Annual Report 2018

Expanding Our Horizons
Reaching New Milestones
2018: A YEAR OF NEW MILESTONES

Our Mission

The Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind is the only accredited guide dog facility serving Israel’s 24,000 blind and visually impaired citizens—and the only such program in the entire Middle East. Operations began in 1991, with a mission to improve the quality of life of Israelis who are blind 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.

Honors And Accomplishments

• The New Puppy Development Campus, adjacent to our current site, doubles our physical size and will ultimately double our capacity—allowing us to provide a higher number of guide dogs and service companions in the years to come.

• As a direct result of our new adjoining Puppy Development and Training Campus, we have increased the number of puppies by 20%—to a record number of 127 births in 2018.

• PTSD Program—while still only a pilot program, we expect this to become a meaningful part of our work in which we train dogs to help Israeli soldiers suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. We have already seen amazing results.

• Our on-site Ph.D. psychologist continues to improve outcomes and success rates for our clients and staff. Along with the training staff, he evaluates people who request our services, and provides critical support to our clients.

• For the sixth year in a row, we received the highest ratings from both GuideStar and Charity Navigator for sound fiscal management and commitment to accountability and transparency.

• For the third consecutive year, we earned Platinum Status from GuideStar. Out of its 1.8 million-member-database, only 0.15% reaches Platinum Status—the ultimate achievement!
Dear Friends,

2018 was an exciting year for us at Israel Guide Dog Center—a year of many milestones and successes, all made possible thanks to your generosity.

You are why our first full year of operations at our New Puppy Development and Training Campus was such a success. With our new birthing center and improved maternal care, we produced a record number of 127 puppies! And because we increased the number of new kennels, we expanded our capacity—while enhancing the health and comfort of our dogs during breeding and training. With our specially-designed training facilities, we’ve honed our techniques for training our dogs and instructing our clients on how to work with their four-legged partners.

That’s why by year end, we reached a total of 643 Guide Dog Partnerships and 210 Service Companions since we began operations in 1991. And, we launched a new pilot PTSD program in which we train dogs specifically to assist IDF soldiers and veterans suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

At the heart of all our work is the unique bond between humans and dogs—their special affinity with us and the almost mystical way they’re attuned to our needs and emotions.

My family and I were blessed to have a dog that exemplified these qualities. Sadly, we recently lost Penny—a long-haired dachshund, playful and loving until her last day—just short of her 17th birthday. Throughout her life, she showered us with unconditional love and loyalty, and was an important part of our family.

That’s the kind of the love the dogs we nurture and train at the Center show us—and the kind of emotional connection our clients form with them. Our clients and dogs walk and live together as a team in perfect harmony, forging bonds even closer than we experience with our pets. A guide dog is a client’s partner—24/7—that they rely on both as a guide and loving companion. Often when a guide dog reaches retirement age, it’s heartbreaking for our clients. So, we provide psychological support—as well as a new “replacement” guide dog—to ease the transition.

In the following pages, you will learn more about how you—and our wonderful dogs—helped us reach new milestones. You’ll read stories of a few of our hundreds of clients with vision loss, autism, or other disabilities—whose lives have been profoundly transformed by having such splendid animals by their side.

From our very beginnings—all our work, all our milestones of the past 27 years—have only been possible thanks to our many friends and your generous gifts. With your continued help, we’ll continue striving to perfect and expand our services to pair even more Israelis with their special four-legged friends.

On behalf of the Israelis whose lives are transformed by all of our dogs—thank you!

Gratefully,

Michael Leventhal
Executive Director
GUIDE DOG PARTNERSHIPS:
EXPANDING HORIZONS – TRANSFORMING LIVES

PROFILE: Guy & Easton

“My guide dog expanded my world and opened my life.”

Guy began life like any other boy. Except at 11, he was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes, often called “Juvenile Diabetes.” Living with diabetes through adolescence and into adulthood was an enormous challenge. Nonetheless, Guy moved on with his life: studying to become a social worker and getting married.

Two years into his studies, he developed complications in his left eye. After three surgeries, he couldn’t see from that eye. Within months, vision in his healthy right eye began to deteriorate. Today, he sees only light and shadow.

At first, Guy was devastated by losing his sight. “I just wanted to go to bed and stay there for the rest of my life.” He learned to use a cane but refused to walk with it. When he finally did, he felt embarrassed to be seen with it and frustrated by how slowly he had to walk and how often he hit things: “I felt like a failure.”

When he learned about the Israel Guide Dog Center in Beit Oved and took his first walk with a guide dog, it restored a sense of freedom and release he had not felt since he became blind. When Guy met Turner, a quiet but fun-loving Black Lab, he knew immediately he had found the way to fulfill his dreams of independence.

