

OUR SILVER JUBILEE: 25 YEARS OF CREATING MIRACLES



Israel Guide
Dog Center

ANNUAL REPORT 2015



OUR MISSION

THE ISRAEL GUIDE DOG CENTER FOR THE BLIND IS THE ONLY ACCREDITED GUIDE DOG PROGRAM SERVING ISRAEL'S 24,000 BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED INDIVIDUALS— AND THE ONLY SUCH PROGRAM IN THE ENTIRE MIDDLE EAST.

Founded in 1991, our mission is to improve the quality of life of blind Israelis by providing them with safe mobility, independence and self-confidence through the faithful assistance of guide dogs specially trained in Hebrew for the challenging conditions in Israel.



We are proud that for the past several years, both GuideStar and Charity Navigator have given Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind their highest possible ratings. Recently, we also received The Midot Seal of Effectiveness – Israel's highest honor given to nonprofits – in recognition of the excellence of our financial management and our work.



“I want to work. I want to walk. I want to BE!”

Irit “Esther” Abranal (photo taken during her first walk with Marlin)



OUR SILVER JUBILEE:

25 Years of Creating Miracles for Blind Israelis

Dear Friends:

This year, **WE MARK OUR SILVER JUBILEE** at Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind – 25 years since we first began providing blind Israelis with guide dogs raised and trained in Israel.

When we say the word “miracles,” that’s no exaggeration. It all began with just one young former IDF paratrooper who dreamed of training dogs for their highest calling: to help blind people live life to the fullest. He saw the critical need for a guide dog center in Israel – where dogs trained in Hebrew would be ready for the challenging conditions in Israel.

That young man – Noach Braun, our co-founder and CEO – faced so many obstacles back then: guide dogs were unusual in Israel, there were cultural obstacles – and he had no money. And first, he needed to undergo guide dog training himself – but no school would accept him.

Then came our first miracle: In 1986, the Israel Consulate in New York City introduced Noach to my father, Norman Leventhal, a U.S. businessman active in Jewish causes. Inspired by Noach’s dream and the need, my dad didn’t hesitate: he and Noach joined forces – and started their quest to create a guide dog school in Israel. That year, Pilot Dogs of Columbus, Ohio, accepted Noach for training.



Noach and Norm also began reaching out to friends like you – who shared our vision for transforming the lives of blind Israelis – and who gave generously to make that dream a reality.

We’ve come such a long way in 25 years. From what seemed like an “impossible dream” to our first guide dog Partnership – through our early days on a moshav, where Noach and his wife Orna hosted clients in their own small home – to the opening of our Lady Kaye Campus, where we “came of age” and established our permanent center—it’s all been a series of miracles.

In recent years, we’ve continued to grow and expand on our work. We have become a globally-recognized, multi-service center, providing not only the best guide dogs – trained with the most advanced methods – but we also provide Service Companions, Psychological Counseling, CanVelo sports activities, and more... while constantly striving for even greater innovation and excellence in everything we do.

We have created **548 Guide Dog Partnerships** to date – providing blind Israelis with the extraordinary mobility, independence, safety, and confidence only possible with a guide dog, we’ve opened new opportunities for them to live full, productive lives.

And throughout all our 25 years of accomplishments highlighted in this report, all of this has been made possible thanks to you and your continued generous support.

With deepest gratitude,

Michael J Leventhal
Executive Director

LEADING THE WAY FOR BLIND ISRAELIS: 1991-2016

A Timeline of Accomplishments

A DREAM IS BORN when Noach Braun, a then-26 year old ex-IDF paratrooper, first conceives his goal to establish a guide dog center in Israel: to help blind Israelis live life more fully.

A GUIDE DOG SCHOOL in Columbus, Ohio, accepts Noach for training instruction.

WE INITIATE OUR EFFORTS to learn, adapt, and implement the latest, most effective guide dog training methods, by sending our trainers to other schools around the world, and by inviting expert trainers to visit our program as well. Our goal is to be the best – to provide blind Israelis with the best-trained guide dogs possible.

