

On behalf of the Russian Advisory Board of the City of West Hollywood, we would like to extend its warmest congratulations to **Unity in Diversity Arts Foundation** - as the recipient of the **Outstanding Educator Award** in the Russian-speaking community of the Greater Los Angeles area. This award recognizes an organization that has demonstrated a high level of achievement, leadership, talent during COVID-19 Pandemic, and is, in short, a model to the community at large.

The Russian Advisory Board of the City of West Hollywood decided to recognize Unity in Diversity Arts Foundation and its work because it has demonstrated an outstanding level of service to the community, and is, in short, a great example to many. Dedication of the organizers and members of the organization to their work in engaging children and youth of all ages is exemplary and inspiring.

Unity in Diversity Arts Foundation – <https://colibrifestival.org>

During the period of 17 years Unity in Diversity Arts Foundation created numerous events in the City of West Hollywood, from famous art exhibitions in Pacific Design Center to children's concerts within Annual Russian Cultural Months, to Annual International Competition for Young Performers "Colibri". All those events were real life performances. Four years ago, Colibri Competition was recognized by the City of West Hollywood as extremely important for the young generation program and became an annual city event. Pandemic and global lockdown changed everything. In May of 2020, when the pandemic started the board of directors decided not to stop and provide educational opportunities to the children and youth in the comfort of their homes.

Work with children and their parents virtually started as a true challenge - no one had any online experience. Within 1.5 months of literally 24/7 research and work, the members of the foundation managed to create a fully functional web portal <https://colibrifestival.org>, which covered four different online competitions for children: Instrumental, Vocal, Dance, and Visual Arts. As the result of the new strategy and with the help and support of a tiny team of volunteers, XIII International Competition for Young Performers "Colibri 2020" achieved unexpected levels of participation. In addition to children from West Hollywood and Los Angeles Area, submissions were received from other areas. Total number of participants in four competitions altogether was over 200.

Highly professional teams of judges created videos not only presenting winners and participants, but also providing analyses of performances with suggestions how to avoid mistakes in the future and improve skills. Winners received monetary awards in addition to elegant certificates. Certificates were issued to every single child regardless of their achievement.

The entire website concept and structure was developed and executed by CEO of Unity in Diversity Arts Foundation Mr. Oleg Volovik. That included graphic and web design of the portal, payment system and full functionality of the site. In other words, within a period of about 1.5 months the team created a "vessel" which brought an entire team of the event organizers, judges, children, their parents, and teachers to tremendous success during extremely difficult times of global pandemic, lockdowns and social isolation. Participation in that competition allowed many children to be engaged in something they really enjoy doing and spend quality time during the lockdown.