Today, Guy is partnered with Easton (pictured). He has a very important position with Histadrut—the largest labor union in Israel—where his job is to monitor companies with 100 employees or more and ensure they adhere to government mandated regulations to hire people with disabilities. He cherishes the opportunity of helping people become productive members of society and is also a devoted husband and father of four children.

“When I became blind, doors closed and my world shrunk. My guide dog was the key to opening those doors, enlarging my world and getting my life back.”

Every Guide Dog Partnership is a life-transforming milestone for the people who receive them. Guide Dog Partnerships remain our #1 mission. In 2018, we provided guide dogs to 35 Israelis who are blind, changing the lives of 19 men and 16 women—and bringing the number of Guide Dog Partnerships created since our inception to a grand total of 643 as of December 31st.

Of the 35 Partnerships created in 2018, three were former IDF soldiers who lost their vision in the course of performing their duties. Our clients range in age from 17 to 88 years young. We currently have 210 working Partnerships, of which 62% are men and 38% women.

These dogs not only totally transform an individual’s life, they impact their entire community, including their families, friends, neighbors, co-workers and more. In a small country such as Israel, this makes an enormous difference.

Twenty-one of the 35 clients received a guide dog for the first-time, while 14 were provided with replacement dogs. Our first priority is to provide a client who had a guide dog with a replacement dog as soon as it is necessary. Once a person with blindness experiences the amazing mobility, safety, and independence a guide dog gives them, they never want to walk alone again.
PROFILE: Yoav & Simba A bond of love

Excerpted from a letter from Yoav’s parents

Our son, Yoav, has epilepsy, communication disorders, attention deficit disorder, learning disabilities, and sensory processing disorder. A close friend told us they adopted a dog from your center…and how empowering the dog was for their daughter.

We called the center, and they were extremely helpful and assisted us throughout the adoption process. They gained a thorough understanding of our family, enabling them to find the dog best suited for us.

We applied for the adoption because we wanted Yoav to have a true companion who would love him unconditionally, who would not judge or criticize him, but would accept him for who he is and always be there for him. We also felt this would help promote Yoav’s communication skills and help him control his behavior and emotions.

Simba is so smart and special that sometimes he communicates with us like a person. He is quiet, calm, and dignified…so controlled in his behavior he radiates calmness to our entire family—especially to Yoav. Well-trained, obedient, and easy to care for, he is filled with love and actually communicates with our children.

He comes when our son calls him, listens to his instructions, and provides him with affection and love. Everything we envisioned about the virtues of the bond between people and dogs has become a reality in our lives.

We wish to thank you for all you have done! We hope you will continue with the great Mitzvah you do for persons with blindness and with all the wonderful things you do for children with illness or special needs.

Karen and Nimrod,
Yoav’s parents

Our standards for training guide dogs are among the highest of any in the world. But not all our dogs can meet them—yet they remain highly capable dogs, ready to offer comfort and companionship to vulnerable children and adults.

So, some “change careers” and become Service Companions—provided to children who have autism or who are blind, and to adults with a wide range of special needs, including soldiers with PTSD.

In 2018, we produced 55 Service Companions. Thirty-five dogs were given to people with special needs, 26 of whom were children with autism. The remainder was given to children and adults with various other needs.

We started a new PTSD pilot program and gave two specially trained dogs to IDF soldiers—more about this on page 6. The difference each of these dogs made in the lives of their clients is immeasurable.
Many IDF soldiers and veterans, as well as other Israelis, suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a debilitating condition. Studies—and reports from our clients—demonstrate that PTSD dogs can significantly alleviate the frequency and severity of traumatic symptoms, including nightmares and flashbacks.

While still in the pilot stage, our PTSD dogs already have shown to be effective in assisting PTSD sufferers by: calming them during panic attacks, waking them from nightmares, orienting and calming them in public situations, increasing feelings of personal safety, reducing anxiety when reacting to loud noises, and helping them forge connections and companionship to reduce depression, isolation, and guilt feelings.

A PTSD dog detects a person’s stress or anxiety (e.g. when they hear labored breathing) and is trained to interrupt this vicious cycle by distracting the person—offering comfort through hugs (jumping with two or four paws) and licking the face.

The biggest problem for people suffering from PTSD is fear of falling asleep—and being tormented by reliving their traumatic experiences in recurring nightmares. This dread keeps them from getting the restorative sleep they need—resulting in ever-deepening depression and anxiety.

