



2010 Program Results

You made this possible!

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Jennifer Simon

Four years ago the Public Relations committee was charged by the Board of Regents with promoting the ACVO and veterinary ophthalmology to the general public, increasing ACVO web site traffic, and developing educational materials for the general public. Three years ago, the Board of Regents gave permission to the Committee to establish the Service Dog Eye Exam Program (SDEEP). Thanks to the combined efforts of corporate sponsors, ACVO leadership, and veterinary ophthalmologists across the United States and Canada, the SDEEP has allowed the accomplishment of the charges given the Public Relations committee four years ago. The SDEEP has been so successful that other specialty colleges are now contacting us, seeking ways to emulate our program.

In our first year the program had limited success in reaching service dogs but the public relations value was evident. We elected to hold the event to coincide with the AVMA's Pet Health Week to take advantage of the AVMA's public relations efforts and to best utilize the ACVO staff time. SDEEP experienced problems associated with any new program and moved to correct those problems during the second year. Following the inaugural year, the ACVO received recognition for SDEEP from the American Society of Veterinary Medical Association Executives, designating the program as the "Best in the Business Innovation Award", 2008. With the second year of the program, an improved web site, formal endorsement from the AVMA and AHAA, and the addition of Fetching Communications further improved the public outreach and public relations value. Fetching Communications is a public relations firm dedicated to promotion of animal related products and activities. With Fetching's direction, numerous newspapers throughout

the country were alerted to SDEEP and ran articles about the effort. Fetching was able to arrange for ACVO Diplomates to speak on nationally broadcast radio programs and pod casts. Circulation of over four million was reached nationally with the 2009 event.

Any program such as SDEEP takes time for momentum to build and establish credibility, 2010 proved this to be true. The ACVO and veterinary ophthalmology received its greatest exposure during the past year. In addition to newspaper articles, radio broadcasts, and pod casts the program garnered national television exposure through ABC Health (ABC News Now).



Exposure increased to over 89.5 million circulation in 2010. ACVO web site traffic has increased as a direct result of SDEEP. In 2010 we saw traffic increase to 6,000 unique visits per month on ACVO.org. This was in the referral section alone. ACVOeyeexam.org

averaged an additional 7,000 unique visits in April alone.

The third year of SDEEP has been our most successful not just considering the public relations aspect but principally the number of service animals examined. The number of service dogs examined in 2010 has more than doubled, with more than 3,200 dogs examined. Additionally the program saw an increase in the number of service horses examined. Not only were police horses examined in Louisville KY but the famous Golden Gate horse patrol benefited from ocular examinations.

There are other benefits directly related to SDEEP. The Public Relations Committee has been able to develop three promotional videos. Two videos were directly related to SDEEP promoting the program not only through the ACVOeyeexam.org web site but also through

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...3,200 Service Animals examined...

...89,500,000 advertising circulation...

...approximately \$1.2 million advertising value...



2010 Program Results...

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE SERVICE DOG SCREENING



On April 1, Friday, 2010 Drs. Paulsen and Wolfer facilitated a Service Dog screening event at Lackland Air Force Base (AFB) in San Antonio, Texas. The event was very well attended. Over 180 locally housed service dogs were

screened. It was a long day of examinations but well worth it as several significant findings were made that will help the breeding programs of both the military working dogs and the Transportation Security Agency (TSA) dogs.

Dr. Paulsen's military background was indispensable in coordination of the event, and the ACVO should benefit from the

ongoing relationship with the Department of Defense Military Working Dog Center located at Lackland AFB. Dr. Geller has volunteered to help Dr. Paulsen next year with this event. Many thanks all involved in the Service Dog event. It was a great experience for everyone involved.



Dr. Michael Paulsen



Dr. Joseph Wolfer

ACVO ON GOOD MORNING AMERICA ONLINE NEWS SEGMENT – 44 MILLION REACHED

The Service Dog event launched with a bang on April 1st as Good Morning America's online news segment welcomed Dr. Bill Miller, ACVO PR Chairperson, to the stage. Dr. Miller was accompanied by Judy Atwood, her Service Dog Cheerio, Micheal Varella with Puppies Behind Bars, and his Service Dog Paddy. The segment was approximately 5 minutes long and launched online that afternoon. GMA estimates a potential audience of over 44 million with its online, wireless and internet customers. It is a rarity that an event gets air time on a major network affiliate like this and for that we are very pleased. We will continue to work through Fetching Communications to garner national interest for the event. But by far the GMA event constitutes the most coverage we've had to date. You may view the segment online at www.ACVOeyeexam.org any time. Seen here are some static photos taken courtesy of a special sponsorship from **OcuGlo Rx Canine Vision Supplement** by a professional photographer for GMA. These turned out quite nicely and will be used on portions of the Service Dog event's promotional booth at AVMA this summer.