WE ESTABLISH OUR Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program, educating U.S. students about the needs of the blind and the value of guide dogs in helping visually impaired people, as well as giving them an opportunity to sponsor puppies for their Mitzvah Projects. Our goal is for students to feel connected with a great project in Israel.

PROLOGUE ● ● 1986 ● 1987 ● ● 1991 ● 1992 ● ● 1994 ● 1995 ● 1997

THE DREAM TAKES SHAPE. The Israel Consulate's office introduces Noach to Norman Leventhal, U.S. businessman and philanthropist active in Jewish causes. They meet on the first night of Chanukah (it's interesting that an organization for the blind is founded on the Festival of Light) – and they join forces to make the dream a reality.

WE BEGIN WITH A DOG and a dream in a ramshackle house on a moshav (agricultural community) in Netanya, and quickly establish ourselves as the only accredited program in Israel providing guide dogs to blind and visually impaired Israelis.

We celebrate our first graduate, Haim Zur, and his guide dog, Tilly.



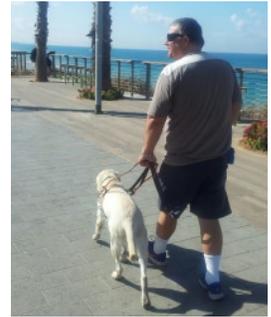
WE MOVE to our permanent home in Beit Oved, just 20 minutes south of Tel Aviv.

WE ARE ACCEPTED as a full member of the International Federation of Guide Dog Schools, which recognizes the excellence of our program.

WE CREATE OUR 100TH PARTNERSHIP:
Rafi Almaliach and Loti.

WE ESTABLISH OUR CANVELO sports club, integrating blind Israelis into team sports with sighted members. The club promotes camaraderie, fitness, and self-confidence among our members with vision loss. CanVelo's activities also raise awareness about the abilities of people who are blind and visually impaired.

WE FORMALIZED OUR SERVICE COMPANION PROGRAM – in which dogs that don't qualify as guide dogs are provided as support animals to blind children, autistic children, soldiers with PTSD and other adults with a variety of special needs. This is quickly becoming a very popular program.



WE CELEBRATE OUR 500TH PARTNERSHIP:
Etan Negev and Loti

GUIDESTAR AND CHARITY NAVIGATOR give us their highest possible ratings.

WE ALSO RECEIVE THE MIDOT SEAL OF EFFECTIVENESS – Israel's highest honor given to nonprofits – in recognition of the excellence of our financial management and our work.

WE GRADUATE OUR 200TH PARTNERSHIP:
Chaim Abin and Cleo

WE GRADUATE OUR 300TH PARTNERSHIP:
Avi Harari and Dinka

WE GRADUATE OUR 400TH PARTNERSHIP:
Adolf Aristehyan and his guide dog, Sally.

1998 • 2004 • 2006 • 2008 • 2010 • 2011 • 2012 • 2013 • 2014 • 2016



WE FINISH CONSTRUCTION on The Lady Kaye Campus, the permanent home of the Israel Guide Dog Center.

WE BEGIN INCORPORATING the Clicker Method into our guide dog training – as we continue to adopt the latest and best training methods. The result: faster training times, higher numbers of qualifying puppies and greater efficiency for our program as a whole. Most importantly, dogs trained this way are more effective, responsive guide dogs.



WE COLLABORATE WITH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS, such as the ELIYA schools – kindergartens for children who are blind or visually impaired. Together, we sponsor monthly visiting dog programs so that children can pet, cuddle, play, and practice walking with our dogs and puppies.

WE CREATED THE INTEGRATED PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION INITIATIVE, a pilot program employing a Ph.D. clinical psychologist to help assess each client throughout the Partnership process. This initiative helps custom-tailor our program for each client – and provides counseling and support. Of particular interest was the discovery about the depth of the grieving process when a client needs to retire a guide dog and get a replacement.