We have already seen PTSD dogs make huge improvements in clients’ lives. It turns out when someone suffering from PTSD knows they can rely on their four-legged best friend to consistently stop the nightmares, the frequency and intensity of the nightmares decline steadily. We still do not know if nightmares will cease permanently (study durations have not been long enough), but we have seen dramatic beneficial results already.

The dog is also trained to watch his partner’s back by sitting next to him, facing the opposite direction. This is the “Watch” command, used to create a feeling of “eyes in the back of the partner’s head” to detect if someone or something approaches from behind. They also learn the “Block” command—standing between their partner and another person or object to create space. This space calms down a person with PTSD in crowded public areas.

In addition, the person with PTSD must care for their dog. They must get up and take the dog out, feed and groom the dog, etc. This gives them a purpose, forces them to get out of bed every morning, and creates a very positive routine.

“I never thought a dog would make such a difference! I’m not afraid of my bedroom anymore. My attitude is completely different, and I can move on with my life.”

Anonymous
FACTS AND FIGURES
ABOUT GUIDE DOG USERS IN ISRAEL

In Israel there are about **24,000** people who are legally recognized as blind.

Among the blind, about **20%** have complete vision loss. The remainder have some residual vision.

Most people with blindness have become blind during the course of their lives. Only a small percent are born with blindness.

Every year, about **65%** of the blind who receive their Blind Certification are over the age of 65.

There is an increase in the numbers of Arab and other minorities using Guide Dogs. The IGDCB has partnered graduates from Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and Druze backgrounds.

The IGDCB has raised about **1,200** dogs, approximately half have become Guide Dogs.

Guide Dogs work 7/8 years before they are retired.

**6** is the average number of puppies per litter.

94% of the IGBCB income is through donations.

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10% of the guide dog users are IDF veterans.

The success rate is identical between white haired and black haired dogs.

The success rate between male and female dogs is identical.

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**From birth through 2 months**
- Puppies are nursed by their moms.

**From 2 months to 1 year**
- Puppies are raised by Puppy Raising Families.

**At 1 year**
- Beginning of 5 months of Guide Dog training.

**For 1 month**
- Guide Dog Partnership course with blind and visually impaired client.

**For 8 years**
- Length of service between guide dog and graduate. The dogs are then retired to live in a warm and loving home.

There are about **250** active guide dog partnerships, among them **200** are partnered by IGDCB.
OUR VOLUNTEERS: 
TEAMING UP TO REACH NEW HORIZONS

CanVelo: New Sports Milestones

Since 2006, we have teamed Israelis who are visually impaired with sighted volunteers in team sports that promote confidence and social interaction. In 2018, CanVelo again developed and expanded its activities, with many new cyclists and paddlers joining, 40 of whom are blind or visually impaired. We have 25 off-road tandem bicycles and 10 tandem road bicycles.

Last year, 20 members participated in our Dragon Boat Racing team, including 11 blind and visually impaired paddlers. They have won numerous competitions. Sportiada—Israel’s largest annual sports competition—continues to rank high on our competitive events, with many more disabled Israelis competing.

CanVelo’s activities included national cycling events, competitions such as the Israel Off-Road Tandem Championship, the Sportidia in Eilat, and the Mini Grand Fondo. Last summer, we sent a delegation of 34 CanVelo cyclists abroad for a week, during our annual event. Last year, CanVelo also won INTEL’S International Prize for volunteer projects.

Interview With A Puppy Raiser

Dorine R is a 27-year old graduate student at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She has raised puppies for IGDCB for four years. We chatted with her recently about her experiences and why she continues doing this for us.

Can you tell us a bit about yourself?
I have loved animals since I can remember. That’s why I decided to major in Animal Science for my B.A. Two of my favorite hobbies are baking and Do-It-Yourself projects. While in the army, I served with the military police at a checkpoint command.

Why did you decide to become a puppy raiser?
Because I wanted to volunteer and help change someone’s life.

What led you to our Center?
Walking down the street, I saw a blind man with his guide dog. I began researching the process of training guide dogs and came across IGDCB’s volunteering program. I immediately signed up.

How many puppies have you raised?
Three puppies in all. I started with Nuli, then Timmy, and now Menta.

Does anyone help you raise them?
No, but my parents support me and my work with the puppies.

Tell us about your experiences raising puppies.
Every puppy is different, each has its own struggles. The most memorable moments are when they overcome their obstacles—and I feel so proud of them. Most puppies are Labradors or Golden mixes.

Any differences raising a German Shepherd?
YES. Raising Menta is more intense, more challenging, and more demanding. However, I feel Menta is more intelligent and understands more. She understands situations with more emotional intelligence.

