



Paws with a Purpose

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



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 in the entire Middle East, and serves as the country's leading program for training and partnering Guide Dogs for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

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 acclimated to the unique conditions in Israel.

Since opening in 1991, we have transformed the lives of more than 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: 1,436

ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS: 279

IN 2025, WE PLACED 99 DOGS

33 Guide Dogs

18 Service Dogs (16 PTSD Service Dogs and 2 Autism Service Dogs)

35 Emotional Support Dogs

13 Breeder Dogs





MESSAGE FROM THE ISRAEL DIRECTORS

2025 was a uniquely complex year, beginning with the heavy shadow of war in Gaza and ending with a profound sense of renewal as the hostages were returned.

Even when the path was difficult and filled with challenges, we never stopped raising our puppies, training them, and providing the life-changing dogs that our clients depend on.

We want to say thank you *-toda raba-* for your commitment, compassion, and genuine care for our 2-legged and 4-legged friends. Because of you, every partnership we created has had a profound impact on their lives and the lives of their families and communities.

Together, as partners in this remarkable organization, we will continue to build a more tolerant Israel where independence and dignity are accessible to all.

Despite the war that is currently upon us, we look forward to better days and another year of meaningful work and true partnership.

With deepest respect and appreciation,

Noach Braun
Co-CEO & Founder

Carmel Reiss
Co-CEO



MESSAGE FROM THE U.S. DIRECTOR

“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” -Maya Angelou



In the last 3 years, I have had the privilege of traveling across the United States meeting donors, sharing our mission, and expressing my gratitude to those who make this work possible.

What stays with me is not the long hours of travel or countless cups of coffee. It's the moments that linger long after the room empties:

- tears that quietly fall when our clients share how their lives have been transformed
- “oohs” and smiles that ripple through the room as our puppies tumble and play on screen
- excitement from a mitzvah student who has reached their fundraising goal
- voices of care and concern on the other end of the phone, asking about our dogs, clients, and team in Israel during times of war

I hope you also feel a deep sense of pride in being part of this work. Because of you, we are transforming Israeli lives by restoring independence and providing confidence, dignity, and hope—often during life's most challenging moments. The impact is powerful and emotional. And it is deeply felt by everyone it touches.

As you read this report, I hope you not only see the work we've done—I hope you feel the lives we've touched... because that's the true measure of our impact!

Hoping for better days,

Gail Androphy

US Executive Director

GUIDE DOGS

Hagar Shnell, Director

We form Guide Dog partnerships to create individualized solutions for each client's needs and each dog's strengths.

In 2025 we developed creative ways to address our staffing shortage and enhance our operations:

International Training

We sent three of our Guide Dogs in training to our sister school in Prague. Their trainers worked hand-in-hand with our Israeli trainers, using Hebrew commands. After a few months, the dogs returned to the Center, received short supplemental training, and have now been successfully partnered with clients.

Staff Development

We sponsored 3 trainers to become fully certified Guide Dog Mobility Instructors (GDMIs), which allows them to work directly with clients who have visual impairments.

Infrastructure Improvements

We upgraded our vans to be outfitted with air-conditioning to increase the comfort of our dogs during the intense summer heat, and our trainers moved into a new dedicated space on-campus for our growing team.



33 Guide Dog partnerships created in 2025

854 Guide Dog partnerships since founding



PROFILE

Avraham, a married father, grandfather, and great-grandfather lives in Bat Yam. Twenty-five years ago, he was diagnosed with Optic Atrophy and, due to his deteriorating sight, had to stop working as a contractor for Israel's electric company. Avraham finds great joy in taking long walks on the beach and playing music—singing and playing the accordion for groups all over Israel.

Since being partnered with Bogey, a male Yellow Lab, Avraham notices that there are fewer obstacles in his way. He says, "Now, I walk safely and proudly, something I never felt when I was using a cane. Bogey is amazing! He's a great match. I love to walk and Bogey loves to play and swim at the beach. And, he's a bit of a rascal, which actually suits my personality well."

PTSD SERVICE DOGS

Yariv Melamed, Director

Since the outbreak of the war with Gaza, PTSD has surged in Israel.

To increase the number of PTSD Service Dog partnerships, in 2025 we prioritized:

Candidate Screening

We receive more than 100 inquiries each year about securing a PTSD Service Dog. After the initial assessment, we conduct comprehensive in-home interviews to explain our work, review the requirements for having a Service Dog, and perform a demonstration with a dog in training.

