

MU Veterinary Ophthalmologists will participate in Service Dog Eye Exam Day

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COLUMBIA, Mo. – Despite being red-green colorblind, the eyes of service dogs are often their greatest assets. When eye problems arise, it is not only bad for them, but also creates complications for the people they assist. Ophthalmologists from the [University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine](#) will participate in the National Service Dog Eye Exam Day by giving free eye exams on May 21 and 28 to service dogs. They will check for eye afflictions similar to those that occur in humans, such as cataracts, glaucoma, pink eye, tumors, eyelid abscesses, inflammation, in-growing eyelids and injuries. They hope to diagnose these eye problems early, so they can potentially extend the time the service dogs are able to serve while improving their quality of life.

“If we do identify an ocular condition in one of these service animals, we may be able to extend the service time of the dog by giving the owners knowledge about the disease and treatment options,” said Elizabeth Giuliano, associate professor of comparative ophthalmology. “That knowledge also gives them the option of retiring their current dog and finding a new service dog before they find themselves in a difficult situation.”

MU hosts three of the only 350 board-certified veterinary ophthalmologists worldwide. Giuliano and Jacqueline Pearce, assistant teaching professor of comparative ophthalmology, will perform the exams. MU is one of only two locations in the state of Missouri participating in exam day.

Dogs eligible for the complimentary check-ups must be certified as guide dogs, handicapped assistance dogs, detection dogs and search-and-rescue dogs. Dogs currently enrolled in formal service-training programs through national, regional or local organizations also qualify for the free exams. Owners can register their pets at www.ACVOeyeexam.org.

National Service Dog Eye Exam Day is sponsored by Merial, Hill’s Pet Nutrition, OPTIGEN and Kong Veterinary Products.

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