Merial has proven to be a terrifically supportive sponsor of the program. They have stuck with us the last three years. We hope they will continue to work with the ACVO and help us co-brand this program. I would like to request that you thank the company whenever and however you can. This might include thanking the rep that is assigned to you or stopping at the **Merial** booth at a national conference and thanking them for their participation. Who knows, many of the sales people may not know about the event directly since the company is so large. Perhaps if our veterinary ophthalmologists mention this often enough to them at shows they could become direct champions of the event, encouraging GP involvement. We hope to meet with **Merial** to discuss future involvement and increased integration from a marketing level this July. We also need to recognize the support we have received from smaller companies who are making every effort to advocate this program on behalf of the ACVO. Please be sure to thank these sponsors: **I-Med Pharma, OcuGlo Rx Canine Vision Supplement** and **Wedgewood Pharmacy** whenever you talk to your local rep. Thank you!

Platinum Sponsor:



Bronze Sponsors:



"Thank you very much for relieving the stress of any possibility of eye problems for my service dog!"



THE ACVO/MERIAL EYE EXAM EVENT... IS FOR THE DOGS!

Thank you to the entire College for your support of the 2010 ACVO/Merial Service Dog Event. Those who were not able to directly participate have contributed through other forms of involvement and promotion and we all thank you for that. I am happy to report that over 180 of our Diplomates treated more than 3,200 Service Animals through the program in the month of May. Based on numbers I've been given, this equates to well over \$170,000 in services donated to deserving clients around the country.

What amazed me this year was the dedication of our doctors and the breadth of press that the event received. Cumulative coverage of the program is beginning to take effect as the press recognizes ACVO's commitment to the Service Dog community is ongoing. Each year the event is held, public interest and thus press circulation increases. Typically it will take 3-5 years to receive adequate recognition from such a project. Our PR firm, Fetching Communications' **initial calculations reveal a circulation of over 89,500,000 individuals on a national scale. The initial estimates are that this coverage would have cost ACVO approximately \$1.2 million dollars to run advertisements in these publications.** Publications include the Philadelphia Daily News, San Francisco Chronicle, Seattle Post Intelligencer, Calgary Herald, Orange County Register, and Orlando Sentinel. This circulation is up from 4 million in 2009. Please take a moment to visit the www.ACVOeyeexam.org website and view some of the outstanding articles that were published on the event.

Additional press coverage was garnered from local affiliates, but these are difficult to quantify. For this reason we are considering hiring a clipping service for 2011, if the College Diplomates continue to support the program. Expansion of publication tracking would help us better quantify reach throughout the country and also include television coverage for the first time; previous numbers have not included TV coverage outside of the Good Morning America interview.

This was the third year for the Service Dog event. ACVO has been fortunate enough to receive continued support from its primary sponsor, **Merial**. The Board of Regents has approved at least two more years of the program as long as the College and sponsors continue to support it. Special thanks go out to all of the sponsors, **Merial**... for three years of tremendous financial support and alignment. Also to **I-Med Pharma, OcuGlo Rx Canine Vision Supplement** and **Wedgewood Pharmacy**. Without the support of the College Diplomates and sponsors, over 6,200 service dogs and their handlers would not have benefitted from these eye exams over the past three years.

We have stepped up our involvement with general practitioners by creating a targeted Service Dog booth which will be presented to the GP community via the AVMA conference this year. The goal of this booth will be to educate and encourage GPs to refer their Service Dogs to the event. We see this as a good opportunity to promote the efforts and skills of the ophthalmologists to the general practice community. Wouldn't it be nice to never again hear a client utter, "I never knew there was such a thing as a veterinary ophthalmologist"? If any of you are local to the Atlanta area and/or are going to attend the AVMA conference this August, please consider volunteering a couple hours of your time to work at the ACVO Service Dog booth with the ACVO staff. It is important to note that AVMA has also provided ongoing endorsement of the program this year, and will continue to promote it internally to the state veterinary medical associations and JAVMA.

This supplemental newsletter was created to help you better understand the reach of this program and the impact it is having on people's lives around the country. Not only is this program helping Service Dogs and garnering press for our Diplomates, but it is excellent exposure for veterinary ophthalmology and the entire specialist community. I encourage you to review the details presented here and at www.ACVOeyeexam.org and consider future involvement. The board would be interested in your feedback regarding how the program is managed and the timeline of the event. Contact us if you have suggestions or concerns. Most of all, thank you for your support of the College and its activities benefiting veterinary ophthalmology.

