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Marathon for a Drug-Free Russia 2013

Athletes from Scientology Churches, Missions and like-minded groups in the Commonwealth of Independent States ran in the 5th Annual Marathon for a Drug-Free Russia to spread the truth about drugs in towns and cities throughout their country.

Launched June 22 in the city of Vladimir, 200 km east of Moscow, and timed to coincide with the United Nations International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, the Marathon for a Drug-Free Russia, now in its fifth year, brings the truth about drugs to the youth of Russia.

Volunteers from Scientology Churches, Missions and like-minded groups were proud to participate in the program and help reverse the drug problem in their country.

The need to reach youth before they begin to experiment with drugs was brought into focus in April 2013. According to the Russian news agency RIA Novosti, Viktor Ivanov, the chief of the country's Drug Control Service, reported "the average Russian drug addict starts [taking drugs at age 15-16](#) and the average age of those who die from diseases associated with drug addiction and from overdoses is 30 years." This news came on the heels

of his announcement in December 2012 that nearly [9 million Russians are addicted to drugs](#) and more than 18 million have tried narcotics at least once.

This year's Marathon for a Drug-Free Russia aimed to inform youth of the truth about drugs, enabling them to make self-determined decisions to live drug-free.

The Marathon began with a concert in the heart of the city of Vladimir, 200 km to the east of Moscow. The following day, the runners conducted a drug education workshop for youth at a local summer camp before taking off for the city of Murom, 171 km away.

In Murom, local cyclists accompanied the runners to the Square of Peace in the center of the city, where they distributed copies of the Truth About Drugs booklets and answered media questions.

The following day, marathoners traveled 149 km to Dzerzhinsk where a team of athletes that specialize in parkour—a training discipline that developed out of military obstacle course training—literally put them through their paces, and local newspapers and TV coverage helped spread the news that with factual education on the effects of drugs, something can be done about drug abuse and addiction.

Next was Nizhniy Novgorod where marathoners handed out thousands of Truth About Drugs booklets.

Local television broadcast news of the team's arrival in Arzamas 26 June on United Nations International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. A team of cyclists met the runners as they arrived in the city

and accompanied them to a meeting with a representative of City Hall. Then a delegation of local police toured the runners through the city's famous sites.

They celebrated City Day and Youth Day in Saransk, capital of the Republic of Mordovia, and the Marathon for a Drug-Free Russia helped celebrate the occasion with a street event where they informed thousands of local residents about the truth about drugs.

Next day was another Youth Day, this time in Penza. The volunteers met with a regional libraries representative in Syzran the following day, to help make the Truth About Drugs materials available to educators.

The team held events with local athletes in Samara, and in Toliaty July 1, a prominent cyclist introduced them to the city official over youth and sports.

July 3, the team arrived in Kazan in Tartarstan, the final destination of the 5th Annual Marathon for a Drug-Free Russia, in time to participate in the finale of a major drug prevention initiative—the anti-drug world bicycle tour—and a press conference organized by the Ministry of Sport of Tatarstan.

In November 2012, with the backing of the Ministry of Sport, two Kazan cyclists, Pavel Grachev and Alen Khayrullin, began their trip to circle the globe by bicycle to promote the 27th Universiade—an international sporting and cultural festival organized and staged every two years by the International University Sports Federation, held this year in Kazan July 6-17. Throughout their journey, the cyclists educated youth on the value of drug-free living with Truth About Drugs, a drug education and prevention program supported by the Church of Scientology. The Marathon for a

Drug-Free Russia runners joined them in promoting drug-free living to those attending the Universiade.

For more than two and a half decades, Scientologists on five continents have been empowering others with the truth about drugs. The Church and its members are dedicated to eradicating drug abuse through education.

The Church of Scientology has published a brochure, *Scientology: How We Help—The Truth About Drugs, Creating a Drug-Free World*, to meet requests for more information about the drug education and prevention initiative it supports. To learn more or read a copy of the brochure, visit the [Scientology website](#).

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Scientology Founder L. Ron Hubbard wrote, "The planet has hit a barrier which prevents any widespread social progress—drugs and other biochemical substances. These can put people into a condition which not only prohibits and destroys physical health but which can prevent any stable advancement in mental or spiritual well-being."

The Church of Scientology supports the Truth About Drugs, one of the world's largest nongovernmental drug education and prevention campaigns. It has been conclusively proven that when young people are provided with the truth about drugs—factual information on what drugs are and what they do—usage rates drop commensurately.



Volunteers from Scientology Churches, Missions and like-minded groups participated in the 5th Annual Drug-Free Russia Marathon. The finale took place July 3, 2013, in Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan.



Volunteers from Scientology Churches, Missions and like-minded groups ran in the 5th Annual Drug-Free Russia Marathon and distributed tens of thousands of The Truth About Drugs booklets to help reverse the drug problem in their country.