



Blinded Israeli Veteran Aims For More Than The Finish Line At NY Marathon

On November 7th, thousands of people will run the New York Marathon. Some will run for the challenge. Some for the glory. Two will run, tethered together, to help bring hope, mobility, and independence to thousands of blind Israelis.

Noach Braun and Gadi Yarkoni are coming from Israel to run for the Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind – and the blind Israelis in need of help.



Noach and Gadi know all about guide dogs and the day-to-day miracles they make possible. Noach is co-founder and Director of the Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind. Gadi is one of its clients. Blinded in action in the First Lebanon War, Gadi went on to graduate from Tel Aviv University, became a full time physical therapist, married and is raising a family. He credits



Noach Braun (left) and Gadi Yarkoni

some of the Center's specially-trained Labradors, Golden Retrievers and German Shepherds for helping him transform his life.

The idea of running the New York Marathon is to bring attention and support to the Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind – and to raise at least \$250,000 so that more blind Israelis (many of whom have been on our waiting list for a year or longer) can receive a guide dog.

Running has always been a central part of Noach's life. "I run for pleasure," Noach explains. "It helps me clear my head and manage stress. It was only natural that I take this great opportunity to combine an activity that I really love, with a cause I really believe in."

Together with Center co-founder Norman Leventhal of Warrington, Pennsylvania, Noach once stood at the finish line of the NYC Marathon handing cups of water to exhausted but jubilant runners. The joy on their faces reminded him of the joy he sees almost daily on the faces of people like Gadi and the hundreds of courageous blind Israelis who have entered the Israel Guide Dog Center's month-long training course and leave with a new pair of eyes—one that has four paws and a tail. For them, leaving the Center is not the 'finish line,' it is a brand new beginning.

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It took years for Noach to convince Gadi to have the faith to run with him, then to run a 10K, and then a half-marathon. Now he's hooked. "When we first started running together, I spent a lot of time waiting for him," smiles Noach. "Now, if I tried to keep up with him on his training runs, it would kill me." In fact, Gadi was already in training for a marathon this winter in Tiberias when Noach approached him with the idea of running the New York Marathon.

Despite his twice a day workouts, six days a week, Gadi says his family is very supportive. He makes sure to reserve evenings for family time with his wife and two very young sons. How does he do it all? Gadi states simply: "When things are important enough, you make time for them."

Noach, whose responsibilities for keeping the Center running keep him busy 24/7, is looking forward to the time the marathon run will give him to reflect. "As Gadi and I run those 26 miles, I'm going to be thinking about what we have achieved so far with the help of so many wonderful people – and how lucky I am to be part of it."

There are more than 27,000 blind Israelis—one of the highest per capita rates of blindness in the world. The Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind was founded in 1991 to help them. The program transforms lives—providing blind Israelis with mobility, independence and self-confidence through the faithful assistance of guide dog partners. The Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind program includes breeding and raising puppies, guide dog training, and then partnering and instructing the visually impaired person with the guide dog, both at the Center and in their home. The process of creating a Partnership takes just under two years and costs \$25,000. Yet these services are provided free of charge.

Please help Gadi & Noach to achieve their goal of raising at least \$250,000

Please donate on-line <http://israelguidedog.org/Donate/>

Or mail your gift to:

Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind, 732 S. Settlers Circle, Warrington, PA 18976

Tel: 267-927-0205 www.israelguidedog.org E-mail: info@israelguidedog.org



Gadi and Timmy walking at the Center

**THE ISRAEL GUIDE DOG CENTER
FOR THE BLIND
AT THE NY MARATHON**

NOVEMBER 7, 2010

***Going Beyond
the Finish Line***