Strong Partnerships

When a Service Dog is ready to be partnered, we review our waitlist to find a good match. The new partners then participate in eight full-day sessions at our Center, supplemented by two home visits to ensure seamless integration into each candidate's life.

We also provide follow-up visits and calls to new partners, as well as ongoing support for all 58 current PTSD partnerships.

International Re-certification

In 2025, we were successfully evaluated and recertified by Assistance Dogs International (ADI).

16 PTSD Service Dogs placed in 2025

58 total PTSD Service Dog Partnerships

Israel's Ministry of Defense estimates that currently there are 20,000 IDF veterans with PTSD and by 2029, that number will increase to more than 50,000



Service Dogs are professionally trained to perform specific tasks that mitigate a person's disability. At the Center, we train PTSD Service Dogs according to the highest international standards. Under the Israeli law, these dogs are granted full public access rights and are permitted in all public spaces including restaurants, shops, hospitals, and other facilities.

PROFILE

Yotam, a retired IDF soldier, experienced severe anxiety during last year's missile attacks from Iran. In the past, these moments would drive him to isolate himself in his room, even during alarms. This time, his Service Dog, Linda, was there. With Linda beside him, he went into the shelter with his family. The physical contact helped him regulate his anxiety and breathe again. That moment became a turning point. Gradually, he began sitting in the living room more often. After a long period of withdrawal, he was once again spending time with his family. It was a small change in behavior, but a profound one in reality.



EMOTIONAL SUPPORT DOGS

Ami Toren, Director

As war continues to impact families, the demand for our Emotional Support Dogs continues to rise.

To address this need, in 2025 we prioritized:

Training

We formed a “Special Needs Patrol” to ensure all Emotional Support Dogs have completed basic training before placement. This team of three expert volunteer trainers provide behavioral evaluation and training for dogs awaiting placement.

Enhanced Assessment

Our dogs participate in an extensive assessment process. To reduce kennel stays, we launched the “Behavioral Assessment and Response Test (BART) Same Day Model,” allowing dogs to be assessed and returned home with their puppy raisers within a single day. They return at a later date to complete other assessments.

Autism Service Dogs

We completed a two-year pilot program, training Service Dogs for children on the autism spectrum. In total, four teams were partnered.

Expanded Relationships

We have built a relationship with Israel’s National Insurance Institute to support a two-year initiative that will provide 25 dogs to families coping with disabilities and emotional trauma.

In 2025, 35 Emotional Support Dogs placed and 2 Autism Service Dogs placed

515 placed since 1991



Emotional Support Dogs provide therapeutic comfort through their mere presence and companionship rather than through trained tasks. They do not require specialized training and in Israel have no legal standing. These dogs are generally restricted from public spaces where pets are prohibited.



PROFILE

A NOTE FROM LEVI’S MOTHER, ORIT

“Every morning, Wendy helps me wake my son, Levi. She licks him until he wakes up, then accompanies him as he gets dressed and brushes his teeth. She knows when he’s upset and comes to him, and he senses her presence. He knows to go cuddle with her when he needs to. Socially, she’s amazing—she brings friends closer to him because she’s always at the center of every room, wherever she goes (how could she not be?).

Now, when sirens go off, Levi runs to make sure Wendy comes with us to the safe room. There, she helps keep him calm and it’s amazing to see their connection. Wendy is part of the family, and the world wouldn’t be the same without her.”



BREEDING & KENNELS

Orna Braun, Director

It's hard to resist cute pictures of puppies! But there is so much more to creating each adorable puppy and helping them thrive so that they can each change someone's life.

Veterinary Health & Breeding Center

In April, we dedicated our multi-functional Veterinary Health and Breeding Center. The new facility has updated surgery & examination rooms, as well as laboratories equipped with cutting-edge technology.



Improving Health Evaluations

Because our dogs' health is critical, we've refined our ongoing health monitoring efforts to proactively identify and manage emerging medical issues. We also hired a Veterinary Technician, Ganit Feldman, who provides clinical and specialized care to our dogs.

Genetics

In 2025, we started working with an Israeli veterinary and genetic testing company to provide DNA-based health and identification services. Every dog selected as a breeder undergoes rigorous DNA panel testing that analyzes multiple genes associated with 15 health conditions.

Breeding

The stress of war clearly impacted our 4-legged friends, resulting in a lower-than-expected conception rate. Luckily, the conception rate improved in November and December 2025, giving us many more litters than originally planned in January 2026.

OUR BREEDING PROGRAM HAS:



- 14 males
- 32 females
- 109 puppies born in 2025
- 4 new breeding dogs introduced from overseas

Every year we provide health services for more than 400 dogs and puppies

PUPPY RAISING DEPARTMENT

Eli Ben Boher, Director

Puppy raisers are the Israeli volunteers who selflessly commit to raising and socializing puppies for their first year of life.



