



# Israel Guide Dog Center

NEWSLETTER

## MORE PUPPIES COMING SOON!

Our new Puppy Development & Training Center is almost complete!

Although the approval process took seven years, construction is moving along beautifully. The official Dedication Ceremony will be held on **April 16, 2018** when we will celebrate this exciting expansion.

We expect to steadily increase the number of Guide Dogs and Service Companions that we place each year – eventually doubling our current production. The new center features six dedicated birthing suites, enough kennel space for 48 additional dogs in training, on-site instruction areas, intersection simulations and much more.

A special **Thank You** to all who have contributed time, money, material and effort to make this dream a reality. Many people will benefit from the life-changing partnerships we will create for years to come – and it's all because of you! 



New training yard in front of the Puppy Development Center.

## OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

We are committed to using your gifts effectively and have consistently received stellar ratings from both GuideStar and Charity Navigator – the main independent rating agencies for nonprofits in the USA. Last year our Fundraising + Administrative costs were just 7%, so 93% of the money that came in went toward fulfilling our mission. In addition, we received The Midot Seal of Effectiveness – Israel's highest honor given to nonprofits – in recognition of our excellent financial management and our work.

We are very proud of these honors, but our true reward comes from seeing successful partnerships between our clients and their dogs walk out the door as they begin new and productive lives together.





## LOVE LETTER FROM FORMER IDF SOLDIER

About half of the dogs we breed have the superior traits to become guide dogs, the other half "change careers" to become Service Companions, and we place them with blind children, autistic children, soldiers with PTSD or other adults with Special Needs. Here is a love letter from a former IDF soldier to his dog (identities protected):



My timeless baby, you just turned five! A big boy but still a kid at heart, you lie on your back turning your head from side to side, jumping for joy and wagging your tail when I come back into the room. You cover my arms and my face with kisses. I love this boy. I give my hand gently and you behave as a polite gentleman. We touch our heads and receive much love. You devote your life to me. Always there for me. Always available to help me when bad dreams enter my head.

You are always happy and give yourself to me freely. I love to read to you and you sit with me like you understand every word. You read my mood when I'm happy and when I'm sad, and you give me support when I need it most. Playing with me to keep me active. You choose to be my friend and I choose to give you my heart.

You dedicate your life to me, you're always there to help me. You accept me for who I am, without conditions and without questions. In total you are there for me. My love, my wish for you is many more years of health and happiness. I enjoy being with you more than you know. My Prince, thank you for choosing to be my companion.

Your devoted friend.



### "IS YOUR DOG JEWISH?"

Bracha Ben Avraham was giving a presentation at a school, when a young boy asked, "Is your dog Jewish?" Bracha smiled and said, "I don't know if my guide dog is Jewish, but her parents are Israeli!"

All of the breeding, raising and training of our dogs takes place in Israel. We have offices in the USA, Canada and the UK where we raise awareness and do "Friend-Raising" to support our efforts.

## Replacing your best friend

For the past seven years Tango has been a loving and faithful companion to Adi Natan, a Special Needs teacher who lives in Haifa. Unfortunately, Tango is getting older and his health is failing, so his work as a Guide Dog has come to an end.

Adi recently told us, "I am having a very hard time dealing with Tango's retirement. It's not easy to change guide dogs because you form such a close bond. My family and friends had a big party for Tango this past Shabbat, where we all hugged him and told him how much we loved him as we said goodbye. We were all crying a lot. Tango is so intelligent and sensitive, that I think he was aware."

The family that raised Tango for the first year of his life has agreed to keep him until the end. This is wonderful news, because Adi knows and trusts the family – and also because he will continue to see Tango from time to time.

Adi added, "Even though I am in so much emotional pain, I know I must press on, and begin a relationship with a new dog."

Adi has recently been partnered with Dandy, a male Yellow Labrador – and the two of them hit it off immediately. Here is a photo of Adi and Dandy on one of their first walks together.



**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR MOTHERS!  
WE HOPE TO HAVE MANY MORE NEXT YEAR!**

Amber	8	Layka	5	Carolyn	9
Luli	8	Sunny	1	Valery	5
Chicka	6	Yogi	5		

## STAFF PROFILE: NETANEL ELBAZ, Senior Instructor



Netanel with a few of his trainees

"Using a white cane is a different language," Netanel explains, "The cane finds obstacles that serve as markers when a person walks from place to place. Often this creates confusion as the blind person encounters too much information – much of it unnecessary to safe travel."

"A well-trained Guide Dog avoids the obstacles," Netanel continues, "The blind person isn't even aware that the obstacles exist. Walking with a guide dog is more fluid and the team moves easier from corner to corner. Basic O&M skills are still extremely important to the success of a guide dog partnership."

