



GUIDE DOGS
SINGAPORE
ENABLING THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Inspiring Lives Without Sight

Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd (GDS)
Annual Report 2022/2023



GUIDE DOGS SINGAPORE PTE LTD

Annual Report
From 1 December 2022 to 30 November 2023

Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd (“GDS”) was registered as a charity under the Charities Act in FY 2008 on 1 September 2008.

Unique Entity No. : 200302260G

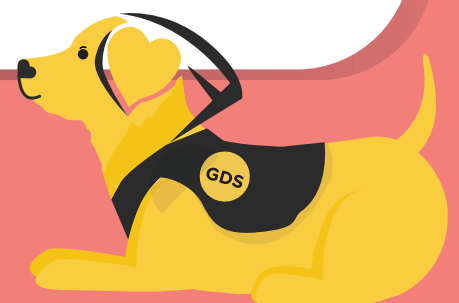
Charity Registration : 002116

Registered Address : 50 South Bridge Road, CMO Building,
#03-00, Singapore 058682

Main Office : 20 Sin Ming Lane, Midview City,
#02-53, Singapore 573968

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ABOUT GUIDE DOGS SINGAPORE LTD (GDS)

Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd (GDS) is a social service organisation formed in 2006. We aim to enhance the quality of life and independence for the blind and vision-impaired community in Singapore through the following programmes and services:

-  **Orientation & Mobility (O&M) Training**
-  **Independent Living Skills Training**
-  **Guide Dog Programme**
-  **Accessibility & Technology**
-  **Client-Centric Activities**
-  **Outreach & Advocacy**

As of 30 November 2023, we have served 775 clients and have been responsible for successfully training and pairing 11 guide dog teams in our history, of which 6 are currently active. A steadily increasing number of potential clients have also joined our waiting list.

Registered as a full member of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) and Institution of a Public Character (IPC) which provides 250% tax deduction for donations, GDS is also an applicant member with the International Guide Dog Federation, and working towards a full membership.

Vision

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

Mission

We are dedicated to help blind and vision-impaired people to achieve their fullest potential within society.

Goal

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

OUR VALUES

Empowerment

To enable the blind and vision-impaired community to realise their potential and aspirations.

Dedication

To promote the interests of the blind and vision-impaired community through close and dedicated partnerships with our stakeholders.

Inclusiveness

To promote inclusiveness amongst the society towards the blind and vision-impaired community.

Accountability

To always act with accountability and transparency in the course of our work.



PATRON'S MESSAGE



Since its inception, Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd has successfully trained and matched 11 guide dog teams*, out of which 8 teams were trained in Singapore. GDS currently has one full time Guide Dog Mobility Instructor and one cadet undergoing training in Australia. By the end of 2025, there will be two locally trained Guide Dog Mobility Instructors.

I am pleased to see GDS's forward-thinking approach in investing resources to develop local capabilities on guide dog training. I urge the policy makers to update our legislation to legally allow the training of guide dogs on public transportation and places. All dogs - before becoming guide dogs - must be trained in the natural environment to ensure safety when paired with its future user with vision impairment.

Apart from providing guide dogs to people with vision impairment, GDS has a team of trainers and specialists that provide vision rehabilitation to help them overcome the difficulties that come with sight loss and learn the necessary skills to live independently. When a person is diagnosed with irreversible sight loss, it is devastating to them and their caregivers, and they are often at a loss of what to do.

I encourage the medical professionals as well as the community service providers to refer these patients or beneficiaries to GDS so that they can receive the care and specialised training to help them integrate back into society.

All of us should play our part in educating ourselves about persons with disabilities. I was shocked to hear news about a cyclist's collision with a guide dog user, and a guide dog user being rejected at one of the Rocky Master café outlets. I feel sorry for our compatriots who face inconvenience and discrimination on a regular basis. They should have equal rights to partake in daily activities like any one of us.

Singaporeans are busy people who value productivity but let us not forget about the value of kindness, empathy and attentiveness to people around us. On this front, there is a greater need for inclusivity and awareness in Singapore and I appeal to the government agencies to collaborate with social service agencies to promote civic mindedness and graciousness.

**Guide dog teams refer to the vision impaired user and guide dog*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tommy Koh', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Tommy Koh
Ambassador-At-Large,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Patron,
Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd






CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



The aftermath of the pandemic has introduced a new way of living, and we find ourselves navigating a changing landscape. The past year has been shaped by both challenges and opportunities, driving us to pave the way forward in imagining our future.

With a focus on enhancing our Guide Dog Programme, we have achieved significant milestones this year:

-  We celebrated the pairing of a new guide dog team, Gary and his second guide dog Matt, enabling him to continue his independence.
-  We welcomed a new Guide Dog Mobility Instructor Cadet, positioning us to double the number of dogs we can train by 2026.
-  We forged a partnership with Nippon Lighthouse Guide Dog Training Centre in Japan to groom a breeding dog, Disco, providing us access to our own pool of potential guide dogs.

With the increased reliance on technology, we have also expanded our Accessibility and Technology offerings by launching VICast, a new podcast series empowering clients with valuable resources for self-directed learning. This initiative promotes independence and knowledge-sharing within our community.

While we have made significant progress over the years, we acknowledge that public knowledge about vision impairment (VI) remains limited and there is more work to be done. As advocates for the vision impaired community, we have taken steps to promote the importance of eye health through our social media platforms, and share information at our outreach talks to schools and companies.

In collaboration with students from Singapore Polytechnic's Diploma in Optometry, we have also provided complimentary eye checks at our public community event. By fostering knowledge and literacy on this issue, we play a pivotal role in shaping a more informed society.

With the prevalence of vision impairment, the need for vision rehabilitation has increased. Behind every individual with VI lies a dedicated caregiver, and we recognise the unspoken struggles they face on their caregiving journey. We are committed to providing people with VI and their caregivers the support they need to navigate this journey with hope and resilience. Recognising the need for a psychosocial component in vision rehabilitation, we are actively recruiting social workers to provide counselling and support, ensuring our clients and their caregivers receive holistic care.

Despite a shift in spending patterns which has led to a decline in donations, we are deeply grateful for the generosity of our supporters. Beyond monetary contributions, we value those who have volunteered their time and actively championed our cause within the community. While these challenges test our resilience as a self-funded charity, they also underscore the significance of pooling resources through collaboration.

Our ongoing efforts to strengthen community partnerships have yielded positive outcomes. By actively engaging with key stakeholders from government agencies, transport companies, and other social service agencies that support the vision impaired community and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), we have forged valuable partnerships to collaboratively enhance our programmes and share resources to benefit the communities we serve.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all donors, sponsors, corporate partners, volunteers, board members and staff for your unwavering support and commitment to our mission. Together, we will transform challenges into opportunities and continue making a difference in the lives of those we serve, fostering a more inclusive and compassionate society for all.



Dr. Wong Hon Tym
Chairman,
Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A/Prof Wong Hon Tym



GDS Chairman (Jan 2017 – Current)

Dr Wong assumed the role of Treasurer from December 2022 to April 2023 when Trina Tan relinquished her role.

