



SERVICE DOGS

Jessica Kamphouse

Service dogs are not just any dogs: they are hard workers for their person.

Some provide medical assistance such as guiding the blind and alerting the deaf. Other service dogs, commonly known as psychiatric service animals, assist patients with conditions like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, by waking them out of nightmares or keeping them aware of their environment.

At BJU, there are several students and faculty who use service dogs, as well as those who train future service animals.

Most students and faculty with service dogs use them for everyday tasks, to pick up items or open doors.

Dr. Jessica Minor, a member of the science faculty at BJU who also owns a service dog, said the most important thing to remember about service dogs, whether training or working with their person is to never touch, interact or distract.

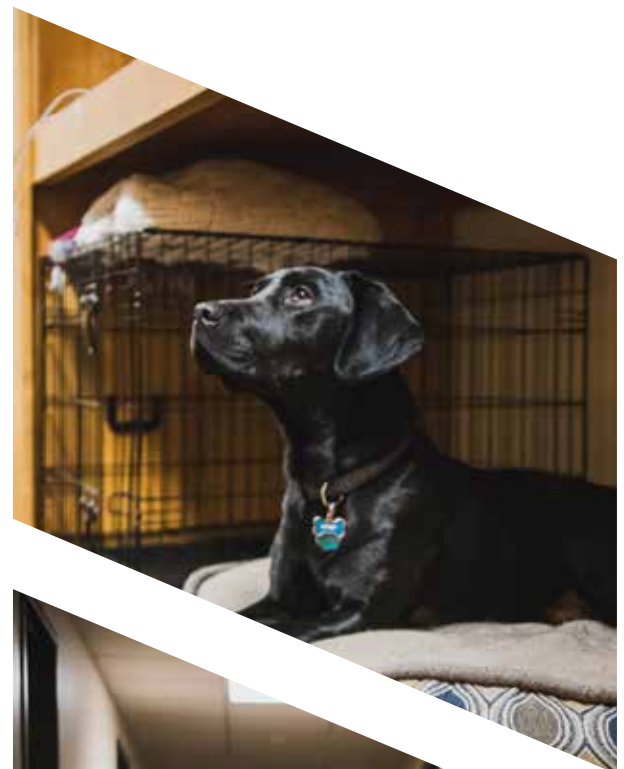
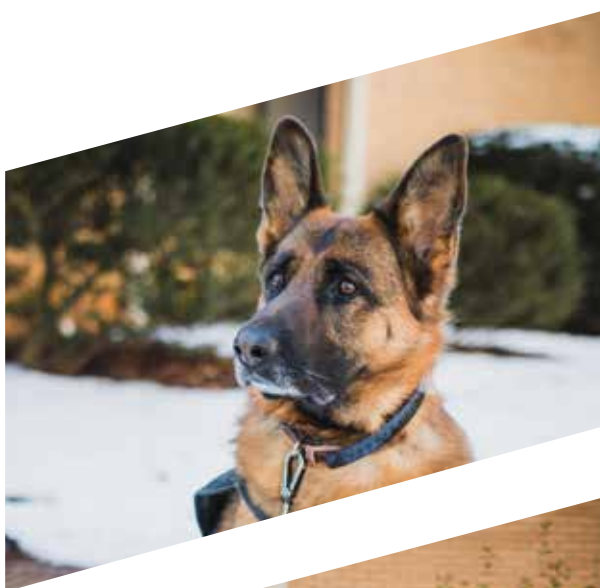
"Generally nobody should pet or even talk to them, it's up to the individual," Minor said. "There are dogs like seizure alert dogs and diabetic alert dogs, which if distracted by being petted even for a little bit can have severe consequences."

Helen Wallen, a freshman science education student who uses a service dog, said service dogs are distracted from service responsibilities when they are petted.

"In most cases, people don't want other people to pet their service dogs just because they get distracted. The dog won't be able to focus on work," Wallen said. "If something happens to that person, the dog won't be able to sense it."

Josh Wutzke, a freshman accounting student who uses a service dog, said distracting a service animal is serious.

"Service dogs are basically a piece of medical equipment. They are like an oxygen mask. No one would ever take off someone's oxygen mask. The same thing is true with a service dog."



Helen Wallen



Dr. Jessica Minor



Helen Wallen