

# token ari evan gold

THE DOOGOOD CONSERVATORY:  
Helping Skateboarding Save Lives

**MISSION:** To provide free-to-use skateboards and pads to underprivileged kids who can't otherwise afford them.

Ari Evan Gold is a lifelong skateboarder from Tampa, Florida, who, after transplanting to Southern California in 2002, started to notice an unfortunate trend: Many kids at public skateparks are borrowing other people's gear because they don't have access to quality boards they can learn on.

"I thought, 'What if somehow I could give skateboards away to kids who didn't have their own?'" Gold says. And with this idea, The Doogood Conservatory was born. Inspired, Gold donated his personal skateboard to the Skatepark of Tampa (the SPoT) for kids to use. He then contacted the Action Sports Retailer (ASR) association and was generously given free booth space at their September 2002 tradeshow so that he could gather letters of support for his idea from members of the skate community. Within a month, Blitz Distribution supplied Doogood with 250 new decks. Gold began putting the donated boards in the hands of community centers and organizations, such as The Boys & Girls Club, that could distribute them to needy kids. By Christmas of that year, organizations in 10 cities had received donations of 20 boards each, and The Doogood Conservatory was well on its way to becoming an official nonprofit.

Working from this momentum, Gold created what would become the heart and soul of Doogood: the Skatepark Program, where donations are

made directly to the parks, without the aid of outside charity. Gold explains that, with this program, it's basically up to the park owners to monitor how the skateboards are utilized and to whom they're distributed. Every four months, Doogood sends new boards to participating parks, at which point the old stock of community skateboards is given away to the kids who will benefit the most from having their own deck.

Today, the program has full fiscal sponsorship from the Community Center Association of Grass Valley, California. It's currently in effect in 16 skateparks nationwide, from private facilities such as the SPoT and California's Simi Valley Skate Lab to lower-key public spots such as the Gilbert Lindsay Skatepark and the Hollenbeck Skatepark, both of which are located in low-income/high-crime areas of Los Angeles.

"My skateboard saved my life when I was growing up," says Gold. "This is what I want to relate to these kids. Skateboarding is a self-taught method of survival. All a kid needs to do is jump on a board, and the rest will take care of itself."

Gold sees huge potential for the organization. "Eventually I would like Doogood to encompass skate, surf, and snow," he says, "but Phase One of the project is to open the program at 100 skateparks. There is much work to be done."

—scott ward



ari, b/s smith



"Because everyone has something that they can 'do good.'"

To learn more about The Doogood Conservatory, or to make a donation, check out [www.doogood.org](http://www.doogood.org) or call (530) 386-2160.