

PRESS RELEASE

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LIBERTY Ostrava donate 200 thousand crowns to the Flamingos Ostrava parahockey team

Visitors to the Colours of Ostrava and the Festival in the Streets have helped the new Flamingos Ostrava parahockey team to win a donation of CZK 200,000, thanks to 1,800 visitors riding a total of 375 kilometres on parahockey sledge trainers. Thanks to this, disabled athletes will be able to purchase additional training equipment and rent an ice rink.

LIBERTY Ostrava together with the organization Parahockey Czech Republic built a Para Hockey Arena at the Colours of Ostrava festival where visitors had the opportunity to play parahockey on a reduced field, try shooting at the goal from a parahockey sledge simulator, and also collect not only kilometres but also funds for the handicapped on four para hockey simulators as the Ostrava steelworks has turned each covered kilometre into money.

Radim Raszka, CSR specialist at LIBERTY Ostrava, said: *"This company has been cooperating with parahockey players since 2019, when we provided a large number of tickets to our employees as a support of the para-hockey world championship, which was held for the first time in Ostrava. And our colleagues helped create a great atmosphere and helped to turn the event into a great success. Therefore, in 2021 we became the general partner of the next championship. Everyone that came to watch the matches was excited by the enormous passion of the athletes."*

Jiří Šindler, manager of the Czech para-hockey, explained: *"Over the past three years, Ostrava has essentially become the world city of para-hockey, also thanks to the support of LIBERTY Ostrava. This opens up a huge opportunity for the self-actualisation of our athletes since para-hockey has changed the lives of many."*

This is also the case of Lucie Sobotkova and Milan Rabik, who helped visitors try out the parahockey sledge simulator or score goals for the entire 4 days of the festival. Lucie was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis five years ago. After several severe attacks and an unsuccessful intervention in the hospital, she had to stop walking because her legs could not support her. However, thanks to parahockey, she is now in excellent physical condition. Last year she came from Bohemia, where she lived, to the Parahockey World Championships. In the fun zone, she tried out the para-hockey sledge and immediately signed up for the developmental para-hockey camp. There she met Milan and today they are partners and live in Ostrava. She plays parahockey in the recently founded Flamingos Ostrava team. Milan will soon move to Flamingos from a Havířov club. Milan suffered from cancer and chemotherapy

burned his nerve endings five years ago, so he can't walk. When he heard about the opportunity to play hockey, he signed up right away. He has been an active player for three years.

At this year's arena at Colours of Ostrava 1,800 people took turns on four work-out machines. When the first visitor started first, there were already 146,500 meters on the board – delivered by the two machines during the Festival in the Street held earlier in June, having already earned the parahockey in Ostrava CZK 43,950. At the end of the Colours of Ostrava, the number had reached 522,391 meters and 156,717 crowns shone on the board, meaning 375 km was ridden during the Colours alone. LIBERTY Ostrava then made the decision to round up the amount donated to Flamingos Ostrava to 200 thousand crowns.

Jiří Šindler added: "*Originally, the work-out machines were for cross-country training, but we modified them to make the movement as similar as possible to the para-hockey sledge. The machines had also been bought thanks to the support from LIBERTY Ostrava, so that our fighters can enjoy a full-fledged training.*"

Two parahockey teams are currently operating in the Moravian-Silesian region out of the eight teams in the Czech Republic and they will all be playing in the league from this autumn. The cooperation between the Czech parahockey league and LIBERTY Ostrava will also continue in the future with the next event an international tournament in Ostrava in September in which the four best para-hockey teams in the world will participate, including those from America and Canada.

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