



Servisa suņu biedrība TEODORS

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Service Dog Association TEODORS, Rīga , Latvia 2019 Annual Report

This was an event-filled year for the Service Dog Association TEODORS. A lot of work went into publicity: seminars were organized, countless meetings, we informed the public about daily life for people with special needs and the importance of service dogs in their everyday lives.

One of the most moving events was “**A Different Church Service**” Pentecost service at Torņakalns church. The *Luther Church of Riga* dedicated this service to benefit Service Dog Association TEODORS. Worshipper filled church, inspiring and interesting sermon, fantastic musicians – to collect donations for our association, made this day bright and fulfilled. Our members Baiba and Aleksejs shared their thoughts about their everyday, living with their service dogs. Not for naught the association is called Teodors, which means gift of God. Teodors was our first service dog, and service dogs truly are “God’s gift” to their masters – their eyes, ears and hands, and together they make one. <http://www.teodors.org/suns-naks-lidzi/>



On a sunny spring day, as in many past years, on April 24 we observed the **International Guide Dog Day**. Members of the association, together with their service dogs and assistants, went on a brief walk to acquaint the public with the service dog’s everyday and their importance to their master’s life. We are proud that this year we earned mass media interest.

An interesting event was our participation in the discussion festival *LAMPA*, June 28, Cēsis Castle Park.. Many different topics are discussed – society, culture, nature, politics and

other topics of interest to Latvia and Europe. Our presentation can be seen here:

<http://straume.lmt.lv/lv/konferences/konferences/suni-telts/1042433>

An extensive campaign organized by Teodors at the beginning of summer was “**Eyes Go to School,**” led by Liene Šternberga with several volunteers. The goal of the campaign was to inform the public



and acquaint them with the service dog's everyday, training and meaning, as well as collect necessary funds for the association's future service dog Joko's training. The campaign was very successful, Joko gained recognition and popularity. Currently Joko, with his trainer, our association's member Santa Aumeistere, are in England obtaining service dog training. Santa has already trained service dog Zuze. We wish them both successful collaboration and successful achievements! Joko's

campaign brought in 4.500 €, a gift certificate worth 1.000 € for fuel, and 250 € for dog food. Donations for Joko can still be made at Vision Express stores. Thank you to all donors!

This summer, same as many previous years, thanks to the support of Latvia State Forests, we could organize a **training camp** for our service dogs and their masters. This took place August 16 -18 in Līgatne. These joint meetings are very important: in different situations the trainer observes the dog and its master's collaboration, corrects and renews necessary skills, the master obtains new competences and is informed of new legislation. For the first time we worked together with rehabilitation workers who work with relatives of the blind, explaining the needs of the blind, understanding them and their feelings. <http://www.teodors.org/but-kopa-kopa-sajust-kopa-saprast/>



As every year, the **International Guide Dog - Master Competition** took place October 5, on a nice, sunny fall day in the premises of the Rīga Luther Church in Torņakalns. Participants from Finland, Estonia and Latvia arrived in the early morning. Six guide dogs with their masters showed their skills and knowledge. Participants on Latvia's team were guide dogs Mango and Neira, taking 4th and 5th places, but in the overall team assessment placed 2nd. <http://www.teodors.org/starptautiskas-sunupavadonu-sacensibas-riga-05-10-2019/>



Another new event for our association! In the beginning of September photographer Valters Poļakova's exhibit was opened- **Wise dog holidays**, dedicated to service dogs. For several months the photographer observed and photographed our dogs in their everyday work as well as during their periods of rest, thereby putting to rest part of society's mistaken impression about service dogs' everyday life. The photographed

moments portray the actual everyday of the service dog, it is multifaceted, event filled and interesting. The exhibit is nice proof that the service dog is a happy dog, who, together with his master, not only works, but also rests and both are truly happy with one another!

In the summer, Baiba and Aleksejs participated in the **National Development Plan's** (NAP 2027) work group. Unfortunately, NAP 2027 in its first draft does not include service dogs. Our goal is to officially include text that service dogs could be considered assistants to people with special needs. This question about social inclusion, with the assistance of service dogs, should be moved along at the national level in the future, because with only volunteer work and donations we can't go far. There are 15 registered guide dogs in Latvia (11 of them are our association's dogs) and there are about 10.000 vision impaired/blind people. That means that for 666 people there is one guide dog. The necessary number should be at least 100 guide dogs (that's 1%, in the West the average is 1,5-2%), besides, only 2 assistant dogs are registered in Latvia.

In a brief report it is not possible to enumerate and describe all activities by Teodors, such as: visiting schools, day centres, businesses, summer camps, participation in the National Library's 100th anniversary, street festivals, an event hosted by The Latvian Association of The Blind, a photography exhibit at the shopping centre Alfa, and our long-term collaboration with The Latvian Red Cross. Very often our events have included white therapy dogs – Džerod, Berija, Franko and Lora. At every event we tell about our service dogs and demonstrate the skills of these smart animals.



The Service Dog Association TEODORS thanks all donors and supporters! Only with your help is the association able to help more blind people. In the beginning of the new year, we will be getting a new service dog – Lulu. This will be the first dog for which the association will pay the full price of 10.000 €. Thanks to donations through ziedot.lv, our dogs have received quality food and partial veterinarian help. During training camps, service dogs also received free health check-ups. Our thanks to veterinary doctors Līga Kovalčuka and

Liene Aveniņa, as well as the Latvia University of Agriculture Faculty of Veterinary Medicine's vetclinic and vetfunds.

With a grant from Otrā Elpa we purchased professional equipment for the service dogs: service dog muzzles and special canine vests so that the public would recognize service dogs. With support received from Rīga Council, we were able to rent space from The Latvian Association for the Blind. It's a joy that some Latvian businesses have started donating even more to social projects. We got a pleasant surprise, visiting SB and Partner's 25th anniversary, in lieu of flowers and gifts, management requested donations to TEODORS. Our long-time friends Liene and Kaspars on their wedding anniversary requested not flowers, but donations for service dogs. Ilze Bērziņa donated

proceeds from her book „Happy Girl”. Our recognition extends beyond our borders: we received support from Germany, France, England, and the US. Special thanks to our longtime friends in Finland and, of course, our biggest donors are and remain **Zaiga Kļaviņa** and **Juha Herttuainen**, without whom the association would not exist! They gift us with dogs, their work, time and love.

Planned activities in 2020

Same as previously:

- public work in schools, summer camps;
- International Guide Dog Day end of April;
- participation in service dog competition in Finland in October;
- care of our association’s dogs and provide 1new service dog to a blind person.



You can read about our main goals and tasks by visiting our homepage: www.teodors.org

We also regularly post information on Facebook: @servisasunubiedriba

The association uses donated funds solely for the attainment of the association’s goals as expressed in the articles of the association.

The association’s account for donations:

Bank: SWEDBANK
 Recipient: Servisa sunu biedrība
 Reg.No. 40008208343
 Acc. No. LV04HABA0551036537614
 BIC/SWIFT: HABALV22

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with you so that the service dog movement can continue and expand its operations!

Sincerely yours,
Service dog association TEODORS