



**Israel Guide  
Dog Center**  
מרכז ישראל ללכבי נחיה

# Paw Prints

THE CENTER'S DONOR NEWSLETTER

Summer 2025 Edition

## Growing Demand and Exciting Plans

**D**emand for the Israel Guide Dog Center's help has skyrocketed in the wake of the October 7th terrorist attacks, especially requests for our PTSD Service Dogs and Emotional Support Dogs.

In response, the Center has developed an ambitious five-year forecast to significantly boost our capacity. The Center is assessing economical and effective ways to nearly double the number of life-transforming partnerships we can create between our loving, supportive canines and Israelis in need — through exploring building plans, implementing a training academy, and expanding the veterinary clinic.

The Center's longevity depends on the continued generosity of donors like you, and we look forward to working together to fully implement this blueprint for growth.

### Veterinary Clinic Reopens After Major Improvements

The Israel Guide Dog Center is celebrating the reopening of its Veterinary Clinic and Breeding Center following a comprehensive modernization and expansion.

The Veterinary Clinic is at the heart of the Center's mission, providing full veterinary care to more than 400 puppies and dogs each year, from birth throughout their working lives. The facility also plays a vital role in the Center's breeding program, working to meet the rising demand for specially trained PTSD Service Dogs, Emotional Support Dogs, and Guide Dogs.

Upgrades became necessary when the original two-room clinic built in 1993 became too crowded for the number of dogs under its care and too cramped to accommodate new high-tech equipment. The redesign more than doubles the Veterinary Clinic's size, adding a state-of-the-art operating room and a cutting-edge fertility lab.

The renovation of the Veterinary Clinic represents an important step forward in the Israel Guide Dog Center's mission, and the Center is deeply thankful to you for making this transformation possible.



# A Mother's Letter of Thanks

**Y**our support of the Israel Guide Dog Center has an enormous impact on so many people, providing specially trained Guide Dogs, Service Dogs, and Emotional Support Dogs who offer unconditional love and critical assistance to Israelis in need.

Recently, the Center received a heartwarming note from Dalia, thanking us for Arnold, an Emotional Support Dog who has had a transformative impact on her son Eitan, who is autistic.

My husband and I have two boys, Eitan, age 7, and Levi, 5. Eitan, our first born, has autism. He has always shown great love for animals, but we waited until he was old enough to assume responsibility for raising a dog.

As soon as we welcomed Arnold to our home, he was an instant success. Our two boys love him and just can't get enough of him. Arnold is extremely patient, well-behaved, and perfectly housebroken.

We can tell that Eitan already sees Arnold as his best friend. He confides in him, hugs him all the time, and they sleep with each other. These are small miracles themselves.

We've also noticed Eitan is learning to share and think of others, which is a great step forward for a child with autism – and which we thought would take years of therapy, instead of just a month with Arnold.

We believe a child raised without a dog is missing a crucial element of development. Arnold more than proves this. Thank you for your gift of light and joy that Arnold has brought to us.



Dalia

**Your support made a life-changing difference for Eitan and so many other Israelis – thank you!**



# Shirley Anavi and Yummy: Building Independence and Resilience

**F**or Shirley Anavi, self-reliance and resilience are central to both her personal life and her profession as a social worker. And Yummy, her new Guide Dog from the Israel Guide Dog Center, plays a crucial role in Shirley's ability to maintain her independence.

Shirley, who is totally blind, lives in Israel's small northern village of Bat Hefer with her husband, her two teen children, and Yummy, a skilled and affectionate yellow Labrador. When her previous Guide Dog retired from service, Yummy allowed Shirley to continue navigating the world and fully engaging with her family, her clients, and her community.

*"When I was waiting for my new Guide Dog, I stayed at home most of the time," Shirley recalls. "It was horrible to be dependent on others and use a cane again."*

Yummy's assistance enables Shirley to pursue her social work career — primarily focused on helping children and their parents deal with disabilities — and conduct writing workshops for the elderly that focus on building emotional resilience. Yummy also fosters a spirit of independence in Shirley's family,



helping to inspire her children to embrace service and self-reliance. "Our teens are both active in Israeli Scouts and also volunteer a lot," Shirley says proudly. "Our children are very independent, raised to do for themselves."

Shirley is grateful to the Israel Guide Dog Center – and you – for bringing Yummy into her family.

## By the Numbers *Your Generosity in Action*



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



**28%** of our blind clients lost their vision due to trauma — mostly IDF veterans



**94%** of the Center's income is from donations



**1,352** is the number of dogs placed with Israelis in need

# Forging A Powerful Lifetime Bond



**W**hen the Israel Guide Dog Center matches Guide Dogs with their human partners, the new teams take part in an intensive three-week training course at the Center's Beit Oved campus. It's the beginning of a beautiful lifelong friendship.

When the blind and visually impaired individuals arrive on campus, they are assigned private rooms in our dormitory equipped with assistive technology such as talking alarm clocks, accessible computers, and emergency communication buttons. After an orientation and information session, the big moment finally arrives: meeting their new Guide Dogs.

Shyla, a Center client from Haifa, remembers, *"when Arke entered my room, he ran right to me and started licking me, like he knew that we are meant to be together. It was the most exciting and emotional experience of my life. I laughed and cried with joy."*

Once the new partners get acquainted, the real work begins. Over the next three weeks, they complete a wide range of training exercises, navigating increasingly complex and challenging routes on crowded sidewalks, in shopping malls, across busy intersections, and even at a local *moshav* (farm).

Gideon, who traveled from his home in Beersheba to train with

Lucky, his new Guide Dog, recalls from his time at the Center, *"when we were out walking, instructors from the Center would run stop signs or pull out in front of us, often screeching their tires or honking at us. I was amazed by how calmly Lucky behaved, reinforcing my trust that she will keep me safe."*

At the end of the course, each new team takes a "final exam" where they must use the skills they've learned to independently navigate a route to a pre-designated destination. Then it's Graduation Day, and after a last dinner and evening at the Center, the graduates return home with their new best friends and the confidence to live their lives to the fullest.

**The Israel Guide Dog Center thanks our staff, volunteers, and generous donors for making this life-changing training possible.**



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Photos: Eli Ben Boher, Tomer Eden, the Center's staff and volunteers.

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