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Free Eye Exams Offered For Service Dogs

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Armonk, NY - Katonah Bedford [Veterinary](#) Center, a member of the BrightHeart Veterinary Centers Network, will offer free eye exams to service dogs May 12 – May 17, 2008.

What happens when a seeing-eye guide dog can't see? Or a search-and-rescue dog can't find its way through unfamiliar terrain? With so many people dependent on working service dogs, canine [eye problems](#) can affect both dogs and owners. To help dogs that help others, Katonah Bedford Veterinary Center in Bedford Hills, NY, a member of the BrightHeart Veterinary Centers network, is offering free eye screening exams to certified service dogs from May 12th through May 17th. The service is offered in conjunction with the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmology's National Service Dog [Eye Exam](#) program. Katonah Bedford Veterinary Center is one of two BrightHeart hospitals participating in the program. The other is SouthPaws Veterinary Specialists and Emergency Center in Fairfax, VA.

Like humans, dogs can develop cataracts, [glaucoma](#), corneal ulcers, and dry eyes, among other diseases and conditions. Breeds often used for service dogs, such as Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, and German Shepherds, are pre-disposed to eye ailments, and should be evaluated regularly. Fortunately, veterinary [ophthalmology](#) today is nearly as advanced as human ophthalmology medicine. Treatment options include laser surgery to re-attach retinas, lens implants following cataract removal, and [glaucoma surgery](#). "We perform at least one of these procedures a week," explains Cory Mosunic, DVM, DACVO, the ophthalmologist who will be conducting Katonah Bedford Veterinary Center's Service Dog Eye Exam program. "Many eye problems can be resolved if discovered early. Unfortunately, most of our patients come to see us only when there's a serious problem, and we don't have as many options left."

A pet's eye screening can reveal other health problems as well, Dr. Mosunic notes. "One often can detect serious conditions in the rest of the body, such as [cancer](#) or infection, in an eye exam because the eye has a delicate and specialized immune system."

Dr. Mosunic says one of the reasons she became a veterinary ophthalmologist is that during her residency at the University of Georgia, she worked with a dermatologist with hearing and [vision loss](#), whose guide dog's cataracts interfered with its ability to work. "The dog had to retire, and I saw how difficult it was for



both the owner and the dog." She adds, "It is wonderful that Katonah Bedford Veterinary Center is able to offer free eye screenings and possibly save another service dog's eyesight."

How to sign up

Individuals must pre-register for the exam at www.acvoeyeexam.org prior to calling Katonah Bedford Veterinary Center at 914-241-7700. The deadline for registration is May 1. Exams will take place during the week of May 12-17. The exam is free of charge, but owners need to provide proof of certification and/or training to confirm their dog's status as a working service dog. Because of limited capacity, the program this year is open to only guide dogs, handicapped assistance dogs, detection dogs, and search and rescue dogs.

About BrightHeart Veterinary Centers

BrightHeart's network of advanced-care veterinary facilities works closely with referring veterinarians and pet owners to provide the highest standards and greatest range of options in pet care, giving pets the best chance to lead longer, healthier lives. BrightHeart provides its [doctors](#) and staff with outstanding career advancement opportunities; promotes greater communication with referring veterinarians; and seeks to increase public awareness of advancements available to pet owners for the medical diagnosis and treatment of pets. Additional information about BrightHeart Veterinary Centers can be found at www.BrightHeartVet.com.

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