GDS Director (Jul 2013 - Jan 2017)

Medical Director
National Healthcare Group Eye Institute (NHGEI)

Clinical Director
Centre for Healthcare Innovation (CHI)

Senior Consultant
Dept of Ophthalmology, Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH)

ProTem Chief
Dept of Ophthalmology, Woodlands Health Campus (WHC)

Ms. Shirley Patricia Sutton (Lee)

GDS Deputy Chairwoman & Secretary (Jan 2017 – Current)
GDS Director (Aug 2012 - Jan 2017)

Director
Dynamic PR & Events



Mr. Matthew St Clair Whittall

GDS Director & Treasurer (Apr 2023 - Current)

Independent Consultant/Director
Mining Strategies Limited



Ms. Tan Hwei Lan

GDS Director (Apr 2007 - Current)

Assistant Professor
Health & Social Sciences
Singapore Institute of Technology



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Dr. Lee Koon Ann Lennie

GDS Director and Veterinary Advisor (Dec 2015 – Current)

Director & Senior Veterinarian
The Animal Clinic

Ms. Trina Tan Li Lian

GDS Director (Feb 2017 – Current)
GDS Treasurer (Sep 2021 – Dec 2022)

Senior Lecturer
Republic Polytechnic



Mr. Shum John Dominic Tze-Juen

GDS Director (Jan 2020 – Current)

Partner
King & Wood Mallesons Singapore



Mr. Isaac Poh Ken Leong

GDS Director (Apr 2023 – Current)

Asia Pacific Head of Digital Marketing
Schroders



Advisor: Amos Miller (Ex-Chairman of GDS & a Guide Dog User),
Founder and CEO at Glidance Inc

Bank: DBS Bank Limited

Auditor: Tan, Chan & Partners

Company Secretary: Mr. Samuel Yuen Wei Loon
(Date appointed: 10 January 2014), Yuen Law LLC

STAFF MEMBERS



Vanessa Loh
General Manager
(Since 2014)



Eileen Koh
Manager,
Community Partnership



Wee Yan Hong
Executive,
Community Partnership



Ashley Koh
Executive,
Community Partnership



Melody Deng
Senior Orientation & Mobility
Specialist, Client Services



Simone Oh
Orientation & Mobility
Specialist, Client Services



Cheryl Yeo
Orientation & Mobility
Specialist, Client Services
Resigned in Nov 2023



Christina Teng
Guide Dog Mobility
Instructor, Client Services



Tan Shi Lin
Guide Dog Mobility Instructor
Cadet, Client Services



Chia Hong Sen
Trainer and Consultant,
Accessibility & Technology



Lim Chai Hwee
Admin & Programme
Executive, Client Services
(part-time)
Resigned in Dec 2023



Manda Lee
Admin Executive,
Client Services
(part-time)



Sandy Ng
Admin & Accounts
Executive

Guide Dogs Singapore extends our heartfelt gratitude to all current and past staff members for their invaluable contributions to the organisation.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR



Continued Independence with a Second Guide Dog

In 2023, we successfully trained and formed our eleventh guide dog team. Our client Gary was matched with his second guide dog Matt in March, empowering him to continue his independence and enjoy a fulfilling life. We held a graduation ceremony with the presence of our valued partners, supporters and friends of GDS to commemorate this momentous milestone.

"I am grateful to the donors for pairing me with my second guide dog. After my first guide dog, Jordie, passed away, I struggled to return to using my white cane. With Matt, he now makes travelling a lot easier. Having him really has been life-changing and he brings me a lot of joy, happiness and freedom!"

Gary Lim, GDS Guide Dog User since 2015



Our First Breeding Dog

In our partnership with Nippon Lighthouse Guide Dog Training Center in Japan, our first breeding dog, Disco, delivered a precious litter consisting of five female and three male puppies.

Disco and her puppies are well cared for by our partner in Japan and fostered by trained volunteer puppy raisers. They will go through a series of basic obedience training and continuous assessments for their potential to be guide dogs.



Recruitment of New Guide Dog Mobility Instructor Cadet

Your donations have made it possible for us to recruit and train a second Guide Dog Mobility Instructor, Shi Lin. This is a direct result of your support as you empowered us to address the growing demand for guide dogs and to support the number of working teams.

Shi Lin commenced her official training in Australia in July 2023. The training will take about two years, and she will join GDS as a fully trained Guide Dog Mobility Instructor in 2025-2026.



We Welcomed Two New Dogs in Training

We are also thrilled to have introduced two new additions to our Guide Dog Programme, Hesta and Vogue, from Guide Dogs Australia. These guide dog trainees will undergo six months of formal training under the guidance of our Guide Dog Mobility Instructor and be matched with clients who are waiting to be paired with a guide dog.

These two new pairings will bring the total number of Guide Dog Teams to 13 since our inception. This achievement will also mark a significant milestone on our path to becoming a member of the International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF).



Newly Launched Podcast Series

In today's interconnected world, technology plays a pivotal role in staying connected with our communities. We are proud to introduce VICast [*vahy-kahst*], our latest podcast series hosted by our Accessibility and Technology instructors, Hong Sen and Dallan, to enhance self-directed learning.

Offering insights, tips and practical advice, anyone with vision loss or has an interest in assistive technology can tune in to learn how to harness technology to enhance their lives and strengthen connections within the community.

Tune in to VICast [here](#).



Fostering a More Inclusive Society

Through a range of talks, events, and training workshops, we engaged over 3,800 individuals spanning from preschoolers to working adults. We aim to educate about the vision impaired community and nurture an inclusive mindset among Singaporeans of all ages. The goal is to foster understanding, empathy, and a shared commitment to building a more inclusive society for all.



Promoting Eye Health

Public knowledge about vision impairment remains limited, with still a large misconception about blindness. In our dedication to promoting literacy and raising awareness about vision health, we actively leverage our social media platforms to share valuable insights into eye health and debunk common myths surrounding vision impairment. Beyond that, we continually engage with schools and organisations to educate and inform about the importance of vision care.

We have also collaborated with students from Singapore Polytechnic Diploma in Optometry to provide complimentary eye checks to public members at our Community Event in Parkway Parade in commemoration of White Cane Day.



Strengthening Community Partnerships

To strengthen our collaborations with community partners, we actively engaged with key stakeholders from government agencies, transport companies, and other social service agencies dedicated to supporting the vision impaired community and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). Through these efforts, we aim to forge partnerships that will enhance our programmes and share resources to benefit the community we serve.



