



## Eldad Hagar Hope For Paws President and CEO

I was born in Tel-Aviv, Israel in 1975 and from day one on earth, I was surrounded by animals. My family moved a couple of times during my early childhood, and at the age of 5, we moved to Northern Israel where I really started gaining a lot of experience because I was exposed to so many more animals, dogs, cats, hedgehogs, tortoises, and many different kinds of birds. My neighbor down the block was a very kind veterinarian, and every time I found an animal in need, he guided me on how to care for them, he would give me the medications needed and he never charged me... he just wanted to help. The example he set for me was very important because I knew from a very early age that this is what I wanted to do when I grow up - help animals!

Fast forward to 1998, I came to the United States and I loved it here. I landed in New York, spent a few months in Fort Lauderdale, and then traveled all across the country until I ended up in Los Angeles. This was the Dot Com era and I was a young computer guy... trying to figure out my life in a new country. In 1999 I married Audrey and in the year 2000, one phone call changed everything for me. A friend of mine told me about two young kittens in need of help and I immediately sprang into action and guided her on how to take care of them.



This event triggered my desire to fulfill my childhood dream and help animals, and for the next 8 years, we volunteered and fostered hundreds of dogs and cats. I was always drawn to the medical cases and towards animals who were abused. Dealing with abused animals required time and patience, but dealing with dogs with many broken bones required a lot of money because medical care here is so expensive! Every month I would have to ask the founder of Ace of Hearts for help covering another surgery and another surgery and I know it was challenging.

After years of volunteering for other rescue groups, we decided that it's time for us to take it to the next level and start an organization so we can be responsible for our own fundraising. On June 11th, 2008 we got approved by the IRS, and Hope For Paws was officially born.

In 2012, Hope For Paws' biggest event happened when Fiona's rescue video went viral and this really helped us grow. It enabled me to hire the first Hope For Paws employee, JoAnn Wiltz who is still working with me. In 2014 Audrey and I parted ways but we remained very good friends. In 2016 Loreta Frankonyte joined the Hope For Paws team and we became a couple.



We are a small organization here in Los Angeles, but thanks to YouTube, Facebook, and all our supporters who are sharing our rescue videos, we are reaching millions of people all over the world. I am so happy to receive every week letters and emails from people who are sharing with me how our work influenced their lives, how it inspired them, and how it helped them save animals in every continent on this earth.

Over the years I assembled the most amazing team that is so dedicated to their work. We work day and night, we work on weekends and holidays, we work above ground and sometimes in sewers underground, and I am just so

proud to be working with them. This year has been a rough one, but for the homeless animals it's always rough so we kept working through it.

I promise we will continue to make you proud for being a part of our team!



*"Eldad is the Real-Deal. He's an amazing man that's assembled a talented team that rescues animals... often at the risk of their own lives."*

*Jay Johnson*