



**GUIDE DOGS
SINGAPORE**

ENABLING THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Singapore's population is uniquely vulnerable to eye disease at every stage of life. The prevalence of vision loss is increasing within the ageing population, while the younger generation is more prone to developing myopia, a lifelong condition. High myopia can lead to serious complications, low vision, and even blindness as early as mid-adulthood.

Vision impairment can significantly affect one's quality of life, leading to feelings of isolation and helplessness, and resulting in higher levels of depression and anxiety.

At Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd (GDS), we believe that people with vision loss should not be limited by their disability. Your support allows us to empower them with the skills and techniques to live independently, travel confidently, and stay connected with loved ones.



Information is accurate at the time of printing (May 2024)

About Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd (GDS)

GDS is a social service agency with an Institution of Public Character (IPC) status and a member of the National Council of Social Service.

We are currently an applicant member of the International Guide Dog Federation and working towards full membership. Our Patron is Professor Tommy Koh, Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Our Vision

An inclusive society where every blind and vision impaired person is empowered for independent living

Our Mission

We are dedicated to help blind and vision impaired persons to achieve their fullest potential within society

Our Goal

To build a world-class organisation providing excellent service quality and lifelong support to the blind and vision impaired community

Our Values

Empowerment, Dedication, Inclusiveness, Accountability

We aim to enhance the quality of life for people with vision loss in Singapore through a range of rehabilitative programmes. Since our inception in 2006, our services have grown beyond providing guide dogs to teaching people with vision loss the skills they need to live independently. We also collaborate with community stakeholders to build a more supportive society for all.

Orientation and Mobility Training (O&M)

O&M training is crucial for people with vision loss, **enabling them to stay mobile and active by gaining the skills and confidence to travel safely by themselves or with their caregivers.** The training takes place on their common travel routes or within their homes, covering topics such as understanding their current location, identifying their destination, and protecting themselves from collisions with obstacles. Clients with O&M skills are eligible to apply for a guide dog.



Example of an O&M Training Goal

Navigate independently from home to work using mobility aids and various transportation modes.

People of all ages dealing with different degrees of sight loss can benefit from O&M training. During the training, clients are taught techniques such as:



Human Guide Techniques

Learning to advocate for themselves and educate their human guides on how to assist in a safe and dignified manner. Training is also provided for caregivers to support family members with vision loss.



Body Protection Techniques

Protecting the upper and lower body from collisions with obstacles.



Proper Use of a White Cane

Learning techniques to detect tactile markings, obstacles, uneven ground, and recognise landmarks using a white cane.



Use of Other Senses

Understanding the environment by relying on their remaining vision and other senses such as hearing, touch, and smell.





Mental Mapping

Creating a mental image of the environment to understand its layout and the travel paths to the intended destination.



Indoor Familiarisation

Understanding the layout of a new workplace or home and learning to navigate indoors safely, avoiding obstacles.



Road Crossing Skills

Identifying traffic patterns and using audio cues to cross safely at traffic lights, pedestrian crossings, and driveways.



Public Transport Familiarisation

Understanding the layout of bus and train stations to learn how to commute independently on public transport.



Integrating Technology

Utilising smartphone apps for auditory-guided navigation in independent travel.



Social Skills

Knowing how to ask for assistance to get the information they require, as well as when to accept or decline help.

Independent Living Skills

Losing your sight can affect daily tasks such as personal care and meal preparation. By learning independent living skills, people with vision loss are empowered to perform these activities unaided, reducing their dependence on others for assistance.

Some of the skills taught include:



Personal Care

Grooming and hygiene management, which includes dressing up, applying makeup, and trimming nails, as well as medication management such as distinguishing supplements and medication.



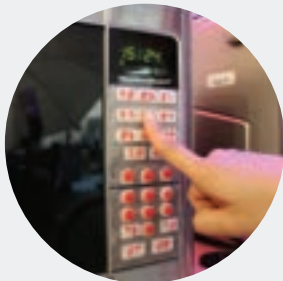
Domestic Chores

Safely using kitchen tools and appliances for tasks such as cooking, laundry, and housekeeping, as well as identifying food expiration dates.



Environment Modification

Navigating their environment by using tactile stickers to differentiate switches on appliances such as ovens and washing machines.



Others





Using ATMs, managing bank transactions, shopping for groceries, and keeping a hobby.



Accessibility and Technology






Technology makes communication and the management of daily activities easier for people with vision loss. **We customise one-to-one training sessions to meet the learning goals and requirements of each individual.** Our Accessibility and Technology workshops cover a range of topics that cater to users with varying levels of technological proficiency.

Some benefits of technology for people with vision loss includes:

-  Connecting with family and friends through text and social apps
-  Reducing the challenges of independent travel
-  Remaining relevant in the workforce
-  Staying updated on current affairs and knowledge



Some of the skills we teach on smartphones and computers includes:

-  **Configuring Display Settings** to improve accessibility on devices, such as adjusting font size and customising colour profiles
-  **Using Screen Reader Softwares** to navigate around the device, such as Talkback on Android, Voiceover on iOS, NVDA or JAWS on computers
-  **Employing Gestures and Shortcuts** to enhance device usability and efficiency
-  **Using Navigation Apps** to aid with travelling
-  **Accessing Office and Productivity Apps** for work or school

Fostering Digital Inclusivity and Accessibility

GDS provides consultancy and user feedback to empower organisations in creating a more inclusive digital environment, ensuring that digital content across websites, documents, social media platforms and mobile applications is usable by people with vision loss.