WE PLAN TO BREAK GROUND on our new Puppy Development and Enrichment Campus! Our goal is to double guide dog partnerships over the next 10 years.

LOOKING BACK AT 2015:

A Year of Success Stories

GUIDE DOG PARTNERSHIPS: OUR CORE PROGRAM

We're pleased to report that in 2015, we provided Guide Dog Partnerships to 36 blind or visually impaired Israelis – 18 men and 18 women.

16 were first-time clients – and 20 received replacement dogs, in keeping with our commitment to provide each of our clients with replacement dogs for life. Once our blind clients experience the amazing mobility, safety, and independence a guide dog gives them, they never want to be without one.

Our clients in 2015 ranged in age from 17 to 81!

We created Partnerships for four IDF soldiers – including one who lost his eyesight to an explosion in a Gaza terrorist tunnel.

SERVICE COMPANIONS: SPECIAL DOGS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

All of our dogs are exceptionally-trained loving companions, bred, raised, and prepared to be responsive to the needs of some of Israel's most vulnerable people. However, not all of our dogs meet our exacting standards to become guide dogs – so these dogs “change careers” and enter our Special Companion program.



Once we realized the demand for Service Companions, we raised our guide dog standards to an even higher level. Now approximately 50% of the dogs we breed are provided as Service Companions to autistic children, blind children, and adults with a wide range of special needs, including soldiers with PTSD.

Last year, we provided 38 service dogs to families with special needs, 25 going to autistic children, and the others to children and adults with a wide range of disabilities. We project placing some 35 Service Companion Dogs in 2016.

PIONEERING ADVANCED TRAINING

We are a pioneer in guide dog training, applying the most innovative techniques to train our dogs, such as the “Clicker Method.” Introduced at the Center in 2012, this



method enables us to train our dogs more quickly and effectively. Clients who received replacement dogs in 2015 reported their new dogs were more responsive and adaptable to their commands.

PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING INITIATIVE

Begun in the fall of 2013 as a two-year pilot, this innovative program provides counseling for our blind Israeli clients. Led by clinical psychologist Jed Schlesinger, Ph.D., who designed the model, the Initiative enables us to custom-tailor our program for each client and helps them live and work successfully with their guide dogs.



In 2015, we began Phase II of this initiative, focusing on the emotional trauma of our clients as they undergo a grieving process when they need to replace their retired dogs. The proactive approach we take helps prepare our clients for this eventuality. We plan to publish and present our findings at the next meeting of the International Federation of Guide Dog Schools.

CANVELO:

10th Anniversary of Engaging Our Blind Clients In Team Sports

CANVELO TANDEM BIKING CLUBS

Our CanVelo clubs engage in on-road and off-road biking throughout Israel, as well as an annual excursion abroad, with a sighted volunteer steering in front and a blind rider in back on each tandem bike.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of CanVelo's biking club. In 2015, six tandem teams embarked on a unique four-day 530-kilometer ride along the entire length of Israel from Metulah in the north to Eilat in the south.

THE DRAGON BOAT ROWING TEAM

First introduced in 2011, CanVelo formed a dragon boat rowing team for sighted and visually impaired people, competing in Israel and abroad. Last year, the team won first place in the Tel Aviv regatta.



MEETING OUR NEEDS.

Growing Our Future.

Since we began 25 years ago, demand for our services has continued to grow each year. The Center has bred over 968 dogs and created some 548 guide dog partnerships for blind and visually impaired Israelis of all backgrounds, disabled IDF veterans, and victims of terrorist acts.

- We are the only accredited guide dog school in the Middle East and a proud member of the International Guide Dog Federation that shares critical information and training methods, assesses each Guide Dog School regularly, and ensures they meet the most stringent standards of excellence.
- We always strive to be even better, continually seeking new strategies to meet the needs of blind Israelis now and well into the future.
- We are in the process of expanding our kennel and whelping facilities to meet this constantly increasing demand (see New Campus below). Our goal is to increase the number of partnerships by 50% over the next three years.