In 2025 we focused on:

Retention

We sought to retain experienced puppy raisers to raise another puppy. Seasoned raisers possess the deep practical knowledge and consistency needed to socialize puppies effectively.

Recruitment

Improved screening and selection of puppy raisers to reduce the number of puppy raisers that relinquish their puppies after realizing the demands required. In 2025, only two puppies were returned during their first month of placement.

Support

We updated training content to enhance our materials and resources, focused on using experienced puppy raisers as mentors, and implemented a daily messaging system for new families.

160 puppies were raised



398 Israelis volunteered as puppy raisers



“Raising a puppy as a foster family is an extraordinary experience - exciting, challenging, and meaningful.

From the first moment Yoyo entered our home, she became an integral part of the family. We learned that every small action we take can affect her future as a Guide Dog and change the life of a person with blindness.

We learned about tolerance and sensitivity, as well as the importance of giving to others without expecting anything in return.

It’s an experience that demands a lot from us, but gives us much more.”

-Eitan Family



COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Erez Barkai, Director

Our commitment remains clear: to help build a reality where independence, accessibility, and dignity are part of everyday life. In 2025, the Center advanced this goal by helping shape public policy, advocating for expanded access, and contributing to professional knowledge-sharing efforts.

Regulatory Leadership and Public Policy

We strengthened our role as a professional voice for Guide and Service Dogs in Israel, representing training centers in discussion with government authorities and participating in Ministry of Justice forums on legislative change. We also built relationships with policy makers, helping keep disability and social issues on the agenda.

Global Influence

Our reach expanded internationally through participation in the Assistance Dog International (ADI) and International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) committees, deepening collaboration between Israeli and global partners.

Expanding Israeli Rights

We continue to support individuals exercising their rights, assisting with cases of access refusal, and helping travelers navigate Israel's regulatory environment with

greater confidence. We also provide accessibility and awareness training across sectors, including airlines, public transportation, and businesses.

Innovation and Support

The Center introduced AI-based tools to support independence and daily life, along with new educational content focused on safety and strengthening client-dog bonds. During periods of national tension, including the war with Iran in June 2025, we advanced the "Purple Home Front Initiative," offering workshops and practical resources to help graduates maintain independence.

Knowledge Sharing

We convened Israel's Service Dog Training centers for a first-of-its-kind seminar to build shared professional standards, while continuing to use graduates' experiences to raise awareness and drive social change.

Together, these efforts strengthened our impact and helped advance accessibility and inclusion across Israel.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Felicia Katz

Thanks to a generous grant, the Center expanded its outreach and fundraising efforts by welcoming Felicia Katz as our U.S. Southeast Regional Director.

Felicia is a seasoned nonprofit professional with more than 15 years of experience in fundraising, donor engagement, and strategic partnerships. Originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Pittsburgh. She has held senior development positions with organizations including ORT America and the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia.

Felicia resides in Jupiter, Florida, with her son, Ethan, and their pup, Lulu.

“As a parent of a child with special needs, the Center’s mission deeply resonates. I understand firsthand how important it is to have the right support systems in place—not only for individuals, but for families as well.

I grew up deeply rooted in Jewish communal life in Squirrel Hill, where my world revolved around the Jewish Community Center and camp, shaping my identity, sense of belonging, and responsibility to community. That early foundation continues today in meaningful commitment to Israel. I feel a strong responsibility to support Israel and to help strengthen the global Jewish community.”



Felicia hit the ground running visiting the Center in Israel, spending time with our clients, and getting to know our longtime supporters, meeting new friends, and building partnerships with synagogues, schools, and other community organizations.

“I am truly honored to have received such a warm welcome and the opportunity to connect with so many committed supporters and new friends.”

CROWD FUNDRAISING

Harper Rosnick's Mitzvah Project

Harper chose to raise funds for the Israel Guide Dog Center for her Bat Mitzvah project in March 2025. She created a local "Walk for Israel."

