



ACVO & MERIAL

2011 Program Results

You made this possible!

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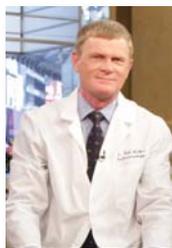
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Edited by: Stacey Daniel
Jennifer Simon



A SUCCESSFUL, ONE- OF-A-KIND PROGRAM FOR VETERINARY SPECIALTIES

by Dr. Bill Miller, ACVO
Public Relations
Chairperson

As part of the ACVO's strategic plan the college was to increase its public awareness. For the first time in the history of the ACVO the board of regents budgeted \$10,000 for public relations activities. Although the amount budgeted is a handsome sum for an organization the size of the ACVO, it would not be sufficient to accomplish the goals of the strategic plan or the public relations committee. In 2007 the public relations committee proposed to the Board of Regents the concept of a national Service Dog eye examination event. Great credit has to be given to the 2007 Regents for agreeing to an outline of the plan for the Service Dog campaign. Although many ophthalmologists provided free services to service dogs individually, no veterinary specialty college or any other veterinary organization had attempted a similar program. In addition, there was no money budgeted for the event. From the time of the annual meeting in 2007 until December of 2007, a web site and program were developed, sponsors were solicited, promotional videos developed and a thousand other tasks accomplished for the first Service Dog event which was launched in May of 2008.

Around 160 Diplomates participated in the first Service Dog event and that number has now grown to over 200. One expert on volunteer programs recently shared with me that if you can obtain commitments from 34%

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IMITATION IS FLATTERY...

by Stacey Daniel,
ACVO Director

"Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery", is that the old cliché? Well it appears ACVO has a little something to be proud of... Your 'little Service Dog event' helped over 4,000

Service Animals and reached an audience of over 217 MILLION people this year! This success has encouraged a couple veterinary colleges to consider emulating the Service Dog event in the next year or two. If those additional programs work out, the increased services provided to these Service Animals would be wonderful while helping to increase the 'snowball' effect of recognition for veterinary specialties.

The ACVO/Merial National Service Dog Eye Exam Event denotes one of the largest, if not the most cost effective public relations efforts put on by a veterinary specialty to date. It could not be done without YOU and the help of **Merial** and our supporting sponsors (**Ocu-GLO Rx**, **I-Med Pharma**, **MWI Veterinary Supply** and **Welch Allyn**). This year over 200 of you not only helped expand the event but put veterinary specialty medicine in front of 217 million members of the pet-owning public. (See bar chart on page 3 illustrating the event's growth in animals served and audience coverage.)

Its All in the Numbers

I've said it many times, the collective effort is the strength of this event. Not only regarding press coverage but in terms of the number of animals you have been able to help. Over half, 57% of the College participated in the May in 2011. An increase of 13% from 2010. Help us increase participation to 70% in 2012. Please consider combining the services that you generously

(continued on page 3)

...4,000 Service Animals examined...

...217,000,000 advertising circulation...

...approximately \$1 million editorial advertising value...

(continued from page 1...)

of a membership organization to volunteer their time to a program you should consider that effort to be highly successful. It is a testament to the character of ACVO Diplomates that from the very beginning the service dog program has had 50-60% of our members participating. Because of the strong commitment of ACVO members the program has been able to attract and maintain the support of corporate sponsors.

Merial has remained the primary sponsor of the Service Dog event for the past four years. It should be noted that although **Merial** is a major company in the veterinary industry it has no products that are specific to veterinary ophthalmology. You would not think that a volunteer program would be that expensive to develop, produce and execute but the costs are staggering. The budget for 2011 Service Dog event was around \$60,000. Without the support of our principle supporter, **Merial** the ACVO could not have provided eye exams to Service Dogs the first year of the program much less seen the event continue and grow for four years.