**SG Enable
10th Anniversary with
SPS Eric Chua**



**Run for Light
2023**



**Enabling Lives Festival
2023 with SG Enable**



**SBS Transit
Community CARES
Bus Launch**



**ActiveSG Event with Ministers
Masagos Zulkifli, Dr Koh Poh Koon,
and Mayor Desmond Choo**



**Waymap-SG Launch
with SPS Baey Yam Keng**



**GDS Community Event
Collaboration with ic2 PrepHouse**



**GDS Community Event with
SPS Eric Chua**

FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS

Total Donations:
\$381,523.64



Season of Giving 2022

1 Dec 2022 to 31 Jan 2023

\$125,628.53



Help Us Become Guide Dog Heroes

1 Mar to 31 May 2023

\$152,158.00



Flag Day

4 Mar 2023

\$31,946.11



Inspiring Lives Without Sight

1 Aug to 31 Oct 2023

\$71,791.00



THE IMPACT OF YOUR DONATIONS



GDS CLIENTS

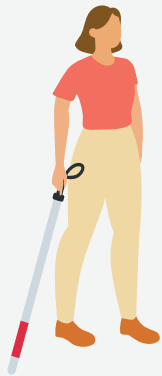


775
total clients
in FY23



increase of
139
Was 636 in FY22

GENDER

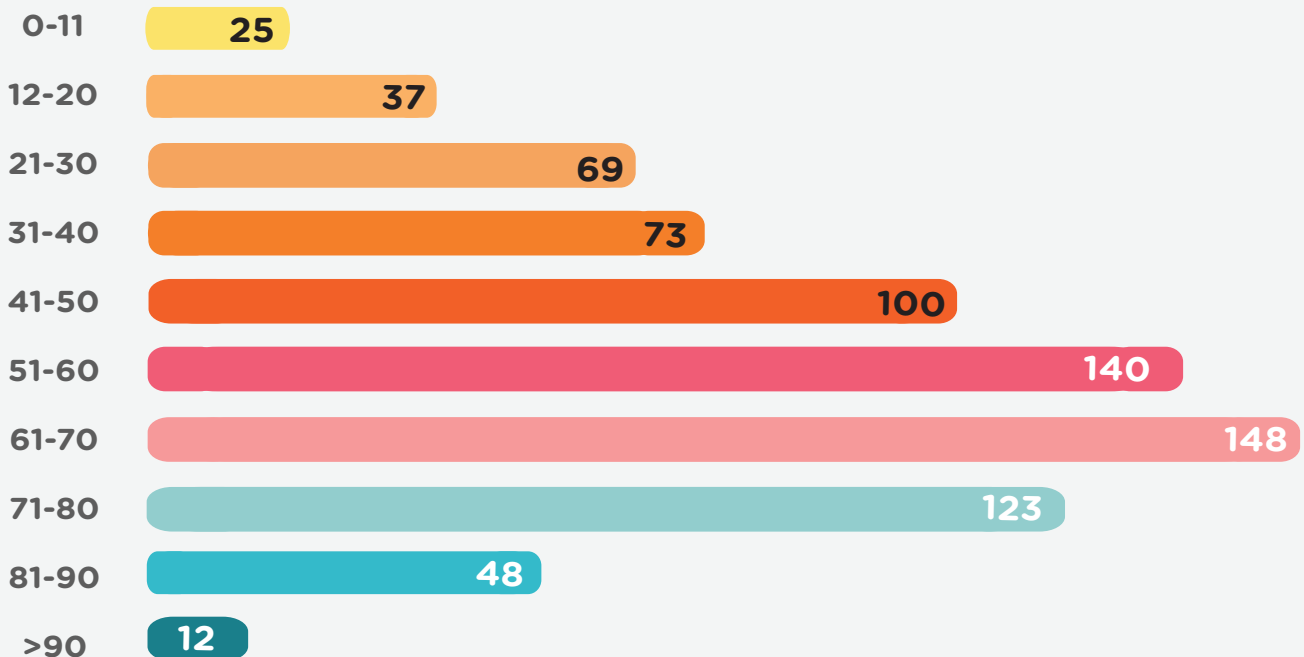


334
Female (43%)



441
Male (57%)

AGE



*Data is from 1 December 2022 to 30 November 2023
Funds raised go towards supporting our client base made up of various ethnic groups*

OUR WORK WITH YOUR SUPPORT

As our training programmes gain more recognition amongst the hospitals and vision impaired community, there has been a notable surge in client referrals. People with vision impairment come to us with a wide range of needs, such as Orientation and Mobility training (also known as independent travel skills) and the use of assistive technology to enhance their daily independence.

OVERALL HIGHLIGHTS

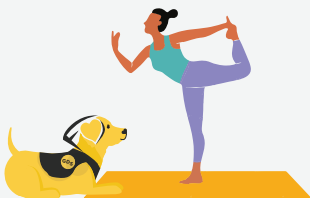
940

Total number of
direct support hours



93.5%

Clients attained
their training goals



18

Client-centric
activities

ACCESSIBILITY & TECHNOLOGY

239

One-to-one
training sessions



13

Workshops &
sharing sessions



4

Collaborative
partnership initiatives



4

Podcasts

510.5

Total number of
service hours

OUTREACH & ADVOCACY



28

Outreach & advocacy talks,
events, programmes &
training workshops



>3,800

Total reach



102

Total number of
outreach hours



ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED FOR CLIENTS

GDS regularly organise recreational workshops to enhance the lives of our clients. Such activities are specially curated to make the experience rich for people with vision loss and encourage our clients to practice their mobility skills outside of their homes, ultimately increasing their confidence through positive experiences.

These events offer our clients an opportunity to make new friends of similar interests, and support one another through learning and social interaction. It also provides an avenue for volunteers to support the VI community, and promotes social integration by normalising interactions between sighted individuals and persons with vision impairment.





Welcome Tea for New GDS Clients

Each year, we host our annual Welcome Tea, an integral part of our induction process for new GDS clients. This session serves to introduce them to our organisation and provides a platform for new clients to connect with existing members, allowing them to foster friendships and meaningful connections to build a supportive community.



Let's Get Together!

In collaboration with Chinese tea merchant, Pek Sin Choon, we organised a Nanyang Tea appreciation workshop. Our clients learnt about the history of tea, had hands-on experience in tea brewing and even crafted their very own blends.





Culinary Workshop

Under the guidance of a certified chef, our clients participated in a cooking workshop alongside student volunteers from Nanyang Technological University's Welfare Services Club Regular Service Project (Vision of Hope), to learn basic culinary skills and made a bowl of Pasta Puttanesca. This hands-on experience enabled clients to enhance their cooking proficiency, which was a valuable aspect of training for independent living skills.

Inclusive Kayaking

Facilitated by students from Republic Polytechnic's Outdoor Adventure Learning Club, our clients immersed themselves in an active and light-hearted kayaking session at Passion Wave Bedok. This enabled both our VI clients and the student volunteers to forge friendships and create cherished memories through a fun-filled outdoor experience.





Low Impact Workout Sessions

We encourage and promote an active lifestyle for all our vision impaired clients, regardless of age. Part of a three-month exercise program aimed at promoting better mental and physical health, the team at Joyous Heart invited our clients to join their weekly morning low-impact workout sessions held at Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery. Through the sessions, our clients can actively participate and reap the benefits of regular exercise.





INSPIRING LIVES WITHOUT SIGHT



CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

Training with GDS has opened doors to new opportunities in my life

Life took a turn when I received the diagnosis of Retinitis Pigmentosa, a rare degenerative eye disease leading to progressive sight loss. I hesitated to use the white cane initially and felt the world lost its meaning as my eyesight worsened.

Through GDS's Orientation & Mobility training, **I learnt to travel with more confidence, using a white cane and honing my mental mapping skills.** This training has fueled my motivation for purposeful living and has also opened up new opportunities, creating a brighter world for me.



Kelvin Lee, GDS Client

To me, he is more than just a guide dog

In 2023, GDS paired me with my second guide dog, Matt. Matt is a remarkable and clever companion who lives by the motto, "Work hard, play hard." His presence has truly transformed my life, bringing joy, happiness, and newfound freedom.

Matt helps me navigate daily challenges and avoid obstacles, ensuring a safe journey from home to work. **With Matt's support, I have gained confidence in independent travel and no longer worry about going out with family and friends.**

Gary Lim, GDS Guide Dog User since 2015

A new beginning with GDS

After experiencing a loss of my remaining sight during the pandemic, I found myself confined to my home. As the world shifted to an endemic phase, the challenge of travelling independently without a sighted guide became more apparent.

GDS's Orientation & Mobility training transformed my life significantly. The training introduced me to a diverse array of techniques and tools, ranging from effective white cane usage to leveraging assistive features on smartphones. **This journey has led to the discovery of a renewed sense of independence and empowerment, all thanks to the guidance and training provided by GDS.**



Aisyah Binte Abu Bakar, GDS Client

CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

Overcoming challenges with GDS's training

Born with Glaucoma, I see the world through light perception, shapes and shadows. The journey of starting school posed a significant challenge, as institutions hesitated to admit me due to my vision impairment. As I grew older, my desire for independence led me to attend Orientation and Mobility and IT training with GDS. **These trainings empowered me to travel with increased confidence and safety, significantly enhancing my quality of life.**

Over time, I transitioned into a role as a freelance IT trainer with GDS. I helped others with vision loss learn how to use the assistive features on their smartphones, while also contributing to the creation of accessible digital content.



Cheyenne Phua, GDS Client

Being able to take care of my family brings me joy

I was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa at the age of 20. Back then, I did not understand its severity. What initiated my determination to learn how to use a white cane was a distressing incident where I was stuck in the rain, and there was nobody around to help me. I was scared as I did not know how to travel to safety.

The training with GDS has given me the ability to travel independently, allowing me to pursue the activities I desire and helping me overcome my fear of travelling alone. **A defining moment was when I learnt how to travel to my daughter's house, allowing me to take care of my grandchildren. This brought me joy as it allowed me to play an active role in my family.**



Mrs Tay, GDS Client

CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

A journey to independence with GDS's training

In December 2017, my world was shattered when I lost sight due to a rare autoimmune condition that affected my eyes. Faced with this challenge, I felt a sense of loss, realising that the simple joys, such as reading, were no longer accessible to me.

