

UPF Moscow, Russia: Young Russian Marathon Runners Promote Health

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Moscow, Russia - The annual youth athletics supermarathon "Children Against Drugs - I Choose Sports" took place from June 12 to 26, 2026, with UPF-Russia serving as a co-organizer, as part of its Peace Road initiative.

Over the course of two weeks, young runners completed a relay run from Moscow through the historic cities of Russia's Golden Ring, combining sport, cultural heritage, remembrance, and meaningful encounters with local communities. Around 1,800 people joined the event, covering a distance of nearly 1,500 kilometers.



The supermarathon began on Russia Day, June 12, at Kilometer Zero beside the Kremlin in Moscow. Before setting out, participants laid flowers at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Eternal Flame. During the two-week journey, the team passed through more than 20 Russian cities, circling back to Elektrostal, about 60 kilometers east of Moscow, for the closing ceremony on June 26.



Every day was different. In some towns the highlight was running together with local athletes; in others it was a commemorative ceremony at an Eternal Flame, a visit to a museum, monastery or ancient cathedral. The participants entered each city not as tourists but as runners who experienced the road, fatigue, perseverance and genuine interaction with local people.

The Golden Ring route also reflected the spirit of the Peace Road initiative, demonstrating that roads connect not only cities but also people, generations, history, culture and acts of goodwill.



Together, the team accumulated approximately 4,500 kilometers. Behind these numbers lay early mornings, warm-up exercises, relay stages, team rotations, recovery, daily responsibilities, helping one another, and the determination to return to the road each new day.

The transformation of the young participants became increasingly visible throughout the journey. At the beginning, many carefully managed their strength. By the middle of the supermarathon they had become more confident, adapted to the physical demands, and willingly took on longer running segments. Gradually, the road ceased to feel like an external challenge and became the team's natural rhythm.

The supermarathon is always more than an athletic event. It is life on the road together: early mornings, rotating relay groups, lunches in the field, overnight stays in school gymnasiums, quick departures, long transfers, finish lines, community gatherings, and brief recovery before another demanding day.



While some participants are running, others prepare meals, organize equipment, assist younger teammates, or encourage friends through difficult sections. In these conditions, teamwork is tested naturally, and the journey teaches simple but lasting values: keeping one's word, helping others, and continuing forward even when exhausted. For teenagers, this is an experience that ordinary sports training cannot fully replace. Sport becomes a school of character, responsibility and mutual support.



An additional goal of the project was broad public outreach through social media. Every evening, a comprehensive report covering the day's route was published together with a video from the road. These updates received hundreds of views and were widely shared, enabling people across different cities to follow the team's progress, learn about the project, and see how the principles of healthy living, drug abuse prevention, and positive community engagement were put into practice. These reports formed a living diary of the team's

remarkable journey.