The Service Dog program has provided a highly valued service to nearly 10,000 Service Dogs over the past four years. The program has provided a platform to promote veterinary ophthalmology and the ACVO to the public. Local and national print media, radio, and television programs have highlighted the Service Dog event thereby educating not only Service Dog owners about veterinary ophthalmology but the general public as well. Many colleagues have said owners sought appointments to have their animal's eyes examined when they learned there were veterinarians who specialize in animal eye care. I would be less than honest if I only touted the altruistic side of the Service Dog program. For the past three years we have been calculating our ROI (return on investment) by participating. Details will be provided in the practice management portion of our upcoming meeting in Hilton Head but the short answer is the economic benefit to the practice is substantial. Service Dog event participation can be managed to be an exceptional marketing tool for your practice just as it has become for the ACVO.

The ACVO was the first specialty college to have a booth at the AVMA convention promoting what the Service Dog event does and how referring veterinarians can become involved. We will continue that by having a presence at this year's AVMA convention in St. Louis. Additionally the ACVO Service Dog event is the first program of its type to be granted full continuous endorsement by the AVMA. The Service Dog event has been so successful that other veterinary specialty

organizations are exploring how they can use a similar format to promote their specialty. On the following page you can see the numbers related to advertising value this year and understand why others wish to emulate our program.

During the past four years the ACVO Service Dog event has grown beyond any of our original expectations. Over the past four years we have hired an outside public relations firm, Fetching Communications to enhance the public relations value of the event. ACVO web site traffic has substantially increased every year the program has been in place further promoting our profession. The Public Relations Committee wants to thank all of those who have contributed time and effort into making the program successful. We expect the event to continue to grow, serving Service Dogs across the world and promoting the profession that we so much enjoy.



One of the Texas Search and Rescue dogs in training who benefitted from the program. They worked with divers, one being **Dr. Bob Munger**. These dogs help locate people in the water, drowned or living.

"My Angel With Paws had several service dogs get their eye exams thanks to this wonderful program... Many thanks."

~ My Angel With Paws

(continued from page 1...)

provide to Service Animals during the year with this program in May. Plan to attend the Service Dog program “ROI” presentation at the annual conference, or watch it post-conference online, to help increase your local recognition and participation. (More information about this practice management program is available at www.ACVOconference.org).

Reaching general practitioners – local promotion ideas

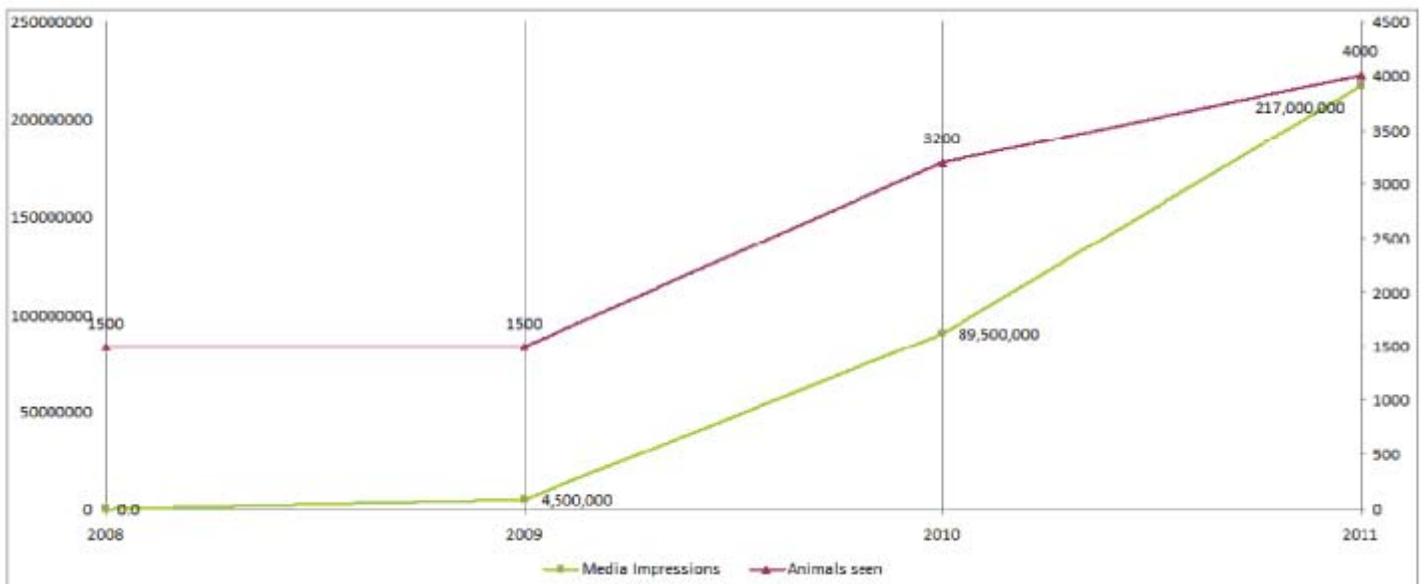
Reaching general practitioners is another goal of the event. We are continuing to work with them to ask for referrals for the program so we can help more animals. To this end, we are taking advantage of several avenues. In 2010 and again this July, we are meeting with general practitioners one-on-one at the AVMA conference to promote the event. The ‘event booth’ is available for use of our individual Diplomates for use at their state VMA conference (Dr. Miller reached over 600 local vets this way in June at two state meetings). The American Society of Veterinary Medical Association Executives promoted the event to all state VMA executives. Thankfully, most of them advertised the event to their general practitioner members. The AVMA has provided ongoing endorsement, publishing several articles in JAVMA. **Merial** has been generously following and publishing updates about the event in its general practitioner newsletter and promoting through the AVMA. Dr. Miller, ACVO Public Relations Chairperson, has been writing ophthalmology articles for MWI’s

