

# Paws with a Purpose

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Israel Guide  
Dog Center



---

**Israel Guide  
Dog Center**

מרכז ישראלי לכלבי נחיה

---

# OUR MISSION

The Israel Guide Dog Center is the only internationally accredited Guide Dog school in Israel—and the only such program in the entire Middle East.

Our mission is to improve the quality of life of Israelis in need by providing them with safe mobility, independence, and self-confidence through the faithful assistance of specially trained dogs that are trained for the unique conditions in Israel.

Since opening in 1991, we have changed the lives of nearly 1,400 people in need with Guide Dogs for the blind and visually impaired, Service Dogs for IDF Veterans with PTSD, and Emotional Support Dogs for children on the autism spectrum and families impacted by war.

**TOTAL DOGS PLACED TO DATE: 1,352**  
**ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS: 221**

## **IN 2024 WE PLACED 85 DOGS**

**27** Guide Dogs

**13** Service Dogs

**38** Emotional Support Dogs

**7** Breeder Dogs





## MESSAGE FROM THE ISRAEL DIRECTORS

The War that started on October 7, 2023 touched each one of us here in Israel personally and has also impacted the Center. We are grateful to our staff and volunteers for being so committed to ensuring we avoid disrupting the many activities that help us fulfill our mission.

During 2024, it became abundantly clear that the need for our specially trained dogs would continue to increase. We already know of:

- **IDF soldiers that have lost their sight and will eventually need Guide Dogs;**
- **families living in the border areas who need Emotional Support Dogs; and**
- **the dramatic increase in the number of post-trauma victims who will seek PTSD Service Dogs.**

In order to respond to the increased need, it was important to actively plan for the future, while continuing to provide our important work to Israelis in need right now. We started by focusing on the Center's infrastructure. We revised our by-laws to better align with our work, expanded our vision

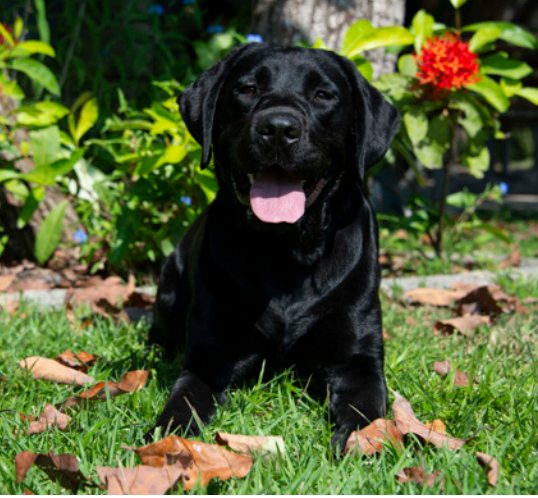
statement to represent our values and goals for the future, modernized our veterinary clinic, took proactive steps to expand our trainer team, and developed a comprehensive five-year plan that will guide our work as we increase the number of partnerships between dogs and Israelis in need.

We believe that we will succeed as an organization, as a society, and as individuals with the consequences of the war, growing stronger in the days that follow.

We thank you for helping us stay the course, and we pray for the return of all the hostages and for days of peace and normalcy.

**Noach Braun**  
Co-CEO & Founder

**Carmel Reiss**  
Co-CEO



## MESSAGE FROM THE U.S. DIRECTOR

I have been at the helm of the Israel Guide Dog Center in the US for two years, and I continue to be inspired every day!



In 2024, I saw firsthand how our friends, donors, clients, staff, and dogs are a worldwide family!

- **Our clients are not just names— we know each of their stories of loss, hope, ambition, and transformation.**
- **Our dogs make us proud, regardless of their career path, as they are each changing lives every day.**
- **Our worldwide staff are a collaborative team in true partnership.**
- **Our friends always provide encouragement in the form of phone calls, emails, and letters of support.**
- **Our donors' steadfast financial support is a testament to their belief in our mission and trust in our work.**

It's this sense of family that makes the Israel Guide Dog Center different, it's what makes our organization special, and it's what makes your support extra meaningful.

And our family stands by the fact that together we are changing lives one paw at a time. When our world seems harsh, watching the partnerships between our clients and dogs and seeing our puppies in blue vests throughout Israel is inspiring.

Just as our dogs and their partnerships are inspiring, your generosity gives me hope that better times are coming.

Thank you for being more than just friends and donors; thank you for being our Israel Guide Dog Center family!

