

# The Ark Village Bulletin April May June 2018



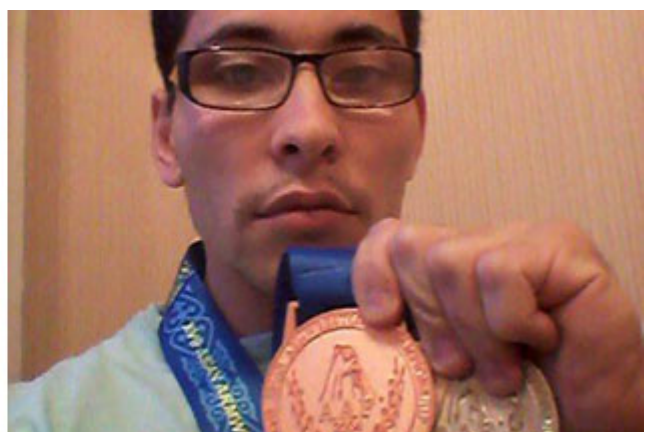
**Easter** has its different traditions all over the world but it is common in every household to celebrate with special food and perhaps a culinary teaching moment for the young ones. At Ark Village it is no different. Our recipes have Russian origins and our girls teach the newest arrivals how it is done. It is bittersweet because it is a typical mother/child moment but, after all, we are part of these children's and teenagers' stories because there was no parent, therefore this is our job, not only to make them less alone but to teach them to become something they didn't have.



### *A colorful Easter at the Village*

For several months **Anvar** has been interested in **arm wrestling**. He practiced at home with friends and family and recently he decided to train with a coach. After success at the local and regional levels, he competed at the national level and won first place! This gave him the opportunity to compete at the Asian Championship. He finished 2<sup>nd</sup>, surpassed only by an Indian participant, losing the chance to participate in the World Championship but... there's always next time!

More importantly... he finished his mandatory education and now he can choose his future course of studies. Additionally, he was selected to receive a public house. This is a huge step toward independence. We are all very proud of him and pleased to see how improved these programs are compared to just a few years ago.



*Anvar: he's tough!*

Every April we dedicate one day to **cleaning up the property** and preparing the land for the warm season. This year, thanks to the generosity of a special friend, we planted some walnut trees. Because we had such good weather, we started to prepare the vegetable garden which will be seeded soon and will take the work of everyone at the Ark, young and old, to grow our healthy vegetables!



*Spring is back and farming as well*

On victory day, we used to host a few **veterans** from the second world war to share with us their memories and stories. This year, the last remaining veteran was not well so a group of our kids visited him, spending the day in his company.



*Comparing and sharing new and old generations*

Over the past years we have seen an increase of **volunteers**. Some spontaneous and others organized by state programs. This is a positive step within Kazakhstan social life. To see a

problem and do something for less fortunate groups of the population is wonderful and so important for a growing country. Recently, a new organization created by students and teachers of an Almaty high school is taking care of families with difficulties by providing basic care to help meet their immediate needs. They also brought us sneakers and we know how important these shoes are to our athletes!

But the core needs of an orphanage remain money, clothes, and food. Volunteering not only help others but helps us understand ourselves. Recent volunteer initiatives saw **Morgan&Lewis** employees paint the bedrooms and a **Citibank** team who worked on the dining hall and helped cleaning the land. **Dodo pizza** invited a group to a pizza making class and our old friends from **Beeline** invited our teenagers to participate in an educational workshop. What we need are volunteers that look at our children not only as subjects to be entertained, but always with the unique goal of education and the growth of the person. These volunteers get it!



*A colorful day with Beeline*



*The 'green' day with Citibank and...*



*we are all pizza chefs with Dodo pizza!*

The end of the school year is a mostly welcomed time. Three months of holiday ahead, time to relax and play. But for some, this is a time of choices, changes, and a bit of worry. For **Julia**, **Kamilla**, and **Nastja** this was their graduation year and now it's time for a new beginning. Julia and Kamilla will join some relatives who agreed to support them during their studies. Nastja will stay with us and she seems keen to apply to veterinary university. She never abandoned her love for pets. Yet another sign of time passing by and our children making their way.



*Julia, Kamilla and Nastja, three flowers ready to bloom*

Sports is a big part of the daily activities at Ark Village. This year our soccer team participated in the traditional tournament organized by the **football team "Kairat"**...and won!

Thanks to the passion of Elena and Valerj, our younger kids have started to show interest in **chess** and Elena and Valerj have started to teach them this classic pastime.

And lastly, SOS association, who has been close to us in many ways for so long, invited a group to participate in a **volleyball master class**. It left a great impression on some. We hope the interest continues.



*Classy champions*

The International Day for the Protection of Children occurs on the same day as our **Ark Village Birthday**. This year it was particularly important because the Village turned 18. On June

1st, 2000 the Ark Village opened its doors, welcoming children of all ages who stay for a short time or many years. We have watched children grow up and others stay with us only for the time necessary for their parents to get on their feet. On this day we do not have a special celebration but we take a few days to see our many friends and enjoy going to parks or organizing activities and games at the Village. The weather was not good but it did not matter a bit. Nothing could stop the enthusiasm. The cherry on top was to tour around Talgar in a luxurious limousine lent by a local entrepreneur. What fun!!!



*Say 'cheese' for the birthday picture*

We would like to share with you a particularly moving moment in which our director Marina and little **Kolja**, participated in an event organized by the foundation "Home". This is the very foundation that allowed our Kolja just a few months ago to go to Korea for one of several difficult plastic surgeries to help with his near full body burn scars. On this occasion, we were able to thank the foundation and benefactor who made this possible.



## Kolia, a star

Once again, the dentists made their annual visit to the Village. [>> Take a look at the pictures](#)

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**The Ark Village**  
step by step, on the children's side

"The Ark Village"  
Talgar - Kazakhstan  
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