newsletter. No doubt general practitioners have also seen the television and newspaper coverage. This year we also provided a flyer which could be circulated to your referring physicians, hopefully this was helpful. This event, coupled with our outreach of the “Ophthalmology Course for General Practitioners” held annually at the ACVO conference, is no doubt having effect in educating those who refer to your clinics.

AVMA and Facebook

New to the program this year was a booth at the AVMA and the introduction of an event Facebook page. At AVMA we personally spoke with over 800 veterinarians and technicians about the program, helping get the word out to general practitioners. We have utilized over 4,000 email addresses from past program clients on file to whom the event was promoted through an HTML campaign and currently over 400 have joined our Facebook page. It is truly heartening to see the kind posts these individuals have made about our doctors on this site. Consider having your clinic ‘like’ the page to help promote the event to your clients and broaden our reach. Networking is our key to success.

This newsletter is intended to update you on the event results, while highlighting some key moments. Please feel free to contact us with any questions. We look forward to beginning promotion of the event again early December 2011 for the 2012. **We hope to hear from you in January with your commitment to participate!**



“Myself and hubby as well as our service dogs THANK ACVO/MERIAL for the eye exams. It takes some of the burden off of us for their care! Bless you!!” ~ Viki Gentilman



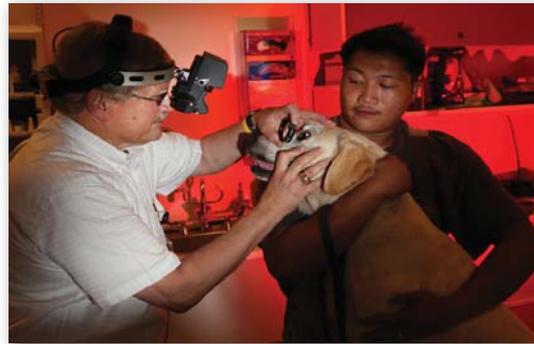
LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE SERVICE DOG SCREENING

On April 23rd Drs. **Bob Munger** and **Andrew Greller** examined 140 military working dogs at Lackland Air Force Base (AFB) in San Antonio, TX. This is the second year the Air Force has

been gracious enough to allow the ACVO to provide this free service to these valuable working dogs. Thanks to **Dr. Michael Paulsen** who again facilitated the event along with COL. Kelly Mann, CTP. Curtis Cline and numerous other military personnel.