**Gail Androphy**

US Executive Director

# GUIDE DOGS

Hagar Shnell, Director

For more than three decades, the partnerships we've created with Guide Dogs have improved each client's quality of life by providing safe mobility, independence, and self-confidence.



Our goal is to train more dogs for people in need, but this goal is hampered when we don't have enough experienced professionals to provide training for our dogs. Certifying a new Guide Dog Trainer is costly and slow; the one-on-one training takes 18 months to

complete plus another 18 months for certification as a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor who works with a person with blindness on how to work with a guide dog.

Inspired by our colleagues at Guide Dogs UK and using the standards set by the International Guide Dog Federation in January 2024, we inaugurated "The Academy" program to hire and educate more Guide Dog trainers. After the new recruits' initial months of theoretical instruction, they began hands-on training, each with 3 potential Guide Dogs in real-life situations under the close supervision of senior trainers. Once their training is completed and the recruits pass the rigorous certification process, they will each be responsible for preparing 10-12 Guide Dogs per year. This helps the Center provide more Guide Dogs and shorten our waiting list.

***"To increase the number of specially trained dogs, it is critical to increase the number of trainers."***

## PROFILE



**Dany Layani's journey is nothing short of extraordinary.** At 20, while serving in the IDF during the first Lebanon War, a bomb explosion next to him left him blind. Yet, even in the face of this life-altering challenge, Dany's spirit remained unshaken.

Over the years, Dany achieved incredible milestones—earning two degrees, advising Israel's Prime Minister, and working with the Organization for Disabled Veterans. Through it all, he relied on the unwavering companionship of five different Guide Dogs. But the most transformative moment came when, after 25 years of blindness, Dany experienced a miracle: he regained his sight and saw his wife and four children for the first time. Unfortunately, his vision began to fade once more, but Dany chose to remain positive. "I decided not to let it make me bitter," he said.

Today, Dany's Guide Dog, Rolly, is by his side every step of the way. Calm, gentle, and loved by all, Rolly accompanies Dany to work and even travels with him abroad. Most recently they traveled to the UK to promote the work of the Israel Guide Dog Center.

Together, they are a perfect team, embodying the strength, resilience, and optimism that have defined Dany's remarkable life.

# PTSD SERVICE DOGS

Yariv Melamed, Director

The recent War has led to a significant increase in the number of IDF veterans diagnosed with PTSD—an invisible yet profound disability. It has also highlighted the urgency of providing meaningful tools to them.

**The Center has more than 30 years of experience partnering specialized dogs with visually impaired people. In 2017 the Center started providing Service Dogs to IDF Veterans with service-related PTSD. We take great pride in our effective and unique program:**

- **Our Goal:** Our Service Dogs help veterans in all facets of life including reducing anxiety and panic attacks; creating a sense of security; interrupting negative behavior patterns; improving social interactions, promoting routine and responsibility; and providing physical assistance and emotional support.
- **Our Dogs:** We know the pedigree, health, temperament, and outstanding qualities of all our Service Dogs. We go to great lengths to make sure that our clients and dogs are perfectly matched.
- **Our Training:** Our intense 5-month program emphasizes communication between the dog and handler, while reinforcing the dog's responses to signs of PTSD. Once the dog is trained and matched with a client, the new partners practice working together as the dog learns to recognize its partner's signs of distress and effective ways to support them.
- **Ongoing Support:** Each partnership receives continuous guidance and support. These follow-ups include supplemental training and professional psychological support in individual and group settings.

***Israel's Ministry of Defense currently recognizes 7,000 IDF veterans as suffering from PTSD. This number is expected to increase by more than 185% to 20,000 in 4 years' time. The actual number is probably much higher.***



## PROFILE

Yigal, a quiet man in his late 30s, served in an elite Special Operations unit in the Israeli Police. After returning home to his family in Rishon LeZion, Yigal's PTSD symptoms started. He was not aware of the warning signs of an oncoming panic attack, so Yigal became afraid to leave the house and couldn't work; and he was afraid to sleep because of the intensity of his nightmares.

The Center partnered Yigal with Zappa, a male yellow Labrador. Yigal, nor his family, has never had a dog, so the education had to start with how to care for and interact with Zappa. According to the Center's trainers, "Zappa was a natural, he has an intense desire to please and is extremely responsive to Yigal's cues."

