

Top News

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Free Sight-Saving Eye Exams Available for Service Dogs



Dr. Cory Mosunic of Katonah Bedford Veterinary Center examines service dog "Pele" during the 2009 eye exam event.

Guide dogs, handicapped assistance dogs, detection dogs, and search and rescue dogs selflessly serve the public. So, for the month of May 2010, the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (ACVO) is launching the third ACVO/Merial National Service Dog Eye Exam Event to help serve these dogs who dedicate their lives to serving the public. More than 150 board certified veterinary ophthalmologists in the U.S. and Canada will provide free sight-saving eye exams to thousands of service dogs.

Stacey Daniel, executive director of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (ACVO), says, "If we can assist more dogs, then the dogs can better assist people. This event is a success each year due to the outstanding support of our volunteer ophthalmologists, our sponsors, and the service dog community. All are instrumental in helping these dogs."

At Katonah Bedford Veterinary Center, in Bedford Hills, N.Y., Pele, a young Labrador retriever, was examined by board certified veterinary ophthalmologist Dr. Cory Mosunic during 2009's event. "We're looking for any retinal disease or early cataracts," says Dr. Mosunic. We're also looking for things that will limit their vision down the road, whether it's an ingrown hair or anything that can result in a scratch of the cornea. It's a complete ocular exam."

Pele is from