

SUMMER CAMP

by Svetlana Bulatova

Autism is not a disease. No medication can «cure» it. It is a developmental characteristic that lasts throughout life. Autism affects communication and relationships with others, perception, and understanding of the world.

Difficulties with social interaction can make it hard for people with autism to make friends. However, people with autism often seek friendship and communication — they simply don't know how to achieve it.

Today, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, every 59th child is born with an autism spectrum disorder. In Russia, statistics are also kept, but it's too careless.

For example, 528 children were diagnosed in St. Petersburg, meanwhile a child population of 900,000. There're no statistics for adults. In the vast majority of cases, the diagnosis of early childhood autism after reaching adulthood is replaced by schizophrenia. Although there is no medical reason for this.

Only two years ago, the Ministry of Health of Russia pointed out the inadmissibility of an unjustified change in the diagnosis of people with childhood autism when they reach adulthood.

There is no system for helping people with autism. Russian society is not informed about the problem.

For many of us, changing something in the usual life can be stressful. For people with autism, it can be real torture sometimes. The camp organizers have thought about it and made an individual schedule for each student. There was a change of various activities for students such as creative workshops, sports, boating, socializing, cooking. All these activities should help them to learn new skills.

For people with autism, it is very important to learn how to be independent in everyday life and it will help them in the future at home. After the camp, it becomes much easier for them to make contact with new people, take care of themselves in the absence of parents and visit unfamiliar places.