Yigal now sleeps better and has more confidence because he knows that Zappa's nudging and grounding skills will help him cope and bring him back to reality.

# EMOTIONAL SUPPORT DOGS

Ami Toren, Director

As more families struggle with trauma, displacement, and uncertainty caused by the war, the demand for our Emotional Support Dogs continues to grow.



As a result, we have expanded our program to provide Emotional Support Dogs to survivors, evacuees, and individuals suffering from war-related trauma in addition to the previously served children with autism and special needs.

While Emotional Support Dogs do not have the legal protections afforded to Guide Dogs or Service Dogs for public access, their presence at home provides invaluable emotional and psychological benefits. Emotional Support Dogs bring a profound sense of safety and stability. Beyond their physical presence, they play a vital role in emotional and sensory regulation, helping their families manage anxiety and stress.

These dogs are more than just pets—they are loyal companions who help restore peace in times of turmoil.

***In 2024, we provided 38 Emotional Support Dogs to children and families in need.***



## PROFILE

Avi, a father of six, lives in Sderot in Israel's south and is an IDF commander. He and his family suffered many losses because of the October attacks—their friends and colleagues were taken hostage and others were killed. Each family member has experienced emotional challenges from the immense trauma each one saw.

One of Avi's children, Daniel, who is on the autism spectrum, withdrew completely and stopped speaking outside the home.

On the recommendation of their psychiatrist, the family received one of our Emotional Support Dogs, named Henry. The impact was profound. The child formed a deep bond with the dog and again found his voice. The dog didn't take away the trauma but has become a source of healing and hope for the entire family.



# BREEDING & KENNELS

Orna Braun, Director

Caring for our dogs and making sure they are healthy is not just important, it is critical to our work. We are extremely proud of the care we provide our dogs at every point of their lives at our on-campus clinic.

## Rebuilding the Veterinary Clinic



Our original two-room veterinary clinic, built in 1993, had become too small and overcrowded to meet the medical needs of more than 400 puppies and dogs each year. In 2024, the facility underwent a \$600,000 complete renovation with a

redesigned layout and expanded space to support our growing breeding program—especially the use of frozen sperm to enhance genetic diversity.

To maintain operations until the renovations are complete in April 2025, the veterinary team has temporarily moved to a mobile clinic adjacent to the facility, transferring all essential equipment.

We are grateful to our generous friends around the world for donating to this important effort! The new clinic’s entrance area is extra special because it will

be dedicated in memory of Martin Segal z”l, Executive Director of the UK Friends of the Israel Guide Dog Center. His passing in early 2024 was a tremendous loss to our community, and this tribute recognizes his unwavering dedication to our mission.

## Genetics

Ensuring strong genetic characteristics in the puppies born is a top priority for Guide Dog schools worldwide. It is critical to diversify our genetic pool to maintain the quality and reliability of our life-changing dogs. We do this by keeping a group of male and female breeding dogs (Labrador and Golden Retrievers) who are used exclusively to create the next generation of working dogs.

### Our current breeding program, where the average litter size is 7, includes:

- 11 male studs in breeding colony
- 25 breeding females
- 117 puppies born at the Center
- 3 dogs brought to Israel from abroad



# PUPPY RAISING DEPARTMENT

Eli Ben Boher, Director



The first year of a puppy's life is critical in shaping its future as a Guide Dog, PTSD Service Dog, or Emotional Support Dog. Any disruption in training can impact a puppy's ability to succeed in one of these roles. Therefore, ensuring consistent, high-quality training and exposure to diverse environments is essential.

Volunteer puppy raisers receive their puppies at just 8 weeks old and care for them until they are approximately 14 months of age. Under the guidance of our professional puppy managers, they teach basic obedience, good manners, and provide critical socialization experiences.

***In 2024, approximately 170 puppies were placed with 320 volunteer puppy raisers across Israel.***



## Our puppy raiser, Roei in his own words!

This is my farewell letter about my experience with the puppy Cheetah because today Cheetah is returning to the Israel Guide Dog Center.

It all started in the middle of my freshman year when I decided to raise a Guide Dog puppy. Something deep within me knew it was important for me to do. Four months later I had a sweet puppy in my hands.

Her sweet face didn't prepare me to be alone with her cries and responsible for her needs 24/7. Yet I found the strength to parent her every single day. And as time went on Cheetah began to mature into the sweetest creature—and our bond became stronger every day.

