UC DAVIS ASSISTS K-9 OFFICERS

Rob Warren, UC Davis VMTH Communications & Marketing Officer

The UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine—in conjunction with UC Davis Police Department—recently announced the establishment of the Faithful Partner Fund, a fund to assist with the medical costs of treating K-9 officers, as well as search and rescue dogs, injured in the line of duty. The UC Davis Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital has a long history of caring for K-9 officers, having treated 65 police dogs in the past four years.

The Faithful Partner Fund is initially funded by matching $25,000 contributions from both UC Davis’ School of Veterinary Medicine and Police Department. As those funds can quickly be depleted, the program welcomes contributions from the public as well as law enforcement agencies and federal search and rescue groups. The average cost of care for the previous 65 K-9 officers treated at UC Davis was $700 per dog. In critical instances, however, the medical expenses can escalate into the tens of thousands. The majority of those medical costs were most often borne by the K-9 officer’s handler and/or from contributions by the officer’s unit.

“With the growing recognition of the vital role that K-9 law enforcement officers and search and rescue dogs play in our society, there is an increasing demand for these animals to receive the highest level of veterinary care available,” said Matthew Carmichael, chief of the UC Davis Police Department. “We are fortunate to have one of the best veterinary hospitals in the world right here on the UC Davis campus.”

UC Davis Police Department recently acquired a new K-9 officer, Charlie (www.facebook.com/UCDavis-Charlie), handled by Officer Vincent Kwong. Charlie, a 3-year-old black Labrador mix, was adopted from a rescue in the Davis area. He completed K-9 training and is certified in explosive detection and article searches. He can detect numerous types of explosives and also locate evidence left behind at a crime scene. Charlie assists the UC Davis Police Department at large campus and dignitary events to enhance security. He also supports the Yolo County Bomb Squad as needed.

Since many K-9 wounds or injuries happen in the line of duty and can be critical emergencies, promotion of the fund is being spearheaded by specialists in the hospital’s Emergency and Critical Care Service. Drs. Guillaume Hoareau and Kate Hopper hope to visit law enforcement agencies throughout the state to introduce the fund to K-9 handlers, as well as host first aid training seminars for the officers.

Additionally, UC Davis also offers free annual dental and vision examinations for K-9 officers. The Dentistry and Oral Surgery Service recently hosted a symposium on the importance of proper dental care in law enforcement dogs that was attended by dozens of K-9 units throughout the state. With K-9s constantly using their teeth as part of their job, dental health is a crucial part of their effectiveness as law enforcement officers.