The dogs were from the 341st Training Squadron's Department of Defense Military Working Dog School.

Many thanks to all involved in the Service Dog event. It was a great experience for everyone.



ANTICIPATED ADDITIONAL COVERAGE

MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS TO PRODUCE VIDEO ON THE SERVICE DOG EVENT

"Medical Breakthroughs" (reported by Ivanhoe) is a news show production company which creates 2-3 minute news segments, sold to over 200 local affiliates across the country. They filmed a segment on veterinary ophthalmology and the Service Dog event at **Animal Eye Specialty Clinic in West Palm Beach Florida**. **Kim Skielnik** and **Dr. Susan Carastro** generously turned over their clinic to a film crew for a day and worked with them to help them understand and film the examination process and general ophthalmology medicine. This news program has the possibility of being picked up by many local networks in July and August, thus bumping this program's audience by millions at a local level. We will forward a link to the segment via your email once production is complete.

VETERINARY NEWS NETWORK TO PRODUCE SEGMENT IN SEPTEMBER

"Veterinary News Network" is national network of animal health professionals and media journalists who produce and distribute content to both traditional and online media. They have agreed to produce a segment on the ACVO Service Dog event and veterinary ophthalmology in September. They work to increase the public's awareness of current issues and advances in veterinary medicine. The VNN is a membership organization and as a network, reach an audience of over 30 million with each story. VNN serves as a resource of stories, video tools, talking points and print or web based columns and ideas to save the member time and enhance the quality of veterinary reporting nationwide.



We are thankful and privileged to be selected for this spotlight. Again, we will forward this link when we receive a copy of the news production.

For a list of coverage on the event, and copies of stories, please visit www.ACVOEyeExam.org/press/pressnat11.html

"Jack, a service dog from Assistance Dogs of the West had his eyes checked on Friday at the Animal Emergency & Referral Center of York (PA). With an all clear, we were happy campers and wish to thank all involved in making this possible!"

~ Cindi Lashinski

'LIKE' US ON FACEBOOK

This year we introduced a page on Facebook to help spread the word about the event. The page currently has 402 followers. One great feature of the site is the weekly report we receive letting us know how many new users have 'liked' us and how many new comments have been posted. We have received very positive feedback so far and many comments have included appreciation directed to the specific doctor who performed the individuals' pet's examination. Be sure to visit <http://www.facebook.com/pages/ACVOMerial-National-Service-Dog-Eye-Exam-Event/176450379044668> and 'like' us to follow news and comments related to the event.



Just four days after her eighth birthday, the glaucoma associated with Dutchess' condition made surgical removal of her eyes necessary. Dr. Mosunic performed the surgery, and I could not have been more confident in her skills, and in the decision that she helped me make to go ahead with the procedure. Being without eyes clearly did nothing to dampen Dutchess' gregarious personality. By all accounts, was a model patient and a charming overnight guest at the hospital. Ten days after the surgery, Dutchess, with her perpetual squint (her eyelids have been permanently sutured closed), was back to fetching tennis balls in the snow-covered back yard, sniffing her way through her favorite activity. A week later, she was thrilled to return to the therapy dog work that she loves so much. Students at the Anderson Center didn't judge or question her lack of eyes or her chronic somnambulatory appearance, and, as always, they received the same unmitigated love in response. They interacted with her as they did before: as individuals who, each week, relish their time together. Dutchess doesn't want pity or sympathy, only to receive love that resembles the pureness of hers for others.