This process has given me so much more than hundreds of pictures could. It has given me insight into life, and I've turned out to be a much better and complete person.

My wish is for Cheetah to fulfill her calling and to be the perfect champion Guide or Service Dog that she was meant to be and to make a difference in someone's life—just like she did for me.

Thank you Cheetah, -Roei



# COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Erez Barkai, Director

Our Community Relations Department was launched two years ago to focus on expanding our government relations, business partnerships, nonprofit collaborations, and client support services.

Since then, we've seen a meaningful impact on the lives of our clients.

Being denied access when you have a Guide Dog is challenging for our clients. Unfortunately, it happens more often than it should in a country that guarantees the public access rights of all Guide and Service Dogs. Luckily, our Community Relations Department is experienced with helping our clients maneuver these tricky situations.

A year and a half ago, a young blind man, Einav, entered a restaurant in central Israel with his newly trained Guide Dog. After months of training with his new partner, he'd finally gained the independence he craved. But when the security guard at the entrance saw Einav's Guide Dog, he refused to let them in, not understanding what a guide dog was.

Einav was understandably furious and also humiliated. He was ready to go straight to social media and call out

the restaurant. Instead, Einav called the Israel Guide Dog Center first. We asked him to hold off posting until we could try to rectify the situation.

After reaching out to the CEO, two weeks later, I was able to meet with the board of directors. While the actual mistake was made by the security guard, the larger issue was the restaurant's failure to train its staff about basic access rights for people with disabilities.

The outcome was surprising. The company took responsibility, started to support the Center financially, and helped us form new relationships. Though it was a frustrating reminder of the challenges blind people face and the incredible amount of work we must do, it led to something positive.

## STAFF HIGHLIGHT

# Lindsay Davidman

The work of the Israel Guide Dog Center has been rapidly expanding, and we are excited to welcome and introduce our new US Director of Development, Lindsay Davidman.

Most recently serving as the Director of Women's Philanthropy at the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, Lindsay has over 15 years of professional and volunteer experience. She is a proud Georgia Bulldog and alumna of Sigma Delta Tau sorority. She also earned a Masters in Nonprofit Management from The New School in New York City.

***"I've always loved dogs. My parents had a dog before I was even born, and my house has consistently had an additional four (or eight, or twelve) paws ever since. I'm most proud of coming up with some creative pet names, including Frisco - as in the Frisco kid - a dog from my childhood, and Harley Davidman, my dog now.***

***I worked with Bar and Bat Mitzvah students at the start of my career. Many of them chose to do their projects with the Israel Guide Dog Center, so I always remembered the name and the great mission. I am thrilled to be part of the family all these years later!"***

Lindsay grew up in North Potomac, Maryland, and has family in South Florida, the North Shore of Chicago, and all over the East Coast. She lives with her husband, twin boys, and their dog in the Philadelphia suburbs, and she



enjoys traveling all over the world (especially to Israel), reading, restaurants, musicals, standup comedy, and spending time outside.

Lindsay will be working with the team in the US and Israel to make sure you— our generous supporters— know how appreciated you are and understand the impact you make with your giving.

# CROWD FUNDRAISING

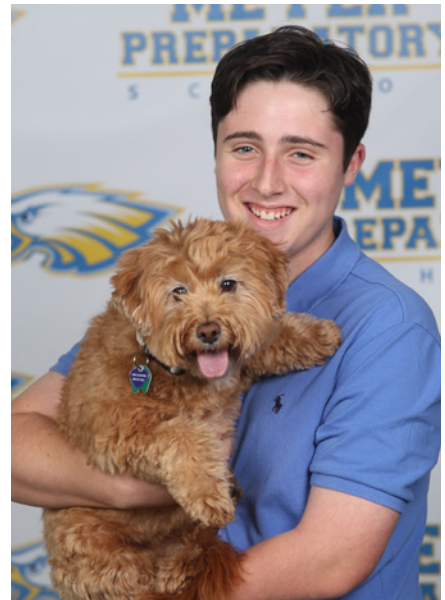
## Ari Darrow's Mitzvah Project

I connected with the Israel Guide Dog Center when I wanted to do a community service project required by my school that would benefit people affected by October 7th. I have always loved dogs and felt that this was the perfect organization with which to do my project.

To create exposure for my project, I sent out emails and texts, and my Mom posted to Facebook to create awareness and raise money for Israel Guide Dog Center to help people affected by the tragic events of October 7th.

