master-classes were held at the sites of 10 educational institutions participating in the program.
«Football as a School of Life» in the Krasnodar Krai

On August 21, 2021, the inclusive «Football — School of Life» festival was successfully held as part of the summer shift at the Olympic camp of the «Orlyonok» Children Centre. Five children’s teams took part in football matches, among them — 2 girls’ teams. Children, including those with disabilities, were glad to participate in master-classes, relay races and competitions of the festival.

On September 14, the Children Centre «Orlyonok» hosted the festival already repeatedly in the «Dozorny» camp. The festive program united 120 children. Six teams of volunteer activists met in football matches, who managed to play with professional athletes of FC Tuapse. In the senior group, the Flash team won on penalties, while Torpedo team became the winner among the junior ones.

The music by students of Igor Butman’s Jazz Academy — winners of Moscow Mayor’s competitions in the field of art, Evgeny Chekashev and Vladislav Mineev beautified the festival.

An exhibition of 200 art objects on a football theme created by participants of the volunteer shift of the «Dozorny» camp of the «Orlyonok» Children Centre became a bright and creative compliment to this festival.
Football — School of Life

«Football as a School of Life» in Moscow

The inclusive festival was attended by 100 children aged 10 to 15 years, including those with disabilities, 10 teams, 50 volunteers — students of Moscow universities. FC Loko-motiv was the general partner of the tournament.

The program included master-classes, games, sports training, relay races and competitions. Along with the coaches of the FC Lokomotiv Academy, professional athletes took part in the event together with the children: world champion in beach soccer Denis Parkhomenko, Soviet and Russian football player, defender, master of sports and TV commentator Dmitry Gradilenko and Master of Sports of Russia of international class Elena Ryzhikova. Honored Artist of the Russian Federation, Honorary member of the Russian Academy of Arts Elena Bolotskikh jointly with stylist Karina Baranova conducted creative master-classes of art for children.

The children’s dream to play a match with the stars was turned into reality by the show-business stars football club — «FC STARMIX» with the participation of DJ Neutrino, the host of «ZHARA TV» Konstantin Tarasyuk, Palli, Adhumat Narziev, Josie, Misha Safonov, Nikita Rice, Alekorus.

Mikhail Grebenshchikov a Russian musician, sound producer, TV and radio presenter became the host of the program and the inspiration for the participants. Choreographer, actor of the Plastic theater Andrey Oleynikov, a well-known freestyle skier of the country, world record holder in the discipline of Lowers Dmitry Bogachev and Maxim Dobrorodnov, who introduced the children and guests of the event to the competition program of the fund «Dunno and his team», helped to create a dynamic atmosphere of the holiday.
New opportunities for cooperation create good and benefit

During its work, the programs of the «Football — School of Life» festival presented diverse and effective approaches to the social rehabilitation of children with special needs through football and cultural events, joint solutions for health promotion. They induce popularization of a healthy lifestyle among children and adolescents, as well as the formation of proper eating habits, which were discussed at round tables and information platforms.

Nowadays the festival consolidates various regional practices and techniques and is willing to share its experience in organizing and conducting inclusive football events in cooperation with various specialists in order to achieve descent work with children, taking into account their health.

The interregional inclusive festival «Football as a School of Life» united 5 regions, 28 children’s institutions, 150 specialists of various profiles and 250 volunteers. Around 1370 children with disabilities took part in sports competitions, contests and creative programs.

The Charity Foundation «Under the Flag of Kindness» expresses gratitude to the volunteers for their activity in creating videos and animated videos, presentations dedicated to the festival.

The Foundation thanks the volunteers of the Moscow State University of Sports and Tourism for their active participation in the organization and holding of the festival in Moscow.

The Charity Foundation «Under the Flag of Kindness» has done a great job!

Elena Istyagina-Eliseeva,
Moderator, Deputy-Chairman of the Commission on Physical Culture and Promotion of Healthy Lifestyle of the Russian Federation
Children need both the external attributes of success and an inner state of joy, encouraging them to take part in various activities that manifest their vital energy. If a child encounters insurmountable obstacles, he needs help of dynamic, inspiring mentors. Children are taught by the activities they find interesting for themselves. «Football as a School of Life» is organized in such a way that the participation of each child enriches the content of the festival, promotes awareness of their own success and building friendly relations with all children.

Natalia Davydova, Director of the Foundation «Under the Flag of Kindness»