Fortunately, my perspective shifted when I discovered that this setback didn't define my limitations. Thanks to the training provided by GDS, I have regained independence in using my mobile phone effortlessly. **Now, I can read up on the latest news, stay connected with my family and friends through messaging apps, and organise outings with my loved ones.**



Elizabeth Lim, GDS Client



My guide dog, my best friend

Ever since I began my journey as a guide dog user in 2012, my life has been transformed by the incredible partnership with these amazing dogs. In 2022, I was paired with Laurie, my second guide dog from GDS and the impact he has had on my life is truly indescribable.

Laurie is not just a guide; he's a loyal companion who has brought an unparalleled sense of independence and confidence to my daily activities.

Alvin Ng, GDS Guide Dog User since 2012

RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Smartphone Training Toolkit for People with Vision Impairment



Launch of the Smartphone Training toolkit in May 2023, attended by the co-designers, and representatives from Guide Dogs Singapore & the Infocomm Media Development Authority.

The Digital for Life (DfL) movement in Singapore is dedicated to building an inclusive digital society, empowering all Singaporeans with digital skills. Since its launch in February 2021 by the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA), the movement has gained substantial traction, with active participation from over 100 partners in the private, public, and people (3P) sectors. Approximately 200,000 Singaporeans have experienced an enhanced quality of life by incorporating digital technology into their daily routines through this initiative.

Guide Dogs Singapore (GDS) collaborated with Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) to develop an accessible toolkit for individuals with vision impairment. This collaboration played a crucial role in securing a research grant from the Digital for Life Fund, to co-design and co-develop an evidence-informed web-based toolkit on basic smartphone training for vision impaired persons. By adopting an experience-based co-design methodology, six clients and two Accessibility and Technology trainers from GDS, all of whom are vision impaired, were actively involved as co-designers from April 2022 to March 2023. Together with the research team from SIT, they contributed their insights to shape the toolkit.

The web-based toolkit aimed to bridge the digital divide through assistive technology, offering personalised training and user-centric resources. This empowers individuals with vision impairment, as well as trainers, family members, and caregivers to confidently navigate smartphones and mobile applications. The co-development process allowed the stakeholders' inputs for the content and structure of the entire web-based toolkit to be incorporated, making it user-centric. Additionally, the team collaborated on writing the content, scripting the videos, and producing the 14 instructional videos featured in the toolkit.

This project is now recognised as a supported initiative by the Digital for Life Fund, championing digital inclusion, literacy and wellness as outlined in the Enabling Masterplan 2030 report. It has become a staple in GDS's Accessibility and Technology training, focusing on smartphones and apps for clients. Furthermore, it has also been adopted by other social service agencies like the Singapore Association for the Visually Handicapped (SAVH) and iC2 PrepHouse, as well as by occupational therapy departments of some local hospitals. These organisations utilise the toolkit to train clients or patients with vision impairments to use smartphones and apps as an effective assistive technology aid to enable independence and participation in society.

The toolkit has also garnered positive feedback from occupational therapists at several Guide Dog organisations in Australia, who find it comprehensive and user-friendly. Its development has filled a significant gap for an evidence-informed training resource in this area. The team looks forward to further refining the toolkit and move towards the "Beyond Basics" phase.



Celebratory lunch with the co-design team for the launch of the Smartphone Training toolkit prototype.

Front row, from left to right: Ms Amanda Chong, Ms Sherriza Hareani Bte Jalil, Ms Vivian Ser, Mr Dallan Au





Back row, from left to right: Ms Nurul Natasya Bte Idru, Ms Jacqueline Siow (research assistant), Ms Yong Pei Yueng, Mr Chia Hong Sen.

Absent from the picture: Ms Tan Xing En

Scan to discover the Smartphone Training Toolkit



Content includes:

-  List of useful apps and accessories recommended for use in the Singapore context
-  Insightful videos on how to navigate through your iPhone or Android
-  Ways you can support someone with vision impairment in learning
-  Tips for tailoring training programmes effectively

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

(As of 30 November 2023)



12,869

+14 from 2022

FACEBOOK
FOLLOWERS



8,206

+157 from 2022

FACEBOOK
LIKES



4,015

+452 from 2022

INSTAGRAM
FOLLOWERS



52

A New Initiative
in 2023

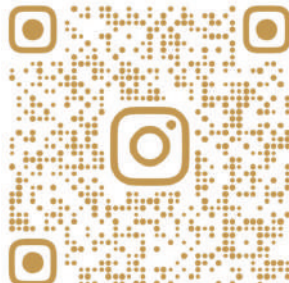
TIK TOK
FOLLOWERS

We're now
on TikTok,
follow us!

Follow us on our social media pages for the latest updates:



@GuideDogsSingapore



@guidedogs_sg



@guidedogssg

#GDS

#GuideDogsSingapore

#GuideDogsSG

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

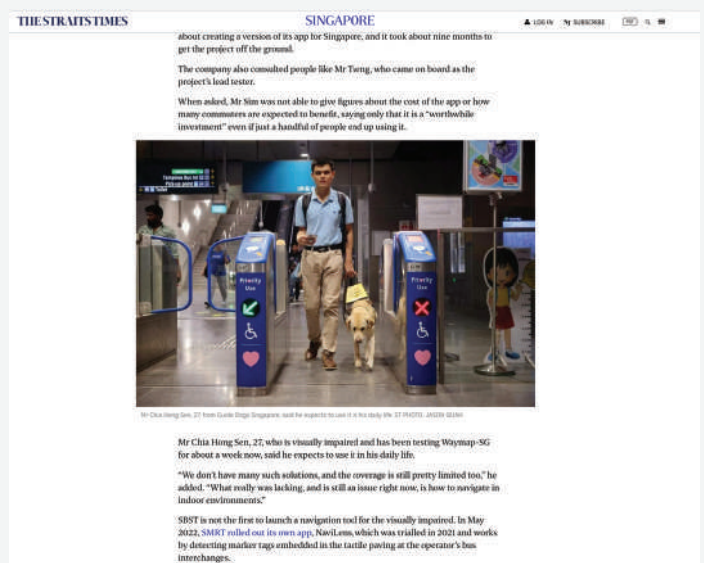
Thank you to all media publications for their coverage and passionate advocacy in support of our cause. You may read some of these features on our [website](#).

The Straits Times 13 March 2023



Paralympian Sophie Soon's dispute with cafe sheds light on guide dog users' daily challenges

The Straits Times 19 October 2023



SBS Transit launches app to guide visually impaired around bus interchanges, MRT stations

Today Online 13 March 2023



Analysis: Regulations allow F&B joints to let in guide dogs for the visually impaired, but why do some still have reservations?

Mothership 4 July 2023



No pets allowed on S'pore public transport except guide dogs: Iswaran



Channel 8 Curious City 2 Ep 4 1 August 2023

Curious City 2 - Learning about Guide Dogs from GDS Guide Dog Mobility Instructor and GDS Guide Dog User

OUR OVERSEAS PARTNERS



*Nippon Lighthouse
Guide Dog
Training Center*

Nippon Lighthouse Guide Dog Training Center

A pioneer in Asia, Nippon Lighthouse (NLH) is a well established welfare centre for the blind based in Osaka, Japan, with its deep rooted history in supporting the vision impaired community. We welcomed our first training dog, Eve, from their leading Guide Dog Training Center in 2021. Eve was successfully matched and has been guiding her blind user since 2022.

In 2023, we embarked on a partnership with NLH to groom a breeding dog, Disco. GDS leveraged on NLH's capacity and expertise to breed, whelp and raise Disco's puppies. She has since given birth to a litter of eight puppies who are under the care of puppy raisers in Japan for a period of 12 to 16 months. The role of the puppy raisers is to ensure these puppies learn basic obedience skills, have the opportunity to socialise and be exposed to the environments they will eventually be working in when paired with their blind users.

Subsequently, these young guide dog candidates will return to NLH in Japan for a comprehensive assessment where their abilities and potential to enter the guide dog training programme will be evaluated. Selection criteria are extremely strict to ensure the safety of their future vision impaired users. Those who do not have the traits required of working guide dogs may be reclassified to alternative careers and continue to make a difference in the life of others. The number of dogs that can successfully enter the 20-week guide dog training programme will be shared between the two organisations.



