DEICHMANN in action:

Ekaterina Leonova takes on the patronage of ‘Germany’s Fittest Primary School’

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Professional dancer and judge Ekaterina Leonova has taken on the role of patron for the DEICHMANN initiative “Germany’s Fittest Primary School”. She is one of the best-known figures on German television and embodies commitment, energy and a zest for life. Together with DEICHMANN, she aims to encourage children across Germany to incorporate exercise into their daily school routine with enthusiasm.

“Sport has been a part of my life since childhood and has given me not only physical strength but also discipline, self-confidence and a love of exercise,” says “Let’s Dance” star Ekaterina Leonova. “That’s exactly why I think it’s so important for children to experience just how much fun exercise can be, right from primary school. The ‘Germany’s Fittest Primary School’ initiative is setting a great example in this regard.”

With your support, the initiative launched by DEICHMANN is entering its third round. Primary schools from across Germany are invited to take part and, once again this year, to collect exercise sessions together. Before the summer holidays begin, three primary schools in each federal state will be honoured. Each will receive a certificate and prize money of 500 euros. At national level, a further three schools will also be awarded prizes, with the winners receiving up to 5,000 euros. The national winner will also be treated to an on-site award ceremony.

The positive response over the past few years shows just how well the scheme works: in 2025, more than 230 primary schools took part, involving over 25,000 children, who together clocked up more than 500,000 exercise sessions within a few months.

At the heart of the initiative is a specially developed exercise programme comprising short, easy-to-follow sessions that can be flexibly incorporated into lessons. In addition to physical fitness, the exercises also help to develop skills such as coordination, concentration and teamwork.

Ekaterina Leonova sees first-hand every day just how important physical activity is for children’s physical and mental development. “As a dancer, I know how important physical activity is for both body and mind. If children discover at an early age just how much energy and joy sport can bring, it can have a positive impact on their whole lives,” she explains. That is precisely why she is so enthusiastic about the initiative’s concept of encouraging children to be active through play.

Alarming figures: lack of physical activity among children is on the rise

At a time when smartphones, tablets and games consoles are playing an increasingly significant role in many children’s lives, physical activity is often neglected. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that children get at least 60 minutes of exercise a day. However, according to data from the Robert Koch Institute as part of the KiGGS study, only around 22 per cent of girls and 29 per cent of boys meet this target.[1] The health consequences of this trend are already apparent: more and more children are suffering from motor development disorders. According to figures from the Kaufmännische Krankenkasse (KKH), more than 311,000 schoolchildren were affected in 2023, representing an increase of around 64 per cent compared to 2008.[2]

With this new round of the competition, DEICHMANN is once again underlining its long-term commitment to children's health and physical activity. In doing so, the company is also bringing its purpose to life: in keeping with its guiding principle that 'the company must serve people', DEICHMANN has been actively committed for decades to the well-being of its customers, employees and people in need. For over 50 years, the DEICHMANN Foundation has been supporting people in need through around 200 aid projects each year, both in Germany and abroad.

For full details and to register, visit: https://www.deichmann-bewegt.de – Join in now and let's make a stand for more exercise together!

DEICHMANN-bewegt.de

[1] https://reposit.haw-hamburg.de/bitstream/20.500.12738/17808/1/Dokuband-Dreiklang%20-%20Final.pdf

[2] Bewegungsmangel: Mehr als 300.000 Kinder und Jugendliche haben motorische Defizite - DER SPIEGEL

DEICHMANN SE, headquartered in Essen (Germany), was founded in 1913 and is 100 per cent family-owned. The group is the market leader in the European footwear retail sector and operates in over 30 countries worldwide. It employs around 50,000 people, runs approximately 4,700 stores and operates around 40 online shops. In addition to the DEICHMANN brand in Switzerland, the company owns Dosenbach, Ochsner Shoes and Ochsner Sport; vanHaren in the Netherlands and Belgium; Rack Room Shoes in the USA; and the SNIPES Group, with stores and online shops in Europe and the USA. For many decades, the company has been involved in a wide range of social initiatives, such as through the DEICHMANN Foundation.