Born in Jerusalem, 35-year old Netanel was raised in a Zionist family that exemplified the importance of contributing to society. His late father, born in Morocco, worked for the Jewish Agency bringing in new immigrants from Morocco and France in the 1970's and 80's. His mother made Aliya from Switzerland. She was a speech therapist working with disabled children. Both were very heavily involved in community activities.

Netanel received his BA from Ben Gurion University in Environmental Sciences. Friends of his who were raising a guide dog puppy suggested Netanel apply for a position at the Israel Guide Dog Center. They thought working at the Center would be a wonderful fit, combining both his passion for animals and working with people.

"I was impressed with the professionalism and seriousness at the Center," reports Netanel, "I instinctively knew that this was the place I wanted to work." Netanel began working for us in 2010.

Married to Maya and the father of two young daughters, Netanel and his family live in Nes Tziona, just a few minutes from the Center. 

## PROFILE **Dror Zilberstein**

**Residence:** Be'er Sheva

**Status:** Single

**Occupation:** Telephone Operator and Factory worker

**Partner:** Chip – Male – (a very large) Yellow Labrador

When we asked Dror Zilberstein why he wanted a guide dog, he replied, "Quite honestly, I'm tired of running into poles."

Dror, legally blind since birth, did not ask for a guide dog until he reached 40. "Chip has given me a new sense of confidence," said Dror, "I have moved out and am living on my own for the first time in my life." Dror also told us that he knows he will not be lonely because of Chip, and he has already seen how women are attracted to Chip and come up to talk with him. "I think Chip is going to introduce me to my future wife!"





## LORETTA SWIT – ONE OF A KIND

You probably know Loretta Swit from her famous role as Major Margaret "Hot Lips" Houlihan on the TV hit series M\*A\*S\*H. But did you know Loretta is an animal rights activist who donates her time and works of art for a variety of wonderful animal causes?



Loretta was introduced to us by Mrs. Phyllis Eisenberg of Palm Springs, and immediately agreed to meet the next time we were in New York City. In February, Loretta met Ruth Nachshon and her guide dog Roxi. She was so taken with the pair that she decided to do a painting of Roxi!

Loretta has donated a signed original Giclee print which we are offering as a silent auction item. Send your offer to [mike@israelguidedog.org](mailto:mike@israelguidedog.org) – the starting donation/bid is \$360.

## R. HERO ARRIVES IN YAVNE!



A Dalmatian puppy statue was placed in a park in the city of Yavneh just down the road from our center in Israel.

Donated by Bunni & Rick Benaron, Founders of "The Hero In You Foundation," the statue is an integral part of an educational project that combines the ideas of heroism, community activism, and good deeds. Helen Varon of Palm Springs, CA who made the shidduch, explained, "For me, it's all about promoting relationships between people and dogs, and the importance of guide dogs in helping people with blindness and visual impairments overcome their disability."

Bracha Ben-Avraham, along with her guide dog Dinka, makes presentations to school children and kindergartens throughout the area. The program includes a discussion about the role Dalmatians played as mascots for firefighters in history, the differences between a guide dog and a pet dog, and how even young children can do heroic deeds and help others.

This is a wonderful program, and a great way to reach impressionable young children with a very positive message. We are proud to be a part of this effort!

**The Mayor of Yavneh Zvi Gov -Ari, Noach Braun, co-founder and CEO of the Israel Guide Dog Center, Nehemah Ben-Eliezaer, Director of Preschool education in Yavneh, and Bracha Ben Avraham and her guide dog Dinka surrounded by a local kindergarten class.**



# RIDING BLINDFOLDED

Brigadier General Moti Regev (retired) is the founder of "CanVelo" – the tandem biking club teaming sighted and blind riders from the Israel Guide Dog Center. Moti usually rides in the front seat of the tandem as the "Captain", while a blind or visually impaired "stoker" rides behind. During a recent off-road trip, Moti relinquished his front seat on the tandem, put on a blindfold, and rode on the back seat as a blind "stoker."

## HERE ARE SOME OF HIS IMPRESSIONS:

"From the moment I got out of the car until the end of the ride more than four hours later, I wore a blindfold and was in total darkness. During most of the ride I experienced a slight sensation of vertigo in which I felt an incorrect perception of the position of my body in space. As a former pilot, this was an extremely difficult sensation – but the ride was a powerful experience."

