



# Servisa suņu biedrība TEODORS

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## Service Dog Association TEODORS, Rīga, Latvia

### 2018 Annual Report

This has been the year of Latvia's big anniversary - the year in which it celebrated its centenary! Meanwhile, this year the popular ensemble "Menuets" also celebrated a major birthday - its 50th:

"Song, what will you begin with? What will you begin with?  
Start with a quiet word, a quiet word.  
Start with a quiet word, start with a quiet syllable -  
Your friends will understand, your friends will understand.  
That song is a cry."



At the same time, our association is celebrating its fifth birthday! We started out quietly and humbly with one dog - the guide dog *Teodors*, who inspired our big idea about service dogs in Latvia to help people with special needs blend into society. We have invested a lot of work, time and funds, both donated and private. We have now built an **established association with 11 registered guide dogs and one assistant dog.**

This year, our dog trainers: Zaiga and Juha together with their volunteer assistants Santa & Liene have invested a lot of time and work into training four young guide dogs. In the spring, intensive training was conducted involving the dog *Serena* and her master Aleksejs V., as well as with the dog *Anneken* and her master Inese P. Both Aleksejs and Inese and their dogs passed their examination in May. For more information, please visit Aleksejs & Inese's articles on our homepage: <http://www.teodors.org/dogs/serena/>. During the summer, Zaiga worked with the dog *Vera* and visually impaired Solveiga from Liepāja, as well as with the dog *Zuze* and visually impaired Beāte from Cēsis. As the training drew to a close, unfortunately it became clear that Beāte had not bonded with her guide dog and it was decided that they could not work together. This can happen sometimes! In contrast, *Vera* and Solveiga passed their tests successfully. Currently, *Zuze* is getting to know her new mistress. We very much hope that they will get on with one another and complete their training successfully! **We would be very grateful for donations from the public that will provide support for Zuze's training so that she becomes a fully qualified guide dog.** Meanwhile, our giant *Mango* has found a friend in visually impaired Andis and is now a qualified guide dog.

*Zuze & Lolita*



During the winter, our assistant dog *Elfa* became seriously ill and it took quite a long time for her to recover. It turned out that the salt that is liberally sprinkled on Riga's pavements had caused her liver and intestinal infections. Since it was impossible for her mistress Baiba, who is confined to a wheelchair, to wash the dog's paws after going for a walk, *Elfa* would lick them. Thanks to the funds donated to the association's Medical Treatment fund, we were able to pay for all the necessary tests and medicines. When the snow melted, so did *Elfa's* health problems. Several publications have published articles about *Elfa* and Baiba, because Baiba is an amazing young woman and *Elfa* is the first registered assistant dog in Latvia.

<http://veselam.la.lv/2017/05/19/elfa-kas-prot-gerbt-and-izdancinat-saimnieku/>

<http://www.teodors.org/pirma-visa-latvija/>

<http://www.teodors.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/veselibas.pdf>

Thanks to a grant from Latvijas Valsts Meži, the association was able to implement its project "LATVIA'S FIRST TRAINING CAMP FOR SERVICE DOGS" from 10 to 13 May in Smiltene. During the camp, service dogs and their masters received training in professional skills. There were 12 participants with dogs of whom three passed exams to become fully qualified guide dogs, while the others refreshed their skills and received new attestations. The training was conducted by seven dog trainers from Latvia, Estonia and Finland, while the exams and dog attestations were judged and approved by a professional judge from Finland who specialises

in appraising the working abilities of working dogs.

<http://www.teodors.org/the-first-training-camp-in-latvia-for-service-dogs/>



During the summer, the Song and Dance Celebration was not only very colourful but also special, because members of our community with special needs were able to participate in them. Among those taking part in the beautiful festival parade were members of the youth choir "Nāc līdās!" and the Strazdumuiža Amateur Theatre,

comprised of visually impaired people and their companions, as well as folks with mobility problems. Other participants included one of our service dogs: *Feja* and her wonderful master Andris.

