

Maria Starinchikova, 31, Kemerovo

Chair of the Youth Committee, Regional Division of OPORA ROSSII

In addition, she:

- is mother to three girls;
- a loving wife who has been with her husband since the age of 17;
- sings all the time: in the car, at home and in karaoke bars;
- is afraid of getting old, which is why she loves sports, outdoor recreational activities and looks after her appearance;
- always looks positively at different things;
- is the regional winner of the competition Young Entrepreneur of Russia 2014; finalist of such competitions as Business Success 2014; You Are Entrepreneur 2012; Social Project 2013;
- promotes such values as integrity, frankness, freedom.

“The idea of opening a private kindergarten occurred to me when I was a child, but I was moving towards its materialisation via a long path of working for the government, getting three university degrees and doing my maternal and parental duties. After giving birth to my second daughter, I realised I had matured enough to open my own daycare centre, which must be the best one in Kuzbass, rather than just a regular childcare centre.

The Early Children Development Centre STUDIO-PUPS is not only a day nursery for babies and toddlers aged 9 months to 3 years; it offers various development studies, a special promenade, its own wonderful cook, best in the city pedagogues who love their challenging vocation, skilled and experienced speech therapist and psychologist.

Pups are a big family consisting of lots of kids and their parents. We have no video surveillance, since we all trust one another. We occasionally hold family thematic festivals, where parents are even more active than their children. We have developed a wonderful tradition of Saturday pups parties, attended by whole families, where they have a barbeque, roast fish, make pies, stage bacon competitions where they compete in the art of pickling and other skills. A special group is set up for the parents of our pups, where their preschool teachers upload the most interesting and funny photos and videos from their children’s lives and where their parents can discuss relevant problems or share their joys. We also have the Pups 2 group for exchange between parents who have already left for municipal kindergartens and share their yearning for the atmosphere at Pups.

Another pleasant bonus from the Pups is the Fly children’s theatre studio, which is to open on 1 October at the development centre, where ‘little stars of the big stage’ will be able to develop their creative capabilities, learn to overcome any complexes, develop communications skills, memory and attention, fantasy and imagination, speech and rhetoric, rhythm and musicality, improvisation skills and creative potential. On weekends, creative and very useful master classes are taught.

A piece of advice for beginning entrepreneurs: ‘Once you have decided to become an entrepreneur, remember that everything you do should be done for people with love; then you’ll be a success, despite the difficulties!’

OPORA ROSSII for me is a chance to put maximum effort into good endeavours. I’ve been a member of this organisation since November 2002 and had enough time to do many good things, but not everything I planned. For example, the Club of Orthodox Entrepreneurs

(Orthodoxy implying the revival of the entrepreneur of prerevolutionary Russia) follows the 4D principle: Dela (Works) – Dengi (Money) – Deti (Kids) – Derevyia (Trees).

Works: we conduct various campaigns and events geared to promoting a positive image of the young entrepreneur and cultivating the moral businessperson.

Children: we oversee orphanages; provide career guidance, hold field events, guided tours, picnics and outings, as well thematic festivals.

Trees: we do not forget about the environment, planting trees!

Once a year, during the World Week of Entrepreneurship, I teach master classes in Kuzbass schools and organise business games. Together with the Entrepreneurs Support Centre, we have developed and twice held a forum for high school teenagers called 'I'll be an entrepreneur'. We conduct our own youth get-togethers, roundtables and seminars.

What else should I add?

While defending my project on the Community forum, I ended up at the plenary session of the Russian Public Chamber, where I met a wonderful woman from Perm, Irina Ermakova, who represented the NGO Large Families of the Perm Region. Delving into the gist of her project, I fully tuned into the beat of that project, wondering why nobody does anything like that in our Region.

Now I am the founder and chair of the non-profit regional NGO Centre of Assistance for Large Families of Kemerovo Region. My organisation has just started out and I am ready for a thorny path, given that I have many children, too, and can have empathy for such parents!"