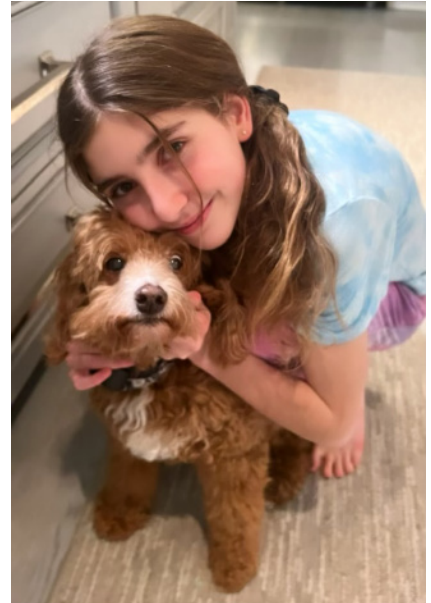
Each participant committed money for every half mile they walked. Because of Harper's incredible effort, she raised more than \$5,000 and was able to name a puppy in Israel. She chose the name Cali, short for Kalila, which means "beloved."

How did you first connect with the Israel Guide Dog Center & why did you choose to do your Mitzvah project with us?

My Dad regularly travels to Israel and is particularly interested in helping wounded soldiers. He asked his friends which dog training organization best supports soldiers in need, and he was directed to the Israel Dog Guide Center.

What are you hoping for now that you completed your project and Cali has been born?

I feel good knowing that I am helping someone dealing with PTSD. I hope to meet Cali when I come to Israel with my family.



PUPPY POWER!

Name A Puppy That Will One Day Change The World

What you see here are no ordinary cute puppies—they are superheroes in the making, ready to bring confidence and independence to Israelis in need.

But even superheroes need a partner. With your help they will be able to reach their full potential.

When you name a puppy at the Israel Guide Dog Center, you become part of that heroic journey. You'll choose your hero's name and follow the puppy's adventures from birth until it is partnered—changing a life forever.

Your \$5,000 sponsorship helps support their transformation, providing the care, training, and support they need to become a Guide Dog, PTSD Service Dog, or Emotional Support Dog.

Every hero's story begins somewhere. This one begins with you!

If you are interested in naming one of our superhero puppies, please contact Gail Androphy at 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.

LEGACY PROFILE

Edwin and Madrene Bruno

Edwin and Madrene Bruno began their journey together in 2020 and from the very beginning, giving back was part of their love story.



As they looked for a charitable cause that reflected their shared values, they discovered the Israel Guide Dog Center. The Center's mission was close to their hearts, connecting their love of dogs, Israel, and helping those in need, and they were impressed with its 5-star rating from Charity Navigator.

The Brunos became dedicated annual donors, and their commitment grew when they donated to name a puppy Eddie and then another, Bruno. They followed their journeys from young, playful puppies, to dogs in training, to life-changing partners.

Recently, they committed to leaving a gift to the Center in their will. For Edwin and Madrene, legacy giving is "not only about what is left behind, but about what is carried forward."

They know that their gift will help the Center continue its important work. And they hope that by sharing their story, they can inspire other people to support the Center's work now and in the future.

IN MEMORIAM

Benzi Elkon ז"ל

Our entire Israel Guide Dog Center family mourns the loss of our dear friend, client, and passionate advocate, Benzi Elkon.



More than 30 years after serving in an elite IDF Special Forces unit, Benzi began experiencing the devastating effects of PTSD. In 2022, the Center partnered him with Lugo, a black Labrador Retriever. Lugo was Benzi's steady presence in moments of distress, a source of comfort during flashbacks, and a loyal companion.

With Lugo by his side, Benzi poured his heart into the people he loved—his beloved wife, Irit, his children, and the community around him.

While Lugo offered unwavering support, some wounds run deeper than what even the greatest support can help. After a long and courageous effort to carry his immense pain, he passed away in 2025.

Benzi was a powerful voice for IDF veterans living with PTSD, helping to shine a light on a condition that is so often unseen. From leading an awareness-building bike ride across Israel to traveling internationally to share his story, Benzi inspired countless people with his courage, honesty, and compassion.

We remember Benzi for his strength, his advocacy, and the lives he touched so deeply. His absence is felt profoundly, and he will be missed; but his memory will certainly be a blessing for all who knew him and for his legacy of resilience.

FINANCIAL REPORTS:

This is our most recent internal Financial Report and Budget for 2026.

