

Mizzou Wire

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Dog days at Mizzou

Bark if you can read the bottom line

Story by Nancy Moen Illustration by Josh Nichols Published: April 7, 2010



Every dog has its day, and for service dogs the best choices are pawisitively May 21 and 28, when ophthalmology specialists at the [University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine](#) will provide free eye exams for furry volunteers.

The Service Dog Eye Exam Day program at MU targets smart working dogs — the canine equivalents of college graduates — who need clear vision for their jobs.

Dogs eligible for the complimentary check-ups must be certified as guide dogs, handicapped assistance dogs, detection dogs and search-and-rescue dogs. Also qualifying are dogs currently enrolled in formal service-training programs through national, regional or local organizations.

MU veterinary ophthalmologists [Elizabeth Giuliano](#) and [Jacqueline Pearce](#) will examine the animals for potential early problems that might affect their ability to perform. Information from the screenings also helps breeders avoid the propagation of genetic eye conditions.

Giuliano says MU's team saw about 25 dogs during last year's [National Service Dog Eye Exam Day](#), an event that drew more than 1,500 dogs in North America. This year, more than 160 veterinary ophthalmologists from the U.S. and Canada will check for afflictions similar to those of humans: cataracts, glaucoma, pink eye, tumors, eyelid abscesses, inflammation, in-growing eyelids and injuries.

To schedule a free exam, owners or agents of service dogs must [register online](#) with the national coordinating agency, the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists. Participants then

should phone MU's veterinary teaching hospital at 573-882-7821 to schedule a morning appointment on either day. Callers should identify themselves as participating in the "ACVO Service Dog program."

ACVO lists MU's Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital, located at Clydesdale Hall on East Campus Drive, as Missouri's only registered location for the program, now in its third year. Merial, Hill's Pet Nutrition, OPTIGEN and Kong Veterinary Products sponsor the event.

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