OUR OVERSEAS PARTNERS



Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs

Our second Guide Dog Mobility Instructor (GDMI) cadet, Ms Tan Shi Lin is currently being trained by Seeing Eye Dogs in Australia. Established in Victoria in 1960, Seeing Eye Dogs is a division of Vision Australia, and is a full member of the International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF).

Only training provided by IGDF full member organisations are accredited and compounded by the limited number of such schools in the industry, it was not easy for us to find a school that could train our second cadet. Post-pandemic struggles faced by these schools made it even more challenging to support other organisations.

We are truly thankful to Vision Australia for their friendship and support in helping us build guide dog training capabilities in GDS and Singapore, empowering more vision impaired Singaporeans to live the life they choose with dignity and independence. We also wish to thank Ms Jane Bradley for facilitating the process. Ms Bradley is the Puppy Development Manager at Seeing Eye Dogs. She is also an IGDF Assessor and sits on the Development Committee, mentoring guide dog organisations worldwide to become full members of the IGDF.



Guide Dogs Australia

Our longstanding partner - Guide Dogs Australia (GDA) has been supplying us dogs since 2013, and also trained Singapore's and our first Guide Dog Mobility Instructor. It has also seconded their Orientation and Mobility Specialists to Singapore to help train our clients in independent travel skills. GDA's friendship and support have been invaluable in our early years of formation until now. Their contribution to the blind and low vision community in Singapore brings us closer to becoming an inclusive and Guide Dog accessible society.



MORE BUSINESSES DISPLAY

GUIDE DOG FRIENDLY SIGNAGES

We are thrilled to express our sincere appreciation for the significant increase in businesses displaying guide dog friendly signages. This positive development highlights the community's growing awareness of the essential role that guide dogs play in the lives of those with vision impairment. Displaying these signages enable businesses to showcase their commitment to inclusivity and fosters an accessible environment for all.



Guide Dogs Singapore provides complimentary "Guide Dog Friendly Business" decals for businesses who wish to indicate their inclusive policy. Contact us if you wish to display such a decal/sticker for your business.

*This decal is endorsed by the following key government agencies:
Animal & Veterinary Service (AVS), Land Transport Authority (LTA), Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS),
Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF), National Council of Social Service (NCSS) and SG Enable.*

Establishments that are Guide Dog Friendly and have adopted our donation box.



7th Heaven KTV & Café



Pawrus® Group



The Eyeclinic
by Dr Cheryl Lee

Visit our website for a list of Guide Dog Friendly Establishments. The list is not exhaustive as there are many more businesses that have since welcomed guide dogs.

<https://guidedogs.org.sg/get-involved/guide-dog-friendly-establishments/>

If you own a business or know someone who does, contact us at admin@guidedogs.org.sg for a complimentary guide dog friendly decal to indicate your inclusive policy or for staff training.

WELFARE FOR OUR DOGS

Guide dogs are precious companions and “eyes” to their vision impaired users. Guide dog users are the main caregivers, and are trained to look after their dogs’ needs such as daily brushing, regular showering, toileting and controlled feeding to ensure a healthy weight. When the dogs are not at work, they get plenty of play and rest.

GDS guide dogs are maintained in positive emotional, mental and physical health to optimise their working life and to ensure they are happy at work. Our job is to ensure that every dog stays healthy and fit to safely guide their users.

Official Veterinary Partner: The Animal Clinic



With the support from our Official Veterinary Partner, The Animal Clinic (TAC), our dogs are provided with half-yearly checks by vets (more frequent for the older dogs); annual vaccination and preventives.

For every GDS working guide dog, TAC provides a comprehensive health screening every 6 months that includes a physical examination, wellness blood tests, and supplies each dog with monthly preventives against heartworms, ticks, fleas, and intestinal worms.

The Pets Workshop



The Pets Workshop provided complimentary grooming sessions for our well-deserved dogs in training and guide dogs, helping our users maintain the well-being of their devoted guides.

Official Joint Supplement Partner: VetZ Petz® Antinol®



VetZ Petz® Antinol® is proud to be our Official Joint Supplement Partner. Antinol is a 100% all natural anti-inflammatory supplement to support joint health in dogs and cats. VetZ Petz has partnered with us to provide Antinol to all our working and training guide dogs.

Guide dogs lead a more active lifestyle than most dogs. Our guide dogs take Antinol as a preventive, to support their joint health, skin/coat and mental health. Antinol enables our guide dogs to maintain their active lifestyle, allowing them to guide more effectively and provide their VI users with the independence they strive for.

APPRECIATING OUR GRANTMAKERS, DONORS, PARTNERS & VOLUNTEERS

GDS operates with limited resources and is extremely grateful to the following grantmakers and donors for their contribution. Their generosity helped us advance our mission, and touched the lives of people with vision loss and their families.

The following grantmakers, corporate and individual donors have supported GDS with \$5,000 and above from the period 1 December 2022 to 30 November 2023. While we have taken care to ensure the accuracy of the list, we seek your kind understanding for any inadvertent omission on our part. We would also like to thank all our donors, not mentioned here, for their kind contribution.



L87



TechnipFMC

Chow Joo Ming
Chua Ying Ying
Clarence Yeo Gek Leong
DBS Bank Ltd
Ho Bee Foundation
Jean Thoh Jing Herng
Koh Tat Lee
Kok Pei Foong
Mavis Khoo Bee Geok
Ng Hui Ling
Ngo Hwee Ngah
Pet Wellness Products Pte Ltd
Shirley Patricia Sutton
Tabernacle of Christ
Tan Chin Tuan Foundation
The Ngee Ann Kongsi
Tiong Shu
UK Online Giving Foundation
Vetsurge Pte Ltd

**We would like to thank the following pro bono Partners
who provided their time and expertise to GDS.**

Official Veterinary Partner



Legal Counsel

**KING & WOOD
MALLESONS**
金杜律师事务所

OUR SUPPORTERS

As a small charity, we depend on the goodwill of the community to support our fundraising and advocacy initiatives. We are grateful to individuals who volunteered their time, as well as those who have passionately advocated for our cause within their communities. It has enabled us to continue doing the important work that we do.

Corporate Partners



I am delighted that TEAM LEWIS Foundation has given me the opportunity to contribute to GDS in their ongoing efforts, supporting the power of these four-legged heroes to restore the confidence and self-reliance of individuals with vision impairments.

Their incredible work goes far beyond providing adorable, well-trained guide dogs. They are dedicated to empowering individuals with sight loss to lead fulfilling lives by offering comprehensive support and life-changing services.

**Cris Xiong, Senior Insights & Analytics Manager,
APAC, TEAM LEWIS**



Community Partners

Working Towards Inclusiveness



We gained a profound understanding of the vital role of guide dogs for the vision impaired community, delving into their responsibilities and the legislative landscape governing their usage. Hong Sen's (GDS Guide Dog User) sharing provided a poignant glimpse into the challenges faced by vision impaired individuals, offering an enlightening perspective. The talk left us with valuable knowledge and insights, allowing us to feel better equipped to offer assistance respectfully and effectively, contributing to a more inclusive community.



Land Transport Authority

Educating and Nurturing the Next Generation

During the session, we gained valuable insights into vision impairment, learning about the varying degrees of vision loss and the different challenges that individuals may face. Through activities such as using simulation glasses and hearing from a guide dog user, we were able to grasp a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by someone with blindness and how mobility aids like white canes and guide dogs can help them. The team from GDS also answered the children's questions in a simple manner, making it engaging and easy for all to understand.



**Maple Bear Preschool,
Hillview**

Empowering Staff With Knowledge

Guide Dogs Singapore provided a great training session, helping us to better understand the needs of persons with vision impairment. Much information was also shared about handlers and their guide dogs. There were ample hands-on activities, allowing us to try to navigate using a white cane and learn the usefulness of a mental map. We also learnt the importance of giving clear instructions, through guiding blindfolded staff to move through narrow pathways, up and down stairs, and to a seat. The training equipped us with the knowledge to better assist persons with vision impairment in the library and also in public.