The setup of the Guide Dog website made raising money and collecting from donors easy.

For kids who are now thinking about using the Israel Guide Dog organization for their project, I strongly encourage them to do so. There is no better organization to work with in order to raise money and help people in need. Such a project is something that can make a difference by really helping people who experienced these hard times and make a difference for those in need.



## Caleb's Bark Mitzvah

Rachel & Morry Safer, Brookline, MA, USA

On September 2, 2024, we hosted a Bark Mitzvah for our 13-year-old dog, Caleb. A year earlier, an indoor dog park near our home in Metro Boston had advertised that they were available to rent for events, including Bark Mitzvahs.



As our guest list of people and dogs grew, we knew Caleb would need only so many Bark Mitzvah cookies and stuffed fountain pens. We have long supported local animal rights organizations but, in the wake of October 7th, a tzedakah project that raised awareness of and money for an Israeli organization seemed important. We had been following IGDC's Facebook posts for several years, so we reached out.

IGDC staff enthusiastically created a dedicated fundraising page for us and sent promotional materials we could display and distribute.

Our friends and family, along with the dog park staff, also embraced our vision. Morry's parents flew in from Florida; a friend dusted off her poodle skirt; an artist friend designed a Bark Mitzvah certificate; a rabbi friend agreed to officiate; Rachel's sister borrowed a Torah from her day school; and a few friends agreed to read Torah at what might be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It was silly and fun and, after a challenging year, we were so glad to celebrate among our family and friends – both two-legged and four-legged. Ultimately, we also feel proud to have raised funds for the Center in Caleb's honor!



## LEGACY PROFILE

Mendy was born into a religiously observant family where his parents demonstrated the ideals of charity, kindness, and a deep love for Israel daily. He embodied these values as an adult and strove to instill them in his own children.

Despite living with strabismus and limited vision in one eye, Mendy never let this define him. He became an avid cyclist. His best days were spent on a bicycle in national parks, cycling upwards of 50 miles on hilly roads. He often said he couldn't imagine life without sight and had tremendous empathy for people with limited vision.

After Mendy passed away suddenly, his family found a brochure for the Israel Guide Dog Center on his table. They immediately knew it was an organization that fulfilled three of his passions—Israel, blindness, and dogs. Mendy's family asked his friends and loved ones to donate to the Center in his memory. And they fulfilled his wish to leave a bequest to the Center from his will.

Mendy's family understood the importance of supporting the Israel Guide Dog Center—to keep his memory and the values he held so dearly alive for his children and family.



If you are interested in learning more about how you can continue to transform lives in the future and leave a lasting legacy at the Israel Guide Dog Center, please contact Gail Androphy at [gail@israelguidedog.org](mailto:gail@israelguidedog.org) or visit [israelguidedog.org/create-your-legacy](https://israelguidedog.org/create-your-legacy)

# FINANCIAL REPORTS:

This is our most recent internal Financial Report and Budget for 2024.

	2025 Budget	2024 Actual	2023 Actual
<b>INCOME - OVERSEAS</b>			
Transfers from US Friends	\$2,277,777	\$2,197,183	\$2,070,064
Direct Donations from US Donors	\$250,000	\$211,268	\$222,930
Transfers from British Friends	\$305,555	\$281,690	\$250,000
Direct Donations from British Donors	\$19,444	\$19,718	\$22,293
Transfers from Canadian Friends	\$379,167	\$366,197	\$382,166
Direct Donations from Canadian Donors	\$2,778	\$2,817	\$3,185
Donations from - Other Countries	\$83,333	\$84,507	\$76,433
<b>TOTAL INCOME - OVERSEAS</b>	<b>\$3,318,054</b>	<b>\$3,163,380</b>	<b>\$3,027,070</b>
<b>INCOME FROM ISRAEL</b>			
Donations from Israel	\$763,333	\$505,634	\$1,241,401
Donations Israel - Ministries & PTSD	\$764,028	\$546,056	\$544,586
CanVelo Donations	\$63,611	\$63,380	\$52,229
CanVelo Income	\$83,000	\$140,845	\$101,592
In-Kind Donations	\$212,917	\$215,915	\$248,885
<b>TOTAL INCOME - ISRAEL</b>	<b>\$1,886,889</b>	<b>\$1,471,830</b>	<b>\$2,188,694</b>
<b>TOTAL ALL INCOME</b>	<b>\$5,204,943</b>	<b>\$4,635,210</b>	<b>\$5,215,764</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>			
Dog Training Expenses	\$1,611,869	\$1,615,395	\$1,553,289
Kennel Expenses	\$845,966	\$748,463	\$787,189
Puppy Raising Expenses	\$493,610	\$371,039	\$342,366
Maintenance	\$390,903	\$395,523	\$408,656
Marketing and Fundraising	\$724,261	\$589,258	\$630,861
Administrative Expenses	\$586,468	\$594,814	\$595,607
CanVelo Expenses	\$86,667	\$207,042	\$157,006
Financing Expenses	\$16,389	\$16,056	\$17,834
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$4,756,133</b>	<b>\$4,537,590</b>	<b>\$4,492,808</b>
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Fixed Assets - New Building Construction	\$871,666	\$753,239	\$399,045
Depreciation	\$337,580	\$261,972	\$318,471
<b>TOTAL FIXED ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,209,246</b>	<b>\$1,015,211</b>	<b>\$717,516</b>
<b>TOTAL ALL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$5,965,379</b>	<b>\$5,552,801</b>	<b>\$5,210,324</b>
<b>SURPLUS/- DEFICIT</b>	<b>(\$760,438)</b>	<b>(\$917,591)</b>	<b>\$5,441</b>