	2026 Budget	2025 Actual	2024 Actual
INCOME - OVERSEAS			
Transfers from US Friends	\$3,428,571	\$1,634,118	\$2,197,183
Direct Donations from US Donors	\$380,952	\$410,931	\$211,268
Transfers from British Friends	\$31,746	\$709,096	\$281,690
Direct Donations from British Donors	\$22,222	\$75,790	\$19,718
Transfers from Canadian Friends	\$444,444	\$512,791	\$366,197
Direct Donations from Canadian Donors	\$635	\$3,602	\$2,817
Donations from Other Countries	\$111,111	\$118,023	\$84,507
TOTAL INCOME - OVERSEAS	\$4,419,683	\$3,464,350	\$3,163,380
INCOME FROM ISRAEL			
Donations from Israel	\$878,095	\$1,615,469	\$505,634
Donations Israel - Ministries & PTSD	\$992,698	\$764,414	\$546,056
CanVelo Donations	\$82,222	\$73,941	\$63,380
CanVelo Income	\$26,349	\$65,673	\$140,845
In-Kind Donations	\$243,333	\$146,164	\$215,915
TOTAL INCOME - ISRAEL	\$2,222,698	\$2,665,660	\$1,471,830
TOTAL ALL INCOME	\$6,642,381	\$6,130,010	\$4,635,210
OPERATING EXPENSES			
Dog Training Expenses	\$2,345,476	\$1,538,056	\$1,615,395
Kennel Expenses	\$775,445	\$851,518	\$748,463
Puppy Raising Expenses	\$579,618	\$476,566	\$371,039
NEW Breeding, Fertility & Health Department	\$390,461	\$0	
Maintenance	\$485,635	\$393,476	\$395,523
Marketing and Fundraising	\$799,790	\$646,770	\$589,258
Administrative Expenses	\$742,373	\$612,307	\$594,814
CanVelo Expenses	\$108,571	\$91,210	\$207,042
Financing Expenses	\$18,730	\$9,407	\$16,056
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$6,246,099	\$4,619,310	\$4,537,590
FIXED ASSETS			
Fixed Assets - New Building Construction	\$922,222	\$405,331	\$753,239
Depreciation	\$380,952	\$294,118	\$261,972
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	\$1,303,175	\$699,449	\$1,015,211
TOTAL ALL EXPENSES	\$7,549,274	\$5,318,758	\$5,552,801
SURPLUS/- DEFICIT	(\$906,893)	\$811,252	(\$917,591)

This is an internal projected budget

The fixed assets expenses are subject to designated donations

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



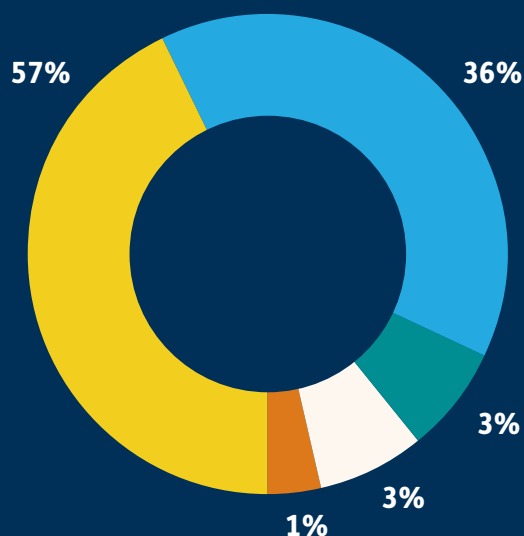
FUNDRAISING & FRIENDRAISING

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR MIRACLES

We rely on individuals, foundations, and community organizations to meet our funding needs.

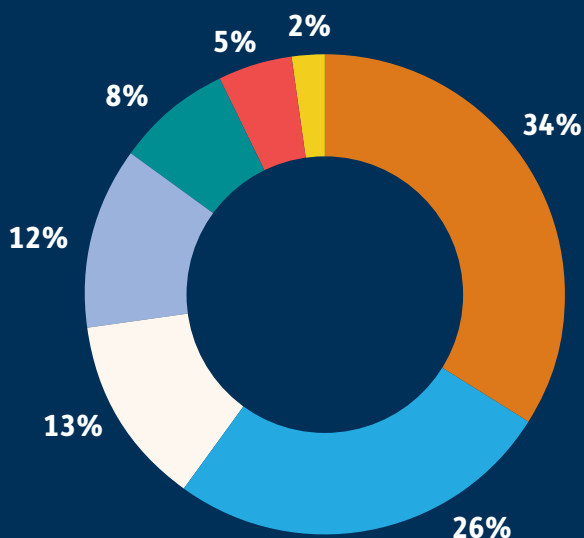
2025 DONATIONS

- Individuals
- Foundations
- Mitzvah Campaigns
- Bequests
- Schools/Synagogues/Community Organizations



DONATIONS BY COUNTRY

- USA
- Israel Donors
- UK
- Israeli Government
- Canada
- Other Sources (in-kind, Canvelo income & donations)
- Other Countries



ACCREDITATIONS





Israel Guide Dog Center

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