**Punggol Regional
Library team,
National Library Board**

Volunteers

Volunteering has always been a source of joy, allowing me to contribute and make a positive impact in the community.



I begin my volunteer journey in 2021 as a dog boarder with GDS, caring for dogs in training and providing temporary support for guide dogs. A particularly touching moment in my volunteering experience was witnessing the guide dog graduation of the guide dogs that I had taken care of. I felt a deep emotional connection and pride in being part of an organisation dedicated to improving the lives of people with vision loss.

Evankay Batenga

It is more than just giving back. It is about making a tangible difference in someone's life.

Because of my passion to support the vision impaired community, I began my volunteering journey with GDS. It has been an immensely fulfilling experience for me, and I have come to understand that simple acts of kindness can transform lives and create a profound impact. A moment that stood out to me was when I witnessed guide dog Clare confidently navigating obstacles in a bustling city street alongside her blind user. This experience underscored the extraordinary bond between guide dogs and their users, highlighting the independence and freedom they provide.

Susan



Volunteering helped me find purpose and meaning in giving back to my community.

Volunteering with GDS has been an interesting and fulfilling experience. It has allowed me to contribute to a meaningful cause and to witness firsthand the life-changing impact guide dogs have on individuals with vision impairment. Through my volunteer experience with GDS, I gained a deeper understanding of how we can work towards making Singapore a more inclusive and accessible place for all.

