**Vladimir Kartopoltscev, 60 years of age.**

Vladimir, a former sportsman, took part in competitions as a member of Latvian National Team in 1966.

Having a degree of ‘Master of Sport’ in Artistic Gymnastics, he worked as a coach of women’s team.

At University he completed the diploma of Higher Education in Design-Engineering of metal -cutting machines and tools.

Vladimir has been married; he has three children and grandchildren.

At the moment his sister is the only closest relative who helps and supports him.

Vladimir has suffered three strokes. The first one occurred in 1993.Rehabilitation was successful, speech therapist helped during recovery.

In 1994 a car hit Vladimir, while he was cycling, which led to the second stroke, then the third.

Vladimir says: ’’ I had shoes and leather goods’ manufacturing company and a shop on Chaka road with 50 employees. Also I had jewellery business and I was making beautiful pieces. Unfortunately after having a stroke I have lost it all.’’

According to Vladimir he used to have a lot of energy, was a great dancer. Despite attending the charity ball he still finds dancing really difficult. He used to be very joyful, but now he is more serious. He also misses the experience of being the women’s favourite.

Vladimir reads a lot, especially funny jokes, newspapers, short stories, (as his brain struggles to hold a lot of information), children poetry, romantic novels. He is able to make various porridges, fried eggs. He can hoover and water the flowers. However he finds it difficult to peel the potatoes, spread butter. The new achievements after starting the rehabilitation process are: he is able to light a fire, to use a computer, to search internet.

Vladimir needs to get back his hand mobility and his speech as his ambition is-to get back to jewellery making. Another dream is to visit Alupka, the resort in Crimea.

At the moment he struggles to restore speech at 100%, sometimes it feels unachievable, but he does not give up and keeps fighting. Vladimir does regular arm and hand exercises, despite the fact that he experiences cramps, which are very painful.

Vladimir has achieved amazing improvements as a result of a year of intensive training. He can move his arm much better easily rotating it in shoulder humeral zone. It can be bended easily in elbow joint, be brought behind his back. Coordination has returned. He still struggles with hand rotation, but he can move it from side to side. He can touch the thumb with each finger. Spastic condition has decreased, so he is able to shake hands.

Now he can rotated his leg, which was effected by stroke. During the walks Vladimir still feels tension in it, but now he has developed endurance. During the summer Vladimir had 4km forest walk every other day.

His speech has improved and now he can communicate on the phone, he uses Skype to talk to his friends.

*The interview with Vladimir was conducted and written down by team volunteer Natalia Sedochenkova.*