Moti, forced to concentrate intensely throughout the ride, found it to be extremely tiring. "I was intent upon hearing



Moti is letting a young man experience riding on a tandem bike – while blindfolded

everything my captain said, despite noise and other voices around me. It was important for me to know who was around me and to identify them, and to try and understand the nature of the area in which we were riding. My captain informed me of what was ahead, and I tried to prepare myself." Moti reported that the visual image he painted from the descriptions of his captain, were nothing like the actual ride – based on photographs he saw later.

Another issue for Moti was not being able to identify other riders. It is extremely helpful when leaders announce who is present, to call out people's names, and announce biking partners. Moti failed to recognize a rider whom he knew very well, simply because he arrived hoarse and did not recognize his voice.

Moti recommends that every captain try riding blindfolded in order to experience what the blind club members, who ride in the back as "stokers" experience during every ride. "Riding blindfolded was a powerful, important experience, but it was wonderful to take off the blindfold at the end of the ride and see all the wonderful people again. I promise to try to be a better captain from now on, and use more descriptive details when talking about where we are going." 



Moti leading the group during a ride from Eilat



**BECAUSE OF YOU,** my dream to walk confidently without light has come true.

—ATZMONA ZADOK



## MY BAT MITZVAH PROJECT

I am very proud to have raised money and awareness for the Israel Guide Dog Center as part of my Bat Mitzvah project.



The non-profit combines my love for animals with doing chesed, the Hebrew word for loving-kindness. This type of project is meaningful to me because I understand the importance of good deeds as it relates to our efforts to perform *tikkun olam* – to repair the world. The Center sent me a wonderful package that taught me all about blindness and why guide dogs are so important to people in Israel.

My family and I share a love for animals and helping others. Back in the fall, I was honored to meet Uri Basha, a recipient of

several guide dogs from the Center – and his beautiful guide dog, Triton. This was a great experience for me because it opened my eyes to the people my fundraising affects. I can't wait to visit the center in Israel to see the dogs and people whose lives have been changed for the better.

Lily Ellman!

## BAR/BAT MITZVAH PROJECT

### INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

Call 215-343-9100 for a complete package, or visit:  
<https://israelguidedog.org/your-mitzvah-project/>



## 2017 EVENING OF MIRACLES – TORONTO, CANADA

Canadian Friends of the Israel Guide Dog Center will gather at the Toronto Centre for the Arts on Sunday, October 15, 2017, with hundreds of supporters to celebrate nearly 1,000 Israeli lives miraculously changed with Guide Dogs and Companion Dogs since 1991. After losing his sight in a martial arts accident, Boaz Gadish soon fell into despair and isolation until the Israel Guide Dog Center matched him with a new four-legged friend. Boaz and his guide dog, Adele, along with Noach Braun, CEO and Co-Founder, join us from Israel to share a story of loss and then a new beginning.



Boaz Gadish and his guide dog Adele.

This year's Evening of Miracles will feature one of Canada's most celebrated bands, Lighthouse, who will perform their hits including "One Fine Morning" and "Sunny Days." The music and programming will surely make for a memorable, enjoyable and meaningful evening.

**For sponsorships, tickets or more info:**  
[info@israelguidedog.ca](mailto:info@israelguidedog.ca)  
416-577-3600

## NATIONAL SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Students who do not enter the military (for a variety of reasons) have the option of serving Israel through National Service.

Volunteers must commit to a minimum of one year, and we rely on these amazing young people to help us all over the campus. They generally rotate through different departments such as the kennels, office, kitchen, etc., work incredibly hard and provide an invaluable service.

When asked what their friends think of what they are doing, Tamar spoke up, "They think we have an easy job and just play with puppies all day. Nothing can be further from the truth! We have major responsibilities and take our jobs very seriously."

Imbar added, "First and foremost, we must keep the dogs safe which starts with spotless kennels and teaching discipline. A dog can develop bad habits, and we are trained to spot bad behaviors and work with the trainers to make corrections."

When asked about what was most difficult, Ravid said, "The hardest part for me was telling the dogs apart. In the beginning they all looked alike, but after a while we started to see the differences, and now I know every dog by the way they look and act. It is amazing how they each have their own personality."