DUTCHESS

by Mark Condon, Service Dog Owner



Dutchess, my Golden Retriever, is a certified therapy dog who works for the Good Dog Foundation (<http://www.dutchessthegooddog.blogspot.com/>). She has been working at the Anderson Center for Autism and at Vassar Brothers Medical Center since August of 2009. Last summer, Dutchess began having some changes in her vision. She wasn't catching tennis balls like she had been able to in the past, and she seemed to have difficulty visually locating and tracking the

sources of sounds. By August, Dutchess had been diagnosed with pigmentary uveitis, and was under the care of veterinary ophthalmologist **Dr. Cory Mosunic** of the Katonah-Bedford Veterinary Center. Dr. Mosunic was skilled and compassionate, working to keep Dutchess comfortable while slowing the progress of her condition as much as possible. This allowed Dutchess to continue to enjoy her work with her many friends at the Anderson Center, and to bring cheer to patients and staff members at Vassar Brothers Hospital, even visiting on Christmas Eve. By that time, her vision was essentially gone, but she was adapting extremely well. Since her diagnosis, I had been teaching her new commands that would help her navigate and interface with her world in a vision-free manner.

I am indebted to **Dr. Mosunic** for her caring and skilled guidance toward the inevitable conclusion of Dutchess' condition. She is gifted with the caring heart of a counselor, the sage mind of a scholar, and skilled hands of an expert surgeon. In turn, Dutchess continues to bring joy to everyone that she encounters, even though she doesn't see them with her eyes.

Learn how to take better advantage of this program locally and boost your clinic's recognition.

Register to attend a free Practice Management session on the Service Dog event, Wednesday, October 26th, 4-5pm.

FREE!

Email your RSVP to office11@acvo.org

"Dr. Mosunic was skilled and compassionate, working to keep Dutchess comfortable while slowing the progress of her condition as much as possible."

~Mark Condon

HENRY - THE LIMITED VISION SERVICE DONKEY



All photos courtesy of: ©2011 Neil A. Young

The ACVO/Merial Service Dog program isn't just for the dogs! Many horses, cats, bunnies and even a burro benefited from the ACVO/Merial event. Learn a little about Henry the service Burro and his story in his owner's words...

Henry was adopted from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Wild Horse and Burro program September 10, 1995. Henry was captured near Beaty NV on May 22, 1995. He is as gentle as they come. I started testing Henry during the Christmas season of 2006 on Christmas Blvd in Berwick and Henry had his Delta Society test August 2007. He, as with all of our donkeys, passed the test the first time. As with all Delta Society Pet Partners, Henry retested last year. Henry and our other therapy animals have traveled over 24,000 miles in free visits from just 2008 to April 2011. We visit all types of facilities including Danville State Hospital, White Haven Training Center and many other hospitals, nursing homes, rehab centers and special needs facilities. We do school programs from pre-Head Start up to University classes. We also do charity walk-a-thons and parades for different groups in Harrisburg, Philadelphia, and Scranton where we give city people a chance to meet and interact with our 'wild burros'. While Henry is a full size donkey, when needed he will ride elevators to be transported to different floors.

In October 2010, we discovered Henry with an eye injury. He was treated by a local veterinarian. After the swelling had subsided post-treatment, it was her judgment that another

therapy donkey most likely had hit Henry with a rare kick. We attended the ACVO/Merial Service Dog event this year and generously received an examination from **Dr. Robert Peiffer** with **Valley Central Veterinary Referral Center**. While it was confirmed that Henry has lost sight in his injured eye, he and our other therapy animals continue to work and bring true meaning to our mission statement of "We Bring Smiles". Thank you again for this wonderful service.

~Neil Young, Young's Funny Farm



Dr. Peiffer examining Henry



Dr. Landis, ACVO Resident, examining Henry

For more information about
Young's Funny Farm visit

www.youngsfunnyfarm.org

"We attended the ACVO/Merial Service Dog event this year and generously received an examination from Dr. Robert Peiffer with Valley Central Veterinary Referral Center. . .

Thank you again for this wonderful service.