What does it feel like, after that first year, to give up a puppy you raised?
It’s very hard. I’m with them 24/7—and it feels like they are part of me. What helps me let go is to focus on the good times we had—and the future good “my” puppy will do for someone else.

Anything else you want to add?
Being a guide dog puppy raiser is very fulfilling. But the most important thing is to know you have a part in restoring someone’s freedom and independence.

Dorine R with Menta
REACHING NEW MILESTONES – THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS

Profile Linda Klein - Why we give...

We were taught about Tzedakah from an early age. When our brother passed away unexpectedly, we wanted to find a meaningful way to honor his memory. He loved dogs and our family has always been very devoted to Israel.

After some research we discovered the Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind. We are careful to learn about the charities we support, so we made a trip to Israel with the intended purpose of visiting the Center in Bet Oved. We heard good things, but nothing could have prepared us for what we saw.

The facilities were immaculate, and we were just so impressed with everything and everyone we met. We could see for ourselves that the dogs received excellent care, and we loved that they only use positive reinforcement to get desired behaviors.

As we were preparing to leave, the current class returned to the Center after a training run, and we were able to meet them and hear a little about their lives. I was immediately drawn to a young man who lost his vision as an IDF soldier — trying to destroy a terrorist tunnel under Gaza. His name is Achiya Klein — and although we share the same last name, we are not related. Achiya told me about how he feels walking with his new guide dog—Night—and I was hooked.

We have supported a number of Partnerships and hosted events in our home to introduce Israel Guide Dog Center to our friends and family. We are proud supporters – because we have seen the difference these amazing animals make to the lives of people in need. We encourage you to visit the center. It is important to support organizations that really do change lives – this is one of them!

Our accomplishments wouldn’t be possible without generous friends such as Linda—or our hundreds of volunteers who assist us in every facet of our program.

Each year, our 884 volunteers — of which 51% are women — provide tens of thousands of dollars worth of service hours in a wide range of roles critical to carrying out our mission — and in educational, social, and sports activities that enrich the lives of our clients and their communities. Our volunteers work in many areas and include 178 general volunteers, 116 puppy raisers, 165 dog sitters, 153 CanVelo participants, 54 Bar/Bat Mitzvah student fundraisers, plus 11 volunteer Israel Board Members and 16 U.S. Board members.

Of our 116 puppy raisers, 80% are university students attending eight different universities throughout Israel. Through them, our future guide dogs and service companions experience their first year of socialization and love.

Thanks to all our caring volunteers who give so much of their time and talents, we can maintain the highest standards in our programs and provide so many additional services to our clients.
**FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Report as of December 31, 2018

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<td><strong>INCOME - OVERSEAS</strong></td>
<td>In $ US</td>
<td>Budget (Shekels)</td>
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**INCOME FROM ISRAEL**

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**TOTAL ALL INCOME**

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<th>Description</th>
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<th>2017</th>
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<td><strong>OPERATING EXPENSES</strong></td>
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<td>Dog Training Expenses</td>
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<td>Maintenance</td>
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<td>Marketing and Fundraising</td>
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**FIXED ASSETS**

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<td><strong>TOTAL FIXED ASSETS</strong></td>
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**TOTAL ALL EXPENSES**

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<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<td><strong>SURPLUS/-DEFICIT</strong></td>
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This is our most recent internal Financial Report and Budget for 2018. The Pink column to the left is the 2019 Budget in US Dollars. The rest of the report uses the currency in Israel (NIS - New Israel Shekel). The fixed assets expenses are subject to a designated donation. The audited financial reports for 2018 will be ready in June 2019. Please remember that we provide all of our services at no cost to our blind clients.
Reaching new milestones – with help from our friends

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Gifts by Donor Type</th>
<th># Gifts</th>
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<td>Foundations</td>
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Donations by Country

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<td>Other Countries</td>
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<td>Israeli Donors</td>
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Age of current guide dog users:

- **6%** in their twenties (or younger)
- **23%** in their fifties
- **12%** in their thirties
- **27%** in their sixties
- **8%** in their seventies
- **19%** in their forties
- **5%** in their eighties

Current guide dog users:

- **38%** Female
- **62%** Male
“Colin and I share a new dance every day. We are a great team!”

Amit Bar-El

USA Headquarters:
Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind
968 Easton Rd - Suite H
Warrington, PA 18976-1875 USA
Phone: 215-343-9100
info@israelguidedog.org

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Beit Oved 7680000, ISRAEL
Phone: +972-8-940-8213
info@igdcb.org

www.israelguidedog.org