BY THE NUMBERS - 2015

Guide Dogs Placed	36
Service Companions Placed	38
Number of Puppies Born	114
Number of Puppies donated	17
Number of breeding dogs	13 female 4 male
Kennel Capacity for training	24



BUILDING FOR THE GENERATIONS

We are currently in the final stages of receiving construction permits to build the new campus on the adjacent lot next to the current Center. This new campus will include training grounds, new kennels and whelping facilities, as well as a logistics building. We expect construction will begin in 2016 for completion at the end of 2017.

A man with dark hair, wearing a light-colored polo shirt and light blue jeans, stands on a green lawn. He is holding a brown leather leash attached to a white dog sitting next to him. The dog has its mouth open and appears happy. The background is filled with lush green foliage and trees. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

**"It's like taking
a prisoner
and releasing
him from his
handcuffs"**

Uri Basha (former IDF tank commander)

FINANCIAL REPORTS:

This is our 2016 Budget in US Dollars, plus the past two years for the operations in Israel in Shekels.

REPORT AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2015	2016		2015	
DESCRIPTION	IN \$ US	BUDGET	ACTUAL	BUDGET
INCOME - OVERSEAS	3,9400	(Shekels)	(Shekels)	(Shekels)
Transfers from US Friends	\$1,434,010	₪ 5,650,000	₪ 3,897,400	₪ 5,350,000
Direct Donations from US Donors	\$126,904	₪ 500,000	₪ 248,389	₪ 500,000
Transfers from British Friends	\$187,817	₪ 740,000	₪ 651,423	₪ 640,000
Direct Donations from British Donors	\$2,538	₪ 10,000	₪ 232,788	₪ 10,000
Transfers from Canadian Friends	\$266,497	₪ 1,050,000	₪ 769,425	₪ 1,300,000
Direct Donations from Canadian Donors	\$10,152	₪ 40,000	₪ 74,058	₪ 40,000
Donations from - Other Countries	\$20,305	₪ 80,000	₪ 256,976	₪ 80,000
TOTAL INCOME - OVERSEAS	\$2,048,223	₪ 8,070,000	₪ 6,130,459	₪ 7,920,000
INCOME FROM ISRAEL				
Donations Israel - Ministries	\$331,218	₪ 1,305,000	₪ 1,090,423	₪ 1,185,000
Donations from Israeli Donors	\$171,066	₪ 674,000	₪ 3,403,493	₪ 775,500
CanVelo Donations	\$34,264	₪ 135,000	₪ 54,400	₪ 135,000
CanVelo Income	\$12,690	₪ 50,000	₪ 45,015	₪ 50,000
Medical Fund for Working Guide Dogs	\$5,076	₪ 20,000	₪ 1,743	₪ 40,000
In-Kind Donations	\$90,482	₪ 356,500	₪ 304,117	₪ 356,500
TOTAL INCOME - ISRAEL	\$644,797	₪ 2,540,500	₪ 4,899,191	₪ 2,542,000
TOTAL ALL INCOME	\$2,693,020	₪ 10,610,500	₪ 11,029,650	₪ 10,462,000
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Dog Training Expenses	\$1,317,665	₪ 5,191,600	₪ 4,573,671	₪ 4,793,280
Maintenance	\$212,239	₪ 836,220	₪ 791,488	₪ 830,600
Marketing and Fundraising	\$523,657	₪ 2,063,210	₪ 1,677,052	₪ 2,054,218
Administrative Expenses	\$342,234	₪ 1,348,400	₪ 1,109,531	₪ 1,329,500
Financing Expenses	\$10,736	₪ 42,300	₪ 20,129	₪ 57,500
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$2,406,530	₪ 9,481,730	₪ 8,171,871	₪ 9,065,098
FIXED ASSETS				
Fixed Assets	\$128,934	₪ 508,000	₪ 629,015	₪ 629,000
One-Time Government Assessment			₪ 573,878	
One-time Land Transfer Fee			₪ 1,400,261	
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	\$128,934	₪ 508,000	₪ 2,603,154	₪ 629,000
TOTAL ALL EXPENSES	\$2,535,464	₪ 9,989,730	₪ 10,775,025	₪ 9,694,098
SURPLUS/-DEFICIT	\$157,556	₪ 620,770	₪ 254,625	₪ 767,902