~ Neil Young, Young's Funny Farm

TIMMY, THE ONLY GROUND ZERO THERAPY DOG



©2011 Neil A. Young

Timmy perched on Henry's back

Timmy, who is a retiring Service Dog and who continues as a Therapy Dog, has the distinction of being the only Therapy Dog the NYPD credentialed to work at the Ground Zero site, for human comfort. Also, in 2009 he became the 4th dog to receive a hearing aid from the University of Cincinnati Medical Center and only the 2nd dog to get a blue tooth hearing aid because of his work as a medical alert Service Dog. As you may know, Service Dogs give their handlers the independence to do what others take for granted. Timmy and Cinderella have allowed me to have my life back and our therapy work is how I pay it forward.

~Neil Young, Young's Funny Farm

THANK YOU 2011 EVENT SPONSORS!

Platinum Sponsor



Silver Sponsor



Bronze Sponsors



"Thank you ACVO DVM's for providing exams to the Mark9 teams in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Special working dogs needing special care."

~Bill Dakin



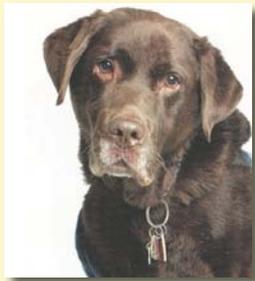
CLIENT KUDOS

We would like to thank you for providing Boomer with his second annual complimentary eye exam! This year, and last, it was a very pleasant experience for us as a family, and for my son's Assistance Dog, Boomer. Registering and scheduling an appointment. is done with such ease. Our appointments have been at **Eye Care for Animals Upland, CA** office. The staff was so welcoming and **Dr. Calvarese** was fantastic, she even remembered us from last year! Boomer

was very comfortable in the office and with the exam. Thank you for looking out for Boomer and other animals who serve their human partner!

The Mitchell Family

I just wanted to thank you for making eye exams available again this year. My service dog, Otto, has been fortunate enough to participate the last two years and we've just completed our registration for this year.



I was extremely impressed with **Dr. Susan Jacobi**. Otto means the world to me and I fear the day when he retires. Thanks to your organization and people like Dr. Jacobi, I'm able to have Otto's eyesight checked so I can catch any problems early. I'm sure this proactive approach to his care has kept him as healthy and happy as he is today. Thanks again for providing us with a service that would be difficult - if not impossible - to manage on a disability income.

Karen and Otto

FACEBOOK FAN FEEDBACK

Thank you to **ACVO/Merial** and to **Dr. Betbeze of Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson** for providing this valuable service!
Marilyn Marcus

Thank you **ACVO/ MERIAL & Dr. Ann Weight** for exam of Fidos For Freedom, Service Dog, Quincy.

Sandra Daly Ball

Skye is my service dog; Jake is a therapy dog. They both had their eyes examined on May 5 by **Dr. Norman** in Avondale, Arizona. Thank you so much for this service!

Linda Lambert

Had a great appointment today with **Dr. Lim** at the **U of MN**. They took a lot of photos of Cleo getting her eyes examined! Thank you for the opportunity to get her checked out!

Jamie Lamprecht

Thank you all for caring so much for our wonderful dogs!! Chai has her appt. this afternoon in Mt. Pleasant, SC.

MaryBeth Martin Rigsby

I had my exam today at **Pittsburgh Veterinary Specialty & Emergency Center** with **Dr. Bagley**. I am a Therapy Dog with Therapy Dog International. I got a good report today! Thank you for providing these exams! Dr. Bagley & staff are wonderful & sooo friendly!!

Debbie Calmbacher

Thank you very much for this program. We saw **Dr. Susan Nelms** at **Veterinary Eye Care** in Bessemer, AL yesterday.

Joan Lieder Hackel

DIPLOMATE TESTIMONY

Dr. Elizabeth Adkins

Last year Service Dogs of Virginia transported some of their dogs to an ophthalmologist in greater DC. During the trip one of the dogs got car sick and on their way home their van broke down. They called and asked if I would be willing to come to them. Of course! Last year they took 7 dogs for exams and this year I was able to examine 20 dogs since I went to them. They've already asked me to come back next year and hopefully we'll see even more dogs. I saw dogs that help wheel chair bound people, diabetics, autistic children and one dog that visits nursing homes that day. (Thank you Dr. Adkins!)