This is an internal projected budget

The fixed assets expenses are subject to a designated donation

**Please remember that we provide all of our services at no cost to our blind clients.**

# PUPPY POWER!

## Name A Puppy That Will One Day Change The World

What you see here are no ordinary cute puppies. With or without the capes, our puppies will soon be superheroes providing confidence and independence to Israelis in need.



But our superheroes can't do it alone. They need to team up with people like you to help them reach their fullest potential.

When you name an Israel Guide Dog Center puppy, you are part of a heroic effort to change people's lives and make the world a better place. The adventure begins when you choose a name for our special hero, and then you will be able to follow the puppy's adventures from birth until it is placed with an Israeli in need.

Your \$5,000 sponsorship helps us care for our priceless puppies. It helps us to operate our Puppy Development and Training Campus and support our puppies' journeys from puppy to world-class Guide Dogs, PTSD Service Dogs, Emotional Support Dogs, or Ambassador Dogs.

Every one of our puppies is a superhero making an impact for good. And someday, they'll reach their true potential because people like you care enough to make a difference.

If you are interested in being a hero to one of our superheroes, please contact Gail Androphy at [gail@israelguidedog.org](mailto:gail@israelguidedog.org) or call 215-343-9100.



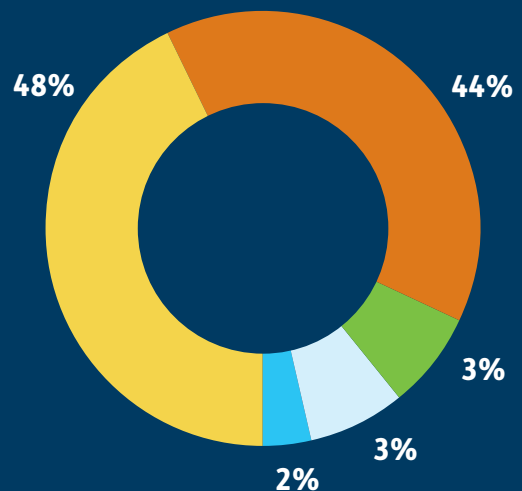
Scan the QR code with your smartphone or visit:

<https://www.israelguidedog.org/name-a-puppy/>

to name a puppy and become part of a heroic effort to change people's lives.

## 2024 DONATIONS

- Individuals **44%**
- Foundations **48%**
- Schools/Synagogues/Community Organizations **2%**
- Mitzvah Campaigns **3%**
- Bequests **3%**



## ACCREDITATIONS





---

## Israel Guide Dog Center

מרכז ישראלי לכלבי נחיה

---

### US OFFICE

Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind  
968 Easton Rd., Suite H  
Warrington, PA 18976  
Phone: 215-343-9100  
info@israelguidedog.org  
[www.israelguidedog.org](http://www.israelguidedog.org)

### ISRAEL HEADQUARTERS

Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind  
Ha'Sadot 6  
Beit Oved, Israel 7680000  
Phone: 972-8-940-8213  
info@igdcb.org

Photo credits: Special thanks to Eli Ben Boher, Rina Arbel, staff, and volunteers