Shaked hopes that her mother never comes to the center while she is working. "If she saw how hard I scrub the walls and mop the floors, she'll expect me to do that at home." ♦



(LEFT TO RIGHT) Chaviva Levin, Tamar Fold, Shaked Sadres, Imbar Elbaz, Ravid Edri

## CONGRATULATIONS to our 2016 GRADUATES!



Dror Zilberstein & Chip  
Ziv Cohen & Diva  
Dima Tsarovskiy & Teddy  
Saleem Sharif & Winston  
Benny Koblantz & Taki  
Moaz Habob & Yan  
Uri Basha & Triton  
Moti Levy & Vida  
Dorit Hajaj & Like  
Aviv Leibovich & Toto  
Dany Ben Zeev & Houston  
Lily Goldwin & Zita  
Baruch Cohen & Vina  
Naama Shang & Tokyo  
Ran Itzhaki & Sidney  
Rinat Meshulam & Vita  
Gary Stern & Lucy

Mazal Solymanov & Luke  
Avichie Yaish & Nero  
Maccabi Safrin & Zara  
Arieh Brander & Pepsi  
Sharon Kadar & Led  
Rachel Mutas & Nancy  
Hilla Meuda & Nils  
Roni Eliyahu & Flash  
Alexander Gutin & Sunny  
Amnon Akko & Sidney  
Irina Sokolov & Pesto  
Oleg Isakov & Roger  
Atzmona Tzadok & Vida  
Rafi Falach & Milo  
Shmuel Yana & Stanley  
Kalman Menashe & Robin

**NOTE:** We give the dogs English names to avoid the possibility of someone accidentally calling out their names in a public place. This avoids confusion.

I'm really grateful  
to you for giving  
me eyes that  
no doctor in the  
world was able to  
give me.

—SALEEM SHARIF





## A GIFT THAT LIVES ON

According to the Torah, the highest Mitzvah we can perform is to bury the dead, because it is an act of kindness that cannot be repaid. Our friends who join our *Legacy Society* perform a similar act of kindness—by helping the living—when they remember us in their Estate Plan with a final gift in their will.



We'd like to tell you the story of one of our special friends, Allen Brill.

Allen, a humble man, started out by literally selling watches on the street corners of New York City. He never finished college but Allen was driven to succeed. He began as a salesman and worked his way up to the top—becoming President and CEO of Rolex, USA!

He was a visionary who inspired his colleagues and employees. And he was also a quietly generous philanthropist who encouraged Rolex to sponsor many philanthropic causes—while he personally gave away a significant portion of his earnings during his lifetime to worthy programs in the U.S. and Israel. But he never wanted any recognition. That's why you won't find his name on any buildings, but the impact of his gifts is felt by the countless people he helped.

Allen believed in supporting small nonprofits—where a gift can make a real difference. He was impressed with our stewardship of donor funds and fiscal transparency and efficiency. He particularly admired how we train our incredible dogs to change lives so completely. When he passed away, he surprised us—leaving a very generous gift that will transform the lives of many blind Israelis for years to come.

In the Jewish religion, you live on as long as people remember you. We want you to remember Allen Brill, a proud Zionist and true philanthropist. He led by example—and we hope his story will lead you to consider making us a part of your final wishes.

You don't have to be rich or famous to leave a legacy – you just need to make a simple decision. 

We can supply you with a sample Codicil that can be attached to your Last Will or your attorney can assist. If you would like more information or sample language, call 215-343-9100. You can also visit our website – <https://israelguidedog.org/legacy-planned-giving/>

### PROFILE

## Sharon Kadar & Led

**Residence:** Be'er Sheva

**Status:** Married with 3 children

**Occupation:** Homemaker

**Partner:** Led – Male – Golden Retriever/Yellow Labrador cross

Sharon lost most of her vision 25 years ago during the birth of her youngest child, and her vision has deteriorated slowly since then. She recently learned to use a white cane, but quickly decided that a guide dog would give her more mobility and independence. Sharon was partnered with Led, and found an immediate connection. "We go everywhere together and have become great friends," Sharon reported.



**DESIGN:**

Proof Design

**PHOTO CREDITS:**

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**ISRAEL GUIDE DOG  
CENTER FOR THE BLIND**

Beit Oved, 7680000, Israel  
Tel: 972-8-940-8213  
info@igdcb.org  
[www.he.israelguidedog.org](http://www.he.israelguidedog.org)

**US FRIENDS:**

968 Easton Rd. – Suite H  
Warrington, PA 18976  
Tel: 215-343-9100  
info@israelguidedog.org  
[www.israelguidedog.org](http://www.israelguidedog.org)

**CANADIAN FRIENDS:**

4600 Bathurst Street, 4th Fl. Library  
Toronto, ON M2R 3V2  
Tel: 416-577-3600  
info@israelguidedog.ca  
[www.israelguidedog.ca](http://www.israelguidedog.ca)

**UK FRIENDS:**

PO Box 756  
Borehamwood WD6-9JE, England  
Tel: 44-(0)-208-090-3455  
martin@bfigdcb.org  
[www.israelguidedog.org.uk](http://www.israelguidedog.org.uk)