

K-9 deputy has canine tooth fixed

Veterinarian, dentist volunteer services for repair

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It's tough to take a bite out of crime with a bad tooth.

In the case of Lee County sheriff's K-9 Deputy Kuzan, his fractured upper right canine hindered his ability to do his job.

"His teeth are the tools of his trade," said Sgt. Steve Ford, who has been the 2½-year-old German shepherd's partner since March.

On Wednesday, Cape Coral dentist Arthur Molzan and Cape veterinarian William Kroll teamed up to fix the canine's canine. Both volunteered their services.

The unusual procedure — worth upward of \$1,200 — came about as the result of the Lee County Sheriff's Office Citizens Academy No. 15, which ended June 12.

The 10-week class offers citizens a firsthand look at law enforcement and how the sheriff's office operates. At graduation, classes traditionally present the depart-

When dog lover and academy member Dianne Sadlowski learned of Kuzan's condition, she asked Molzan, her dentist, and Kroll, her veterinarian, to fix it.

Early Wednesday at Viscaya-Prado Veterinary Hospital, Kroll administered the anesthesia, putting the dog into a deep sleep, and Molzan went to work.

First, he did a root canal, removing the nerve, then cleaning and sealing the canal. Then he shaped the tooth with a high-speed drill to prepare it for a crown.

The last step was to take impressions of Kuzan's



STEPHEN HAYFORD/The News-Press

Dentist Arthur Molzan, with the help of dental surgical assistant Tracey Drew, performs a root canal on Kuzan of the Lee County Sheriff's Office K-9 unit on Wednesday. Kuzan's partner and caretaker, Sgt. Steve Ford, brought the dog to Viscaya-Prado Veterinary Hospital for repair to a tooth broken during training in Germany recently.

teeth so the lab can make a crown that precisely fits his mouth.

while Ford stood at his side, often stroking his back.

In two weeks, Molzan will cement the dog's new metal tooth in place.

The academy class also donated an automatic door opener Ford will wear on his belt, allowing him to release the dog from the car from a distance.

Ford knows firsthand how vital a canine partner can be and how important his teeth are.

"The dogs have saved my life twice," he said.

Fifteen years ago tonight, Ford and his first K-9 partner, Rydy, came face-to-face with Fort Myers drug king-

MEET THE DOGS

Kuzan will be at Bell Tower Shops in Fort Myers from 5 to 9 p.m. Friday for a fundraiser to buy bulletproof vests for the K-9 unit.

■ Sheriff's Deputy Frank Glover and his new K-9 partner, Taro, will be at The Promenade in Bonita Springs from 5 to 9 p.m. Saturday to help raise

Glover's previous partner, Alko, died in the line of duty in April.

■ For more information on the Lee County Sheriff's Office Citizens Academy, which will take place in September, call the community outreach division at 477-1400.

pin Ronnie Lee Tape. Tape grabbed another officer's gun and pressed it against Ford's forehead. Just as he started to squeeze the trigger, Rydy lunged at him, biting him in the groin.

Not long after that, Ford was in the process of arresting three robbery suspects when Rydy started barking furiously in the car, alerting him to a fourth man.

"The dog saw the guy

with a gun," Ford said. "I never knew he was in the car."

Kuzan's improved bite, Sadlowski's academy class gave the sheriff's office a 3-foot-by-10-foot banner — created and donated by Fastsigns owners Paul and Terry Hill — that reads: "Citizen Academy No. 15: To Sgt. Steve Ford and K-9 Kuzan, dental service sponsors Dr. Arthur Molzan and Dr. William Kroll."

On learning that Kuzan's dental work went well, Sadlowski said she was glad the dog's tooth would no longer hurt and that he'd be better able to do his job.

"I've never done anything that was this good in my whole life," she said.

