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# CARES offers free eye exams to service dogs

By Sarah Hyde



Service dogs act as their guardian's eyes, so those eyes had better be at the top of their game. That's the thinking behind the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (ACVO)/Merial National Service Dog Eye Exam event taking place in May 2010. Guide dogs, handicapped assistance dogs, police detection dogs, and search and rescue dogs are invited to take part in this third annual eye exam extravaganza.

Free eye exams are the result of a collaborative effort of the Center for Animal Referral and Emergency Services (CARES) in Langhorne, PA, and ACVO. Dr. Robert Peiffer, an ophthalmologist at CARES, will provide free eye exams to dogs throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Delaware.

Dr. Peiffer is one of 150 veterinary ophthalmologists in the United States and Canada committed to providing free eye exams to service dogs. In explaining the importance of free eye exams for service dogs, Peiffer states, "I am frustrated regularly by the cold reality of veterinary practice, which limits what we can offer our patients based upon what the [guardians] can afford to pay, and it is enlightening to have an opportunity to be free from those shackles, if only briefly."

Registration for the event runs April 1 through May 16, 2010. To be eligible for a free exam, dogs must currently be working and certified by a formal training program or organization or be in the process of getting their certification. Guardians must first register their dog at [ACVOEyeExam.org](http://ACVOEyeExam.org) and then contact CARES at (215) 750-2774 to schedule an appointment.

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