Organisations that embark on the journey to enhance digital accessibility will align with Singapore's forward-thinking initiative, **positioning themselves as leaders in the digital space and setting a benchmark for conscientious practices.**

Guide Dog Programme



Guide dogs are specially bred from a lineage of guide dogs to retain the right working temperament and health.

Our dogs are typically Labradors and Golden Retrievers, or a mix of both.

Training, Matching & Retirement



Breeding

Puppies born to parents from guide dog lineage.



At 12 Months

The dogs return to training kennels for an initial assessment. Some dogs may be re-classified to other careers at this stage.



Working Team

Dogs that successfully complete the training will be profiled and matched to suitable Guide Dog applicants. Subsequently, they are trained for about 3 to 4 weeks with the new user as a team. The team is supported and assessed regularly by GDS until the dog retires.

At 8 Weeks



Assessment of puppies' temperament for placement to puppy raiser homes. Puppies play, socialise and learn basic commands.

Guide Dog Training



Suitable dogs are attached to a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor for an intensive five months of training and continuous assessments, with periodic milestone checks.




Retirement






Various options are discussed with the guide dog user. Some dogs may retire earlier than others depending on their health.

How Guide Dogs Help Their Users





-  Ensuring ample space for itself and its user to pass through
-  Navigating through crowds and busy places
-  Walking in a straight line in an open space



-  Indicating kerbs and stairs by stopping
-  Avoiding ground and low-hanging obstacles
-  Making travelling via public transport easier



-  Locating objects within sight when given commands such as “Find a seat/lift/door”
-  Refusing commands that may lead both itself and its user to danger, known as “Intelligent Disobedience”

Legislation



Guide dogs are allowed on public transport.



The Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura) supports the use of guide dogs.



Guide dogs are allowed to enter food establishments including halal-certified restaurants.

Client-Centric Services

Social Workers

Adapting to a life with vision loss can be a difficult process for both our clients and their caregivers. Our social workers provide comprehensive support to help clients address **emotional, social and practical difficulties, with the goal of enhancing their quality of life.** Clients may be referred by hospitals, other social service agencies, or are self-referred.



Emotional

Addressing psychological issues through one-on-one counselling to clients and caregivers, and organising support groups that provide a safe space for meaningful discussions and connections.



Training

Working with GDS Specialists and Trainers to develop a personalised vision rehabilitation programme, aimed at helping clients to regain their mobility and independence.



Resources

Facilitating access and connecting clients to community resources and grants.



Outreach and Education

Collaborating with clients' immediate communities to foster a conducive space to achieve their goals. These communities include family members, social networks, workplaces and educational institutions.

Skill-Based Workshops and Social Events

GDS organises regular social events and skill-based workshops for our clients. **This gives them opportunities to make new friends, form communities of similar interests, and support one another through learning and social interaction.**

These activities encourage our clients to practice their skills that they have learnt, enhancing their confidence and independence through positive experiences.



Outreach and Advocacy

We conduct customisable outreach talks and staff training in schools, companies and government agencies, as well as collaborate with medical and allied health professionals to **raise awareness about the vision impaired community and guide dogs in Singapore.**

Contact us to schedule your outreach session today.



Guide Dog Friendly Establishments

We offer complimentary "Guide Dog Friendly Business" decals for businesses who wish to showcase their inclusive policy. Additionally, businesses can show their support by adopting our donation box.



Hougang 1



7th Heaven KTV and Cafe

Our Clients

GDS has made seeking assistance a comforting experience, ensuring that we are equipped with the support needed to confidently navigate our unique journey of caring for our blind child.



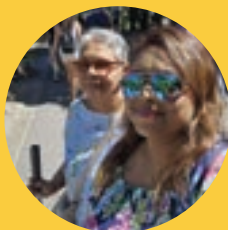
Wei Shi



GDS has taught me invaluable skills in using assistive features, enabling me to navigate mobile applications, manage emails, and online shop, enhancing my daily life and independence.

Sherriza

Thanks to GDS, my mom can confidently navigate with a white cane, feeling safer and less anxious during her daily commute.



Thiru



With my Guide Dog Eve, I have rediscovered the world with confidence and can maintain my hobby of morning runs independently and safely.

Thomas

How You Can Help

GDS is self-funded and depends largely on the generosity of individuals and companies to fund our programmes and services for our clients, ultimately enhancing their quality of life.

All direct donations to GDS of minimum S\$20 are eligible for a 250% tax exemption. Please provide us with your full name, NRIC/FIN/UEN, contact number and email address to admin@guidedogs.org.sg.



Online

Donate via these secure portals:
(a) giving.sg/gds
(b) guidedogs.give.asia



PayNow

Key in GDS's Unique Entity Number (UEN):
200302260G



Cheque

Crossed and payable to
"Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd".
Mail to PO Box 021,
Tampines Central Post Office, S(915201).



Partnerships

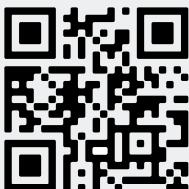
Invite GDS to conduct an outreach talk, explore the possibility of adopting us as your Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) partner, or organise fundraising activities in support of GDS.



Planned Giving

If you are thinking of setting aside an amount for charitable causes in your Will, contact us to find out more.

Scan to Donate



Get in Touch:



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