**Sports: A Stepping Stone to Success**

Ten-year-old Polina has an intellectual disability. She used to be withdrawn, rarely played with her schoolmates and showed absolutely no interest in her studies or sports. She was often sick and missed school. And gym class — well, she usually wouldn’t put on her gym suit and refused to participate.

But Polina’s life took a dramatic turn after getting involved in the project called “Children in Motion. Better Together!” A master class in badminton was being held at the Moscow school that Polina attended. The classes were led by Igor, a professional trainer who has a lot of experience working with children both with and without disabilities. He volunteered to work on the project in several schools. His class got Polina interested in sports and inspired her to consider a professional sports career. Soon she asked to train with Igor, who welcomed her.

Now Polina plays badminton and can’t wait to get to every class. In fact, to make sure she’s not late, she packs her gym suit in her school bag ahead of time. In class Polina follows the trainer’s instructions and mixes with her schoolmates as she plays with them. Badminton immediately had an effect on her whole life. Polina’s mother says that since she’s taken up badminton, her coordination has markedly improved. And that’s not all. Polina has shown great improvement in her other classes. Since she’s been playing badminton, her health in general has improved and she is not sick as often — she doesn’t have time for it.

Polina dreams of continuing to play badminton so that she can become a professional athlete!