VOLUNTEERS:

At the Heart of All We Do

The number of volunteers who help in and around our Center has swelled to 571, including 383 general volunteers and 188 puppy raisers, plus 10 volunteer Board Members.

They assist us in every facet of our program, fulfilling vital responsibilities in a wide range of educational, social, and sports activities that enrich the lives of our clients and their communities. They work beside us in our offices, assist us in the kennels, provide special instruction classes to our blind clients at the Center, and participate in outreach activities to the community.

We have 136 volunteers in CanVelo alone, helping provide Israelis who are blind with a safe and nurturing

environment in which they can indulge in team sports such as Tandem Bike Riding and Dragon Boat Racing.

Of our 152 puppy raisers, 80% are university students attending eight different universities throughout Israel. It's thanks to them that our future guide dogs experience their first year of socialization and love. During this crucial year, man's best friend accompanies our volunteers on their routine activities: classes, walks, public transportation, and along Israel's busy streets. All situations the puppies will face as guide dogs.



FUNDRAISING AND FRIENDRAISING: The Foundation of Our Success

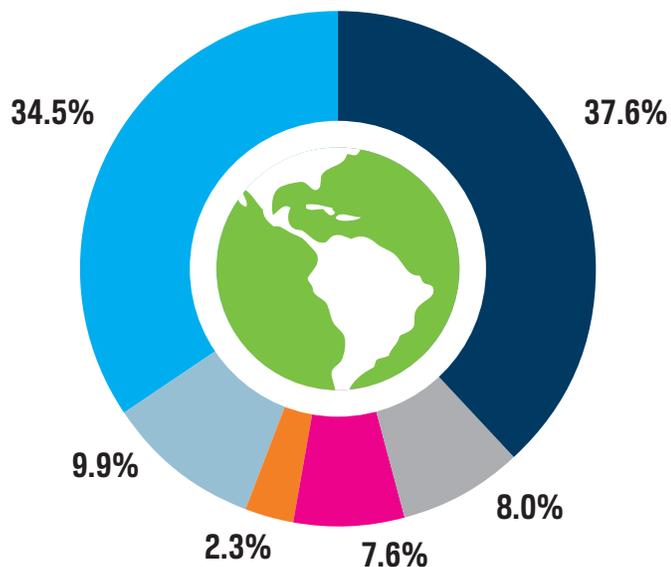
We rely on individuals, foundations, synagogues and schools to meet our funding needs.



	# OF GIFTS	AMOUNT
Foundations	193	\$923,824
Individuals	1,351	677,976
Bar/Bat Mitzvah gifts	771	98,451
Tributes (Honor or Memory of)	539	89,566
Bequests	3	35,000
Schools/Synagogues	139	22,623
TOTAL	2,996	\$1,847,897

DONATIONS BY COUNTRY

- USA
- Great Britain
- Canada
- Other Countries
- Israeli Gov't
- Israeli Donors*



*In 2015 we received a large Bequest from an Israeli donor. This was a one-time gift.



CENSUS INFORMATION

The census of our current guide dog users breaks down as follows:



63% male



37% female

1% are in their twenties

6% are in their thirties

12% are in their forties

17% are in their fifties

26% are in their sixties

11% are in their seventies

4% are in their eighties





Israel Guide Dog Center

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