Ang Kai Yee



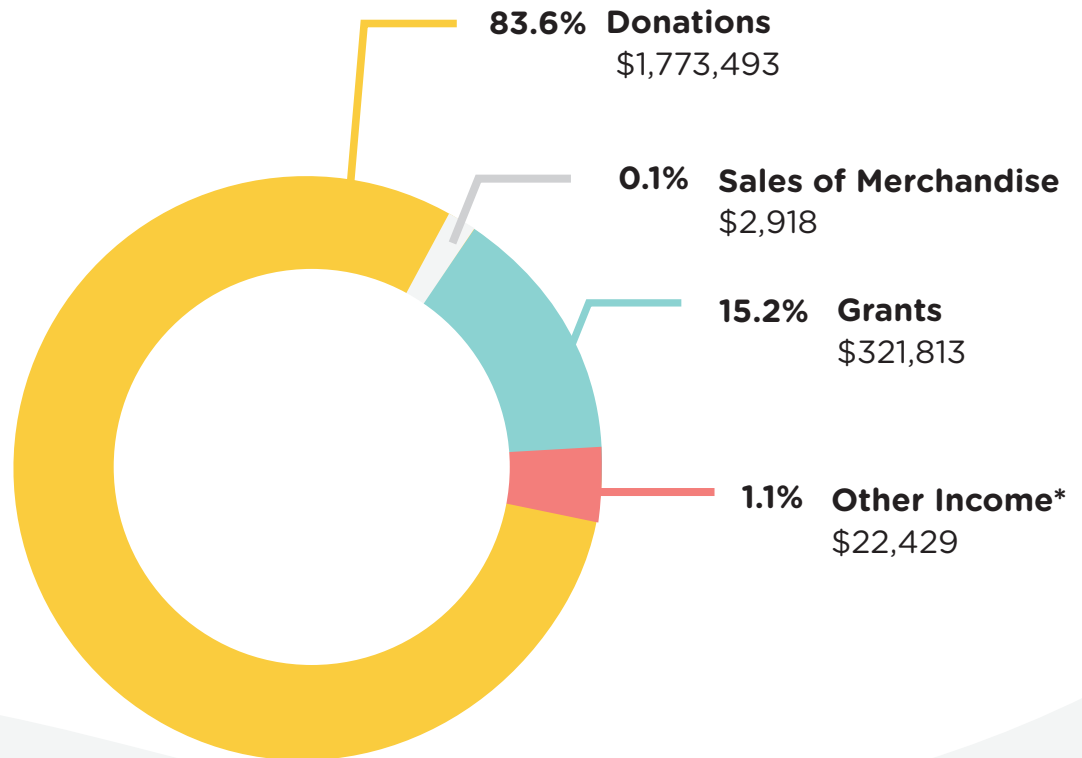
HOW FUNDS WERE USED

Period: 1 December 2022 to 30 November 2023

Sources of Income

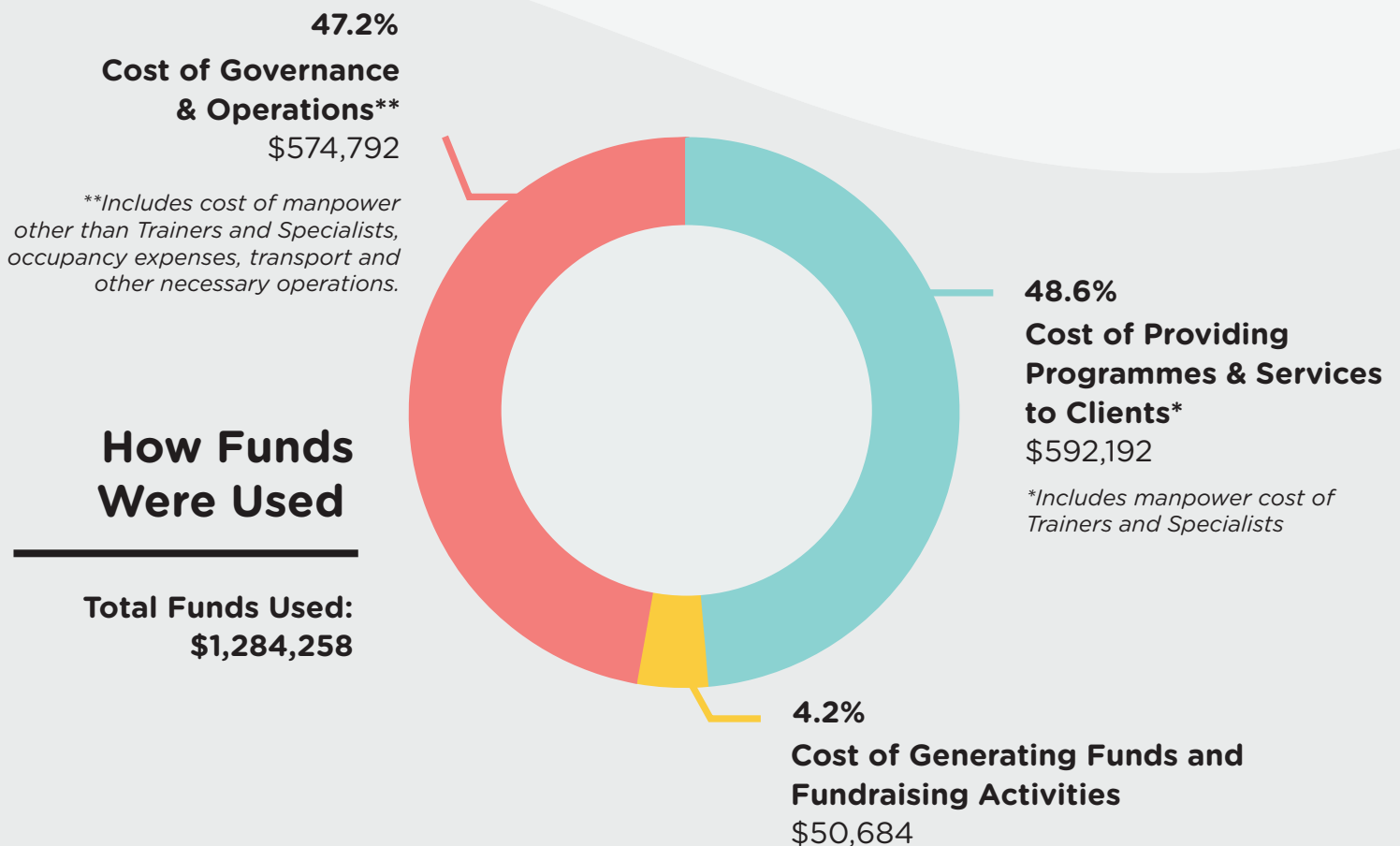
Total Income:
\$2,120,653

**There was a loss of \$66,590 on investment income in FY2023.*



How Funds Were Used

Total Funds Used:
\$1,284,258

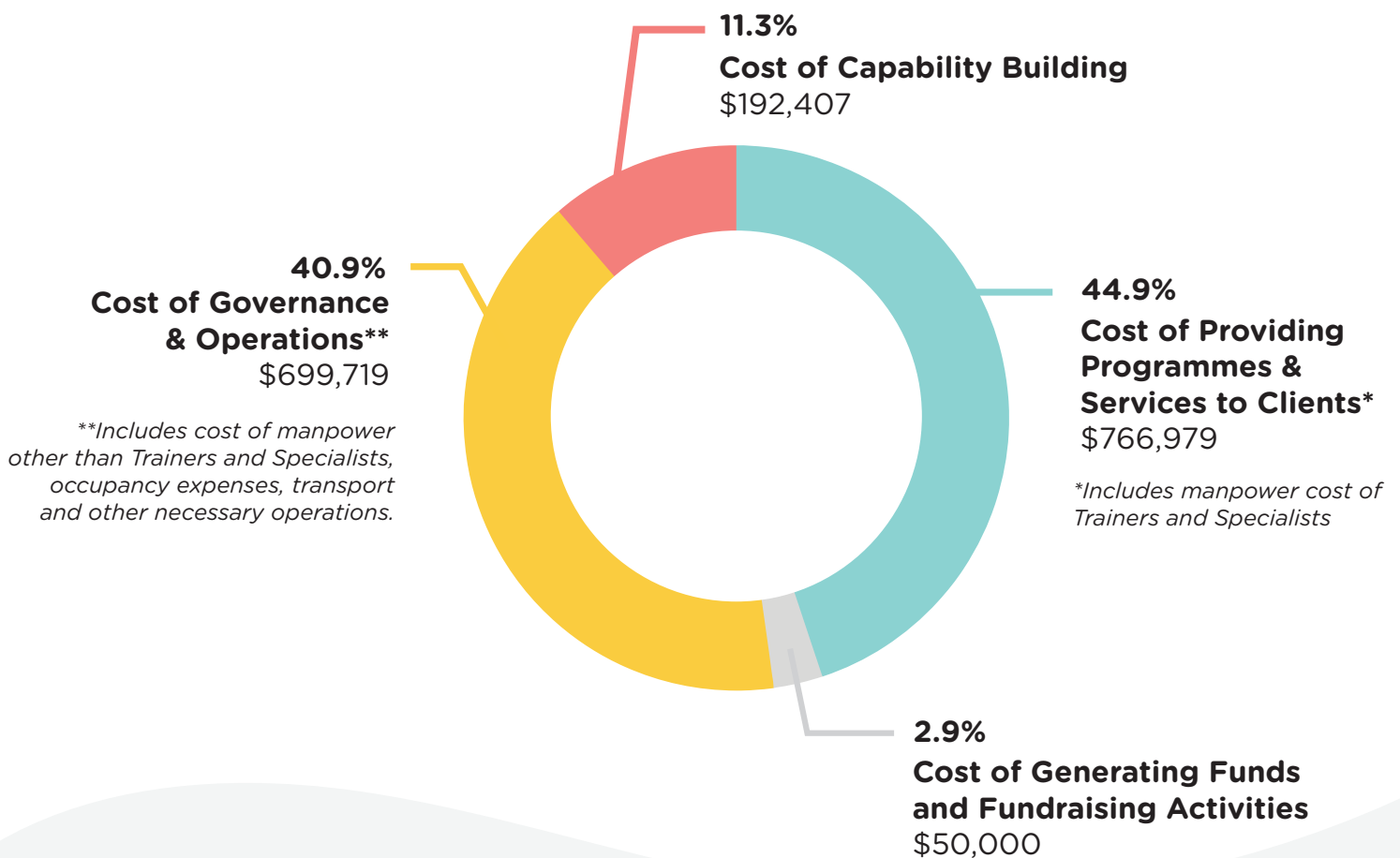


PROJECTED EXPENDITURE FOR FY2024

Period: 1 December 2023 to 30 November 2024

Fundraising and Expenditure Set Aside for Fiscal Year 2024

Total Operating Budget: \$1,709,105



Recognising the importance of psychosocial support to ensure a more holistic vision rehabilitation to our clients, we will be hiring additional headcount in the provision of programmes and services to clients. We will also be investing in building local capability to meet the growing demand for our vision rehabilitation services and the use of guide dogs.

FUTURE PLANS AND COMMITMENTS

Board of Directors

Recognising the need for a range of expertise and skill sets to bolster the leadership at GDS, we welcome Mr Matthew St Clair Whittall and Mr Isaac Poh as our new Directors on the Board. Their diverse backgrounds in corporate finance and digital marketing respectively will steer the organisation towards our long-term objectives as GDS continues to grow and evolve.

Increasing Professional Capacity and Capability of Orientation and Mobility Services

The demand for vision rehabilitation services continues to rise, evident from the increasing number of new clients referred to us over the years. We served 535 clients in 2021, 661 clients in 2022 and 775 clients in 2023. One of the most critical skills provided by vision rehabilitation is the ability to travel safely and independently to continue living a self-reliant life. To ensure every client has prompt access to our O&M training, we are expanding the capacity and capability of our Orientation and Mobility Services.

Our Senior O&M Specialists will provide support to clients with complex O&M needs, while our newly recruited O&M Specialist cadets will assist those with less complex needs. The cadets will undergo continuous training under the guidance of Senior O&M Specialists. Once they have gained sufficient experience and skills, they will mentor future cadets, ensuring effective allocation of our overall O&M resources.

With over thirty years of combined experience, our GDS Senior O&M Specialists are highly skilled and adept at providing comprehensive training to our clients, enabling them to function as independently as possible. In addition, we are committed to supporting our O&M Specialists in enhancing their skills and staying updated with the latest developments in the field.

Providing Holistic Vision Rehabilitation

With the addition of social workers to our team, we can offer a more holistic vision rehabilitation programme that includes psychosocial support alongside the current independent skills training. The role of these social workers extends beyond assisting our clients, and will also include support for caregivers.

Social workers will help our clients adjust to losing their vision, and address psychological, familial and employment challenges related to their vision loss, leading to a more successful rehabilitative outcome.

A Second Guide Dog Mobility Instructor (GDMI)

GDS Guide Dog Programme is currently supported by one GDMI, Ms Christina Teng. She sources for suitable dogs, train and pair them with eligible clients. She also provides life-long aftercare support* to the working guide dog teams** to ensure a safe and viable teamwork.

Our initial plan was to augment the programme by hiring a second GDMI from overseas, while our GDMI cadet, Ms Tan Shi Lin underwent training at Seeing Eye Dogs, Vision Australia. However, due to current legislative constraints by the Ministry of Manpower, that was not a viable option.

We look forward to the graduation and return of Ms Tan in 2025-2026 as our second GDMI. She will be accredited according to the standards of the International Guide Dog Federation. With two GDMIs, we can double our guide dog teams and enable life-changing experiences to more people with vision impairment.

**Aftercare support includes intensive support for the first six months post pairing, learning of new routes, dog's wellbeing, the annual public assess tests and retirement*

***Guide dog team refers to the vision impaired user and their paired guide dogs.*

"Enabling The Vision Impaired Through Technology" - Supported by IMDA Digital For Life Fund

We were awarded a grant from the Infocomm Media Development Authority to enhance our IT training, generously supported by DBS Bank Limited. The two-year grant funds one-to-one individualised training, group workshops and podcasts, with the aim to push for greater technology literacy and adoption within the vision impaired community.

