



**Israel Guide
Dog Center**
מרכז ישראלי לכלבי נחיה

23 Elul 5782

[Primary Addressee]

[Address Line 1]

[Address Line 2]

[Address Line 3]

[City], [State] [Zip]

Dear [Salutation],

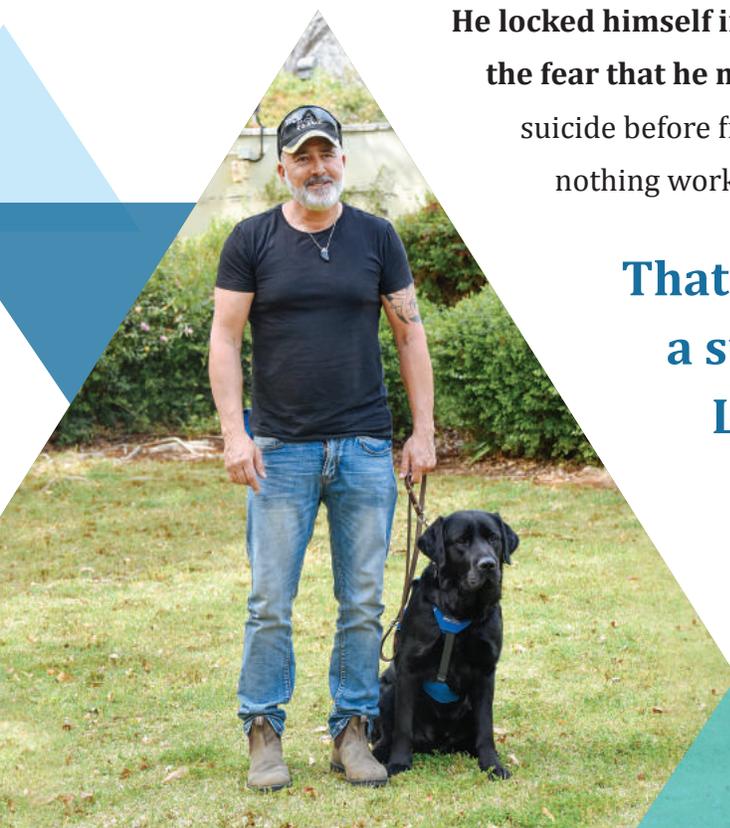
On a recent trip to Israel, I sat in the student lounge at the Israel Guide Dog Center listening to Benzi, an IDF veteran who served in the elite Special Forces Unit. I wish you could have been there. His story still gives me goosebumps...

"I have seen things and done things that no one should ever see or do," said Benzi as he told me how he had suddenly snapped, developing symptoms of PTSD 30 years after his military service.

Benzi's newly debilitating condition tore apart his family and reduced his life to shambles.

He locked himself in his room for nearly four months, paralyzed by the fear that he might hurt someone. Deeply depressed, he attempted suicide before finally seeking help. Despite numerous treatments, nothing worked.

**That is until donors like you offered a surprising solution:
Lugo, Benzi's new black Lab.**



*“I’m seeing colors again...
the air is fresher...
and I’m beginning to return to life”*

— Benzi

You see, Lugo is one of our specially trained PTSD service dogs. We developed the PTSD career path for our uniquely bred and raised puppies who fall just shy of our stringent guide dog qualifications—because we want every dog you’ve invested in to make a difference in an Israeli’s life.

This year we hope to produce more dogs than ever before—so more blind Israelis can have a guide dog, and more veterans like Benzi can benefit from the dogs assigned to alternate jobs. But we need your support to do it!

Can another suffering Israeli like Benzi count on you to give today?

As Benzi told me his story, Lugo quietly nudged him. He was keeping Benzi’s stress levels in check when he sensed they were rising. Lugo was able to see what I couldn’t—his ability to recognize Benzi’s growing distress was amazing. In fact, I wouldn’t have noticed Lugo at work at all if Yariv Melamed, our director of training for the PTSD program, hadn’t clued me in!

Benzi and Lugo had only been paired for three weeks when I met them. But the changes in Benzi were remarkable. Benzi had begun to reconnect with people he had shut out of his life. He was sleeping better. His attitude had improved.

“I’m seeing colors again... the air is fresher... and I’m beginning to return to life,” Benzi explained.

Benzi was already known at the Israel Guide Dog Center well before he came to us for a PTSD service dog. He previously volunteered with our tandem bike program to help other veterans. While we were talking, one of his friends from the center walked by and stopped to hug him. “Welcome back to life!” she said in Hebrew.

**Welcome back to life,
indeed. And all because of
donors like you!**

Our PTSD service dogs are incredibly gifted animals, destined to do great things in the world. They have even captured the attention of the IDF, which declared our program the best available therapy for veterans suffering from the condition.

And the IDF has asked us to train more dogs.

Because our primary mission remains providing guide dogs to blind and visually impaired Israelis, every one of our puppies that meets guide dog qualifications will continue to go on to become a guide dog or a breeder.

But with your support, we plan to grow our entire breeding and training program to produce more dogs overall—inevitably resulting in additional dogs that end up on the PTSD service dog track to meet the request for more.

Will you please give today and help us address the critical need for more dogs? Because no one should have to struggle alone.

A photograph of two men standing outdoors with a black dog. The man on the left is wearing a dark blue t-shirt and grey pants. The man on the right is wearing a black t-shirt, blue jeans, and a black cap. The dog is sitting on the grass between them. The background shows green bushes and a building.

“I would walk up and give them the longest, strongest, tightest hug they ever had, and I would simply whisper ‘Thank you!’”

— Benzi

When I asked Benzi what he would say to the donor who made his partnership with Lugo possible, Benzi paused, deep in thought.

“There are no words,” he said finally. “I would walk up and give them the longest, strongest, tightest hug they ever had, and I would simply whisper, “Thank you!””

If only there were a way I could make you feel that hug—so you could truly know the difference you make with your generosity.

On behalf of all of our clients, our guide dogs, our service companions, and everyone at the Israel Guide Dog Center, I thank you! L’Shana Tova!

With gratitude,

Michael J. Leventhal
Executive Director

P.S. — Many of our blind and visually impaired clients who are also IDF veterans suffer from PTSD. They’ve told us that their guide dogs not only guide them, but calm them as well—acting as a double blessing in their lives. Help another Israeli heal with their own furry four-legged companion by their side. **Please give now at www.israelguidedog.org/donate-now, or use the enclosed envelope to mail your donation.**



Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind
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