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UMM is for the dogs

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UMM is for the dogs

Summary:

(September 30, 2005)-By Ben Edwards '06, UMM News Service

Watch out! There is a small "Sherman" tank rolling across the campus of the University of Minnesota, Morris these days. It comes in the form of a small black lab puppy named Sherman.

Sherman belongs to Karen Esler, the resident director of Clayton A. Gay (residence) Hall at UMM however, he is only in her care for a short while. Sherman and Esler are both part of Leader Dogs for the Blind, an organization based in Rochester, Mich., that has been providing animal helpers for more than 60 years.

Esler is excited to have this opportunity. "It's a great gift to someone [the leader dog] gives them so much independence," she said. Although Esler originally wanted to call the dog Tank, the decision was made to call him something a little less defiant, though it keeps the spirit of Esler's original idea.

Socialization is very important for a dog that will be going to many different types of places and environments, "and what better place than a college dorm," Esler remarked. She has no prior experience in the training of dogs, but one gets the feeling that she truly loves animals.

Esler will have the dog for a full year before he heads back to Michigan to enter the rigorous training that prepares the dogs to help with a variety of tasks. To learn more about Leader Dogs check out the website at www.leaderdog.org, or just stop and say hi to Esler and Sherman if you see them around campus.

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