Preparing for finals can be a stressful time for students. Morris Library at SIU Carbondale hopes to relieve some of that stress on Thursday and Friday, December 10 and 11, by hosting trained service dogs for students to pet and play with before finals begin. The dogs will be available from 10 a.m. to noon and from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on both days. They will be on the lawn near the north entrance to Morris Library or in the Browsing Room on the first floor if the weather is inclement. The dogs are provided and handled by SIT (Supporting Independence through Teamwork) Service Dogs of Ava, IL. The event is co-sponsored by Saluki Service Dawgs, a registered student organization whose members who will assist with the dog handling.

Dogs and kids (of all ages) are a natural fit. The dogs provide a way for students to relax and have a little fun as they approach their final exams. This will be the fourth such event to be held at Morris Library at the end of the spring and fall semesters. Hundreds of students and others stopped by in May to pet and play with the dogs as they were preparing for their end-of-semester exams. Many students and staff members stopped by several times for a quick “scritch” or pat on the head before heading to class or back to work with smiles on their faces.

The service dogs are trained and tested for public situations. SIT Service Dogs are routinely exposed to 'real life' scenarios in which their nerve strength and skills are evaluated. In general, service dogs have government-mandated public access rights. They are held to a higher standard of training than therapy dogs, which do not qualify for public access rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

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