



# Servisa suņu biedrība TEODORS

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## Service Dog Association TEODORS, Latvia 2024 Annual Report

The Service Dog Association TEODORS has completed its eleventh season. This year has brought significant changes in the society's leadership and operations. In May, a general meeting was held,



resulting in changes to the board. Mārtiņš Vizulis was elected as chairman, Dinija Lūcija Bite took on the role of administrator, Līga Ķikute became the media liaison, and the former leader Velga Zēgnere continues to oversee financial matters.

Currently, our association works with 9 guide dogs and 1 assistant dog. Two guide dogs, Tikka and Anekene, retired. Guide dog, Hugo, was prepared and handed over to a new handler, and by the end of the year, another guide dog is expected to be ready. Active work is ongoing with foster families, where five labradors and one royal poodle are receiving basic training. Although common practice globally, the royal poodle will

be the first guide dog of its kind in Latvia. Our dogs undergo regular health check-ups and training. We develop foster family work and collaborate with therapy dogs. Every year, each service dog must pass an exam to continue its daily work. Additionally, we monitor the conditions in which the dogs live and provide high-quality food if needed.

TEODORS continues to participate in various events, educating students and adults about the daily work of service dogs, their and their handlers' rights and responsibilities, and the desired public attitude toward them.

In February, in commemoration of the 124th birthday of human rescuer Žanis Lipke, the Lipke Museum organized an event series "What is courage?". Our wonderful Baiba Baikovska, with a certain touch of humor, talked about her excellent assistant dog Elfa, for example, whether the owner and the assistant dog are brave, what it is like to go out on the street every day and not be afraid to be different, how to act in situations when someone wants to hug or feed your dog.





In April, Service dog association TEODORS participated in the “Read with a Dog” program by the Inčukalns Library. Therapy dogs help foster positive emotions and motivate children to develop reading skills. In Latvia, canistherapy is becoming increasingly popular for engaging children in learning through interactions with dogs.

In June, the Service Dog Association TEODORS participated in a wonderful event - the opening ceremony of our member Baiba Baikovska's book "Elfa - a dog, not a person". The heroine of the book, Elfa, also celebrated her 10th birthday. Elfa is a special assistant dog, she not only helps Baiba in everyday life, but is always by her side on walks, at events, trips, in good and difficult moments. Baiba has described this everyday life with humor in her book.

The association also participated in entertaining and educational events such as “Dog Party” and “More Fun with a Dog” in Jaunmārupe and Carnikava, discussing the training and daily needs of service dogs.

In October, Baiba and Elfa, along with therapy dogs, visited *Cabot Latvia*, a company that sponsors a guide dog named Edijs, which is an excellent example of a socially committed company. The association expressed gratitude for the growing number of companies supporting charitable causes, either financially or by helping with practical tasks. In November, *Cognizant Latvia* employees renovated the association’s premises, while *Polipaks* representatives donated funds for dog training. *SB and Partners* have supported Elfa for several years, and the company *Puse Plus* has sold Christmas cards featuring our logo for the fifth consecutive year, generating donations. Donation boxes are placed at *t/c Origo* and *Ķepa Raw Food* store, with collections managed by the *Taureņa Efekts Society*. Donations can also be made via the *Mobilily* payment system.



Board member Līga Ķikute collaborates with the Association of People with Disabilities *Apeiron*s and lectures in a program on “Service Provision for People with Disabilities.” Līga emphasizes the importance of educating the public, reducing prejudice, and sharing knowledge and experiences. She is always accompanied by her guide dog, Rīga.

In 2023, canistherapy sessions began at the Children’s Hospital as part of a pilot project. This was the first official introduction of canistherapy in a hospital in Latvia, providing positive interactions for patients, their families, and hospital staff. Special thanks to Ričards Pavlovskis, Austra, and therapy dogs Stella, Mona, and Togo!

Unfortunately, there were setbacks, such as the refusal of entry for Baiba and Elfa at the *Vaivari Rehabilitation Center* in the summer.

Very long discussions with the guard, an excruciating 3-hour wait in the hot sun, which ended without a positive result. Needless to ask, is the rehabilitation institution really living in an information vacuum or is it an abuse of official position? It is hard to imagine that in the 21st century, people have not heard about service dogs and their rights. Unfortunately, from time to time we still encounter the fact that public transport, a cafe or other public place is denied entry with a service dog.

Support from the Rīga Neighborhood Residents Center allows us to rent premises for meetings, training, and informational events. We thank the *Rīga Municipality* for their assistance.



TEODORS is grateful to all donors and supporters, whose contributions provide quality food and veterinary services for our dogs. We also extend our thanks to our longstanding friends in Finland, Zaiga Kļaviņa, and Juha Herttuainen, who generously provide dogs, transport, and other support.

More about our goals and dogs can be found on our website: [www.teodors.org](http://www.teodors.org).

Follow us on social media: Facebook (@servisasunubiedriba) and Instagram.

Donations are used exclusively for the society's goals as outlined in our statutes. Donation details are available on our website: <http://www.teodors.org/ziedojumi/>.

There are several ways to donate, please visit: <https://www.teodors.org/jaunumi/>

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With warm greetings and best wishes,

**Service Dog Association TEODORS**