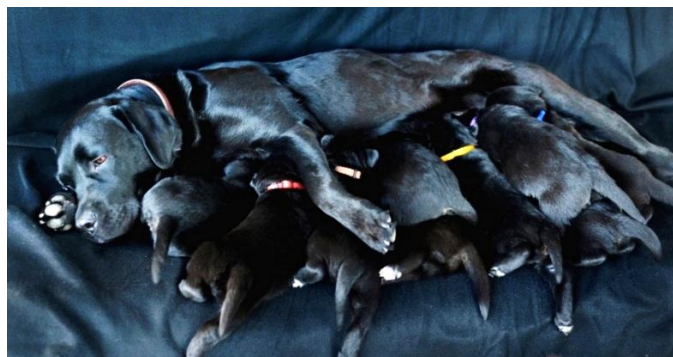
<http://www.teodors.org/a-song-celebration-also-enjoyed-by-people-with-special-needs/>

This year, on the occasion of our nation's centenary, another organisation celebrating its centenary was the Latvian Red Cross. On 8 September in the square in front of the Congress Hall, a major event was held to mark the organisation's anniversary, with participants including foreign and domestic cooperation partners. Among the other was guests was our association. We demonstrated the skills of our service dogs and told the guest about our dogs' trustworthiness and the many skills that they use every day. Thank you to the Red Cross for the opportunity to show off these smart service dogs and lovable therapy dogs to the public. We wish the LRC many more accomplishments during the next 100 years!



Rīga Central Library organised a project "I read". Among those invited to take part in this project was the Service Dog Association TEODORS. The goal of the project was to help children with reading problems and to introduce the general public to the positive influence of dogs: *a child would read in front of a specially trained dog, who doesn't care whether the child is stuttering or reading with errors. It simply lies there and listens, thus relieving all the child's stress and fears.* A total of about 20 activities were held. In order to ensure that we could provide enough therapy dogs, in August our kinologist Zaiga Kļaviņa conducted therapy dog testing: the behaviour of the dogs were tested in various unusual situations, e.g. how would the dogs react when a person in a wheelchair approached them, or if a person was suffering from mobility problems, how would the dog react to the fall of an object such as a walking stick, and if several people tried to stroke it at the same time. All the tested dogs passed these tests with distinction and can now work as fully qualified therapy dogs. Thank you to Ramona, Dagnija, Linda, Anita, Vita, Santa, Dinija and their therapy dogs for supporting our organisation at this event! At the start of October, two of our association dogs *Neira* and *Serena* and their masters and assistants visited Finland to take part in the annual international guide dog competition. *Neira* and *Viktors* finished third and young (little) *Serena* and *Aleksejs* finished fifth! A total of six guide dogs took part, with two competitors from each country. (It was only a year ago that the general public donated about €2,000 to support the association, which made it possible to buy and train *Serena*!)

Another happy event occurred on St. Martin's Day on 10 November, when our guide dog *Neira* gave birth to nine puppies, all black as little pieces of coal, five of which are girls and four boys. Now, *Neira's* master Viktors cannot complain of boredom, and is being helped in the task of raising the pups by Zaiga and Santa. In two months' time, the puppies will undergo their first tests to ascertain which will be suitable to undergo service dog training. **Therefore, we are looking for kind and responsible foster families for the puppies, who will care for, love and train them for about a year, as well as teaching them the first skills they require.**



*Neira with her little black miracles*

### **Planned activities in 2019:**

- Public activities in schools, events and summer camps, and introducing the public to the everyday lives of service dogs
- A celebration marking International Guide Dog Day in April with a demonstration of the skills of service dogs
- Qualification competitions prior to participation in the international guide dog competition in Latvia
- Organising an international guide dog competition in October 2019 in Latvia
- A two day training camp for service dogs and their masters, concluding with guide dog trials, mastery of practical and theoretical skills, and presentation of information of the latest news about legislation at national and municipal level
- A celebration marking the organisation's sixth birthday at the end of May or in early June
- Make a gift of a guide dog to a blind person
- Care and veterinary care for guide dogs, and support for puppies and their foster families.

You can read about our association's main goals and task on our homepage: [www.teodors.org](http://www.teodors.org).

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 suņu biedrība**  
 Reg. No. **40008208343**  
 Acc. No. **LV04HABA0551036537614**  
 BIC/SWIFT: **HABALV22**

The association would like to express its sincerest gratitude to all those who already support the service dog movement in Latvia, including our Finnish partners and a special thank you to Zaiga and Juha for all the dogs they have presented to us and their voluntary work, without it - the association could not exist.

You can read about how we use your donations on the association's homepage [www.teodors.org](http://www.teodors.org).

**We humbly invite you to continue supporting us in future in order to provide for the training of our future guide dog *Zuze* and to help us find good foster parents for *Neira's* puppies, and so that the service dog movement can continue and expand its work!**

Sincerely yours,

**Service dog association TEODORS**