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Service dogs get free eye checkups from MSU vets

By [Kara Paliokas](#)
The State News
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Correction: The story has been corrected to say "(Heidi) has really increased my independence."

Valarie Franklin made a lifelong friend when she met Sunny in high school.

Since then she and Sunny, an 8-year-old golden retriever mix, have been inseparable. Franklin, a pharmacy senior at Ferris State University, brought Sunny to the MSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital Tuesday for an event that offered free eye exams for service dogs.

The event helped special dogs that do services for individual people and the community.

"He has definitely changed my life," said Franklin, who was born with brittle bone disease and uses Sunny for assistance wherever she goes. "We spend a lot of time together."

Some of the eligible clients were search-and-rescue dogs and leader dogs.

"Any dog that works for a living could be considered a service dog," said Donna Letavish, a licensed veterinary technician at the hospital.

Letavish said they were using a "RetCam" to do a retinal examinations on the dogs.

Veterinary ophthalmologist and MSU assistant professor Joshua Bartoe said the hospital is interested in teaching, and performing services that support a cause.

"This is the first specific day that we've had for service dogs that was cost free to owners," he said.



Angeli Wright
The State News



Ferris State University student Valarie Franklin pets her service dog, Sunny, a golden retriever mix, on Tuesday at the Veterinary Medical Center.

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