



KENT COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT
Lawrence A. Stelma – Sheriff

701 Ball Avenue, N.E. • Grand Rapids • Michigan • 49503



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Lisa LaPlante – 616.632.7567

Service Dogs, Sheriff's Mounted Unit to Receive Free Eye Exams
Free Eye Exams for Dogs and Horses on May 21

GRAND RAPIDS – Service Animals make life easier for many Kent County residents, whether it's hearing or sensing danger or providing seeing-eye for a blind individual. The American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (ACVO) holds the ninth annual National Service Animal Eye Exam event this weekend. This philanthropic effort encourages members to donate their time, staff and services to provide free screening eye exams to qualified Service Animals. Over 45,000 Service Animals have received these free screening exams over the past eight years nationwide. Registration for the event this year is already full.

Harriet Davidson, DVM, DACVO, of Blue Pearl Veterinary Partners and GD Veterinary Ophthalmology, is donating her time and expertise to examine the animals. This year, the event gets bigger: the Kent County Sheriff Department Mounted Unit will also be receiving eye exams. Ten horses and 13 service dogs are scheduled for exams at the Kent County Sheriff Department Equestrian Training Center, located at 4687 Kroes Street in Rockford. "This annual event has helped save the vision of several service animals in the past few years," said Kim Karr, Deputy Director of Kent County Search and Rescue. "We hope through the generosity of Dr. Davidson, these valuable service animals will be able to assist those in need for years to come." Dr. Davidson has worked as a Veterinary Ophthalmologist for three decades. She also taught Veterinary Ophthalmology as a professor at Kansas State University.

The Ninth Annual National Service Animal Eye Exams for Service Animals is open to those animals that provide the following services: guide, hearing assistance, drug detection, police/military, search and rescue, therapy, and those assisting people with disabilities other than blindness. Service animals receiving exams are working for a program or organization, or are currently enrolled in a formal training program.

MEDIA NOTE: You are welcome to attend the event Saturday at 4:00 p.m. (anticipated to run until 6:30 p.m.) at the Kent County Sheriff Department Equestrian Training Center, located at 4687 Kroes Street in Rockford. If you have additional questions or would like an interview with Kim Karr, Deputy Director of Kent County Search and Rescue, you can reach him at 616.204.7774 or email at kkarr@kentcountysar.org.

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