Clients will receive transport subsidy, thereby making it easier for them to access the training venue by themselves. We anticipate at least 280 learners to benefit from the training and workshops.

GDS Takes Positive Steps Towards Achieving Better Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Standards Compliance

As a social service agency that advocates for equal rights and inclusive participation on behalf of the vision impaired community in Singapore, we see our move towards being an ESG-focused organisation a natural progression that aligns with the nature of our work.




Refer to our [website](#) to find out more about the steps we have taken to incorporate ESG standards compliance into our operations and culture.



GOVERNANCE

GDS Board

The Board's role and responsibilities are to:

-  Provide leadership and diverse expertise to support the strategic pillars of the organisation – programmes and services to clients with vision impairment, community partnership and governance
-  Monitor the progress of the organisation's direct charitable services
-  Review and approve the yearly budgets to ensure funds are prudently used

GDS Board members do not receive remuneration for their Board services. There are no paid staff who sit on the Board or are close members of the family of the Board members or the Head of agency.

Three Board members – Dr Wong Hon Tym, Ms Shirley Patricia Sutton (Lee), and Ms Tan Hwei Lan, have served on the Board for more than ten years. They are dedicated members valued for their contributions and institutional memory that help with the organisation's continuity planning.

Our Chairman, Dr Wong Hon Tym served as a Director from July 2013 to January 2017 and was appointed as a Chairman since January 2017. As an Ophthalmologist at Tan Tock Seng Hospital and a Clinical Director at the Centre for Healthcare Innovation, he continuously brings in valuable knowledge and expertise to augment our programmes and services to meet the needs of the vision impaired community.

In line with the company's Memorandum and Articles of Association, one-third of the directors would retire from office and get re-appointed. Directors who are to retire every alternate year shall be those who have served the longest in the office since their last election. Dr Wong Hon Tym, Ms Patricia Shirley Sutton (Lee) and Ms Tan Hwei Lan have previously retired from office and were re-appointed.

We also welcomed two new Board members, Mr Matthew Whittall and Mr Isaac Poh who lend their expertise in finance consultancy and marketing experience.

The Board endeavours to identify potential candidates to ensure succession planning for Board members wherever possible.

Board Meeting Attendance

From 1 December 2022 to 30 November 2023, six board meetings were held and this was the attendance of our Board members.

Date of Board Meeting	31 Jan	28 Mar	16 May	25 Jul	26 Sep	28 Nov
Dr Wong Hon Tym	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Ms Shirley Patricia Sutton	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Mr Shum John Dominic Tze-Juen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ms Tan Hwei Lan	✓		✓		✓	✓
Ms Trina Tan Li Lian		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Dr Lee Koon Ann Lennie	✓	✓	✓			
Mr Matthew Whittall	Only appointed in Apr 2023		✓	✓	✓	✓
Mr Isaac Poh	Only appointed in Apr 2023		✓			✓

Reserves Policy

GDS maintains a reserves policy to ensure our financial sustainability, continuity of services and operational stability in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Our current reserves position is 3.78 years. We will be using the funds to expand our services to our clients, and increase our advocacy and outreach efforts.

	2023 (\$)	2022(\$)
(A) General/Unrestricted Funds	4,857,763	4,021,368
(B) Annual Operating Expenditure	1,284,258	952,852
Ratio of Reserves	3.78 : 1	4.22 : 1

Conflict of Interest Policy

All Board members and staff are required to comply with GDS's Conflict of Interest Policy. The Board has put in place documented procedures for Board members and staff to declare actual or potential conflicts of interest on a regular and need-to basis. Board members also abstain and do not participate in decision-making on matters where they have a conflict of interest.

Whistle Blowing Policy

GDS is committed to conducting its operations in compliance with applicable accounting requirements, financial reporting requirements, internal controls, corporate governance (including, without limitation, the code of governance for charities and institutions of a public character applicable to GDS) and any legislations and regulations relating thereto. Our whistle blowing policy aims to provide an avenue for any employee or stakeholder (such as any volunteer, supplier, service user, client and any other party with a business relationship with GDS) to raise concerns about actual, suspected or anticipated wrongdoings or improprieties in matters or concerns within GDS.

For more information, please visit the [Corporate Governance](#) page on our website

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd (GDS) depends largely on the generosity from individuals and companies to fund our programmes and services for our clients. We will be most grateful if you could support us through these ways:





Fundraise

Organise fundraising events in support of GDS, make a personal donation, and/or encourage your employees to donate by matching their donations.



Advocate

Help raise awareness about the vision impaired community and guide dogs in Singapore.

-  Invite us to give a talk or conduct training at your school or company
-  Display our "Guide Dogs Are Welcome" decals and consign a donation box at your business premises



Shop Our Merchandise

Buy our exclusive GDS merchandise. All sales proceeds go towards funding our holistic rehabilitation programmes to help our vision impaired clients regain their independence.



Volunteer

Contribute your time or skills through volunteering to make a real difference in building an inclusive society for the vision impaired community.



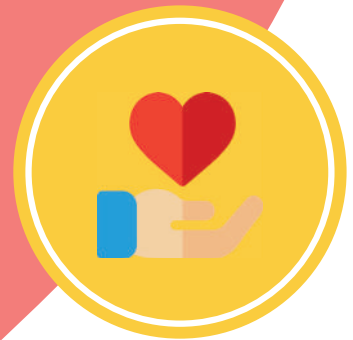
Be an Inclusive Business

Make information accessible to people with vision impairment. We offer digital accessibility consultancy and user experience testing, focusing on making content accessible for people with vision impairment. Contact us to learn more.



Offer Employment

Provide meaningful employment opportunities to job seekers with vision impairment, enabling them to be financially independent and self-sufficient.



Corporate Social Responsibility

Adopt our charity as your Corporate Social Responsibility partner, and witness first-hand the difference you make to the lives of our clients and their caregivers.

For more information and resources on supporting the VI community, please visit:

guidedogs.org.sg/resources/for-public

We appreciate the efforts from all individuals and businesses that are taking active steps towards inclusiveness.

WAYS TO DONATE

All direct donations to GDS of minimum S\$20 are eligible for a 250% tax exemption.

ONLINE

Making a difference has never been easier. Donate online with just a few clicks via these secure portals.

giving.sg/gds

guidedogs.give.asia

PAYNOW

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

Under Comments/Reference No., enter your name and NRIC/UEN/FIN if you would like to receive tax deduction.

SGQR CODE

Scan and donate with any of these payment apps.



CHEQUE

Crossed and payable to:
Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd

Mail to PO Box 021, Tampines Central
Post Office, S915201

Provide the following details if you would like to receive tax deduction:

- Name
- NRIC/FIN/UEN
- Contact Number
- Email Address/Mailing Address

PLANNED GIVING

Making a Will is an important part of planning for the future and providing for your loved ones. Increasingly, people are nominating charitable causes as a beneficiary to make a positive impact beyond one's lifetime.

Contact us if you would like to know more about Planned Giving.

GIFTS IN MEMORY

A gift in memory is a special way to pay tribute to a loved one. Your generous gift will support our rehabilitation programmes to help our clients gain independent living and mobility skills, and the provision of guide dogs to enhance their quality of life.

Contact us if you would like to know more about Gifts in Memory.



**GUIDE DOGS
SINGAPORE**

ENABLING THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

CONTACT US



www.guidedogs.org.sg



20 Sin Ming Lane, Midview City, #02-53 Singapore 573968



(65) 6339 7900 – Main Office
(65) 6734 3969 – Client Services Office



admin@guidedogs.org.sg



Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd



@guidedogs_sg



Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd



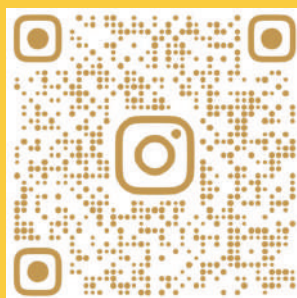
Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd



@guidedogssg

**If you know someone who can benefit from our programmes and services,
please reach out to us.**

Scan QR code to follow us on Facebook and Instagram



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