Stacey Daniel, ACVO Executive Director

GOALS OF THE SERVICE DOG PROGRAM

- 1) ...to preserve the sight of those who serve us all selflessly...
- 2) ...to strengthen referral relationships with general practice veterinarians...
- 3) ...to gather data relative to work performance for future work recommendations...
- 4) ...to benefit those who rely on Service Dogs; individuals and society...

Did you know that data has been collected on approximately 2,500 service dogs to date? That data is being input this summer into a searchable database for Diplomate or Resident use. If you wish to mine this for your own research program, please contact the ACVO office. The data should be ready by late summer. Please fax or mail in your forms from the examination. We would hope to gather forms from ALL service dogs. To date our Diplomates have examined over 6,200 dogs but we only have 2,500 data files. Do not forget this important step. Send us your exam forms please!

"...[this] is such a wonderful gift. We have participated the last three years. Thank you so very much for your kindness."

~ Pat Lomson, K-9 ONE Search & Rescue

CLIENT KUDOS

On Monday, May 17, 2010 at 10:00 a.m., Dazzle was examined by Dr. Anne Cook, the WONDERFUL animal ophthalmologist veterinarian at ANIMAL EYE CARE, Mount Pleasant, SC. Dazzle came through with flying colors! Dr. Cook said that Dazzle's eyes are very healthy and he will NOT develop cataracts. (We were very concerned about cataracts). He is such a precious, wonderful gift from God! Dazzle made us proud yet again! Just before we were leaving Dr. Cook's examination room, Dazzle alerted me that I dropped my sunglasses! He then gently picked them up and gave them to me. Dr. Cook was very pleased to see Dazzle perform this feat! Thank you very much for relieving the stress of any possibility of eye problems for my service dog. So many people depend upon specially trained working animals for a wide variety of disabilities. It's services like yours that help us through tough times!



Stephanie Walsh

I wanted to say thank you for putting out news about this great program. I was able to take my K-9 Partner Ben on May 21st to Sarasota. The doctor and her staff were awesome and treated us great!! Having an older police dog who has been through quite a bit and to know that his eyesight is still good is one less thing that

I have to worry about. Thank you again from both of us.
Sergeant Adam D. Schank #1757 and K-9 Ben

Our team recently received an invitation to participate in your annual eye exam promotion and I just wanted to write to say "thank you" for providing this benefit. As a member of a volunteer search team, I can tell you what a benefit this is for us. We spend hundreds out of own pockets to train our people and our dogs to provide services for missing persons. To be able to have our beloved partners examined at no cost to our handlers is such a wonderful gift. We have participated in this event over the last three years and we just wanted to say thank you so very much for this kindness.

Pat Lamson, K-9 ONE Search and Rescue

I just wanted to let you know that we are happy and excited to share the information about the free eye exams with our partners and trainers. This is a great service to offer, and I know that our partners who have participated have been very pleased.

Deborah Duerk, Saint Francis Service Dogs

"...thank you again for providing this program for Service Dog owners. Please pass along our gratitude to the doctors. Thank you for the work you do!

Marc – US Service Dog Registry

DIPLOMATE TESTIMONIES

Dr. Milt Wyman

For the past several years Dawn Filco, my technician for many years, and I have examined the eyes of the Canine Companions for Independence dogs before they go on their training programs. We have done this pro-bono.



We feel that this philanthropy is well worth the time and effort and to see these dogs help those individuals with handicaps is something to behold and makes our efforts a small price to pay to see how these unfortunate people benefit from the dogs.



Dr. William Greentree

We had a wonderful Service Dog event at our local library for dogs that helps kids with reading disabilities. I brought a special student assistant, my 9-year-old Henry, to administer eye drops and provide a little extra TLC where needed. He happily assisted me for the entire day!

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YouTube. A video is now in production that tells the story of who veterinary ophthalmologists are and what we do. The video will showcase veterinary ophthalmologists in clinical practice, treating exotic species, teaching future veterinarians and performing cutting edge research. Dr. Joe Wolfer has taken the lead in developing all of the promotional video including the ACVO cataract video.

Throughout the program, corporate sponsorship has been critical to our success. Special thanks goes to **Merial** who has been our principle sponsor since the beginning and will hopefully agree to continue sponsorship for another two years. **Pet Health Solutions, Optigen, Kong, I-Med Pharma, Wedgewood Pharmacy, and Ocu-Glo Canine Vision Supplement** have contributed to the success of the program over the past three years. The costs involved to promote free eye exams to service dogs are staggering and without the aid of corporate sponsorship SDEEP could never have been accomplished.

The Public Relations Committee is excited about the future of SDEEP and its value in promoting the ACVO and veterinary ophthalmology. Momentum for the program continues and opens new avenues for promotion. Using SDEEP we are in the process of establishing May as Veterinary Eye Health Month. More information to come as we progress...

by Dr. William Miller, Chair and Stacey Daniel, Director