

# Kola Project Becomes Truly International

July 8 – 29, 2019

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Twenty-four young people of the first and second generations, together with five staff members, took part in the summer educational program Kola Project 2019 from July 8 to 29.

Six Japanese sisters who were in the one-year Eastern Europe Leadership Training Program participated in the project and also assisted the staff. In addition, there was a second-generation brother from Angola who is studying in Russia, two people from Georgia, one from Moldova, two from Belarus, and nine from different parts of Russia. For the first time, the United States sent three second-generation young people to participate.

The first and second weeks took place in St. Petersburg, with the third week's activities moving to the Kola Peninsula, which is located in northwestern Russia near Finland.

The first week was dedicated to Divine Principle lectures and creation of unity by team building, sports, and evening programs.



The second week was dedicated to studying True Parents' life course, internal guidance and fundraising in pairs. It was a good opportunity to practice Divine Principle and learn from each other. It was a most inspirational and enjoyable week.

On the third week we traveled to the Lapland Biosphere Reserve in the Kola Peninsula. For more than 10 years the Kola Project team has helped the Lapland Reserve in various ways. This time, by request of the reserve administration, we dismantled unused wooden bridges and made a 5-square-meter children's playground. We also set up informational boards along an ecological walking path, making the walk safe and convenient for tourists.

Brothers and sisters worked in unity, investing their best efforts. They learned how to work with carpenter's tools, light a bonfire, cook and wash dishes outdoors, and heat up a banya (Russian-style sauna).

On the last day we served as volunteers at the Lapland Reserve Open Doors Day, which attracted 500 guests. We conducted games and activities, led a master-class in drawing, and prepared food.

Through the international Kola Project, members were able to grow more quickly and become friends with people of different cultures. Concepts about Russia and the United States were broken. We learned a bit of each other's languages. The program was just amazing. In the opinion of the organizers, it was the best program ever.

## **Reflections of participants from USA**

### **Kody Morris**

"When I return home, I am going to first rest. After that I am going to stay true to a more rigid schedule in my daily life and start to exercise more. Also experiencing nature is something I really want to embrace more. Also I will go back to work and hopefully when the school year starts I hope to embrace a bigger role in my community as a council member and continue to serve the youth in some way. I want to continue activities that make the kids excited and empowered. Also heading back to school, I am determined to keep my grade up and further my education in the accounting field. "

### **M. T.**

"I had a lot of spiritual experiences, some included me being able to feel the deep sorrow and anguish others were feeling simply by hugging them while fundraising. Others included following my intuition and being correct about some of the decisions that I ended up making. I also had experiences where God would express my thoughts and heart through the clouds (that was quite cool). I feel like, while we were in nature, I was really able to remove all negative energy and spirits. I became more attuned with myself and became more sensitive. ...

I really want to study the Russian history / politics more and completely erase all the stereotypes the media had implanted in my head about Russia. I also want to study the Russian Language and maybe (if time allows) even join the other Baikal program. I also wish to go out and have more camping experiences in nature."

### **Yuri Hanna Jimenez**

"Through this program I was able to understand more of what it means to be a 2<sup>nd</sup> gen, and what our mission is as a 2<sup>nd</sup> gen. I had so many experiences but my best experience was when we climbed the mountain in Kola Peninsula. Usually when I hike with other people, we would climb really steep and high mountains. We would usually stay there for 15 minutes, pray and go back down. This time however, we were able to stay there for more than an hour. I was able to explore so much. At first, I thought wow! I want to go there and see what is out there! But the more I saw and the more I walked I thought "I hope heavenly parent can see this amazing place through me, I must go there".

Monday was the hardest fundraising I have done in my life because there was no unity at all between me, Takako and Nastia. However, through this and other experiences, I was able to learn just how much unity is important.

When I go home, I will practice giving lectures with my parents and invite others if possible. I also plan to help out with the youth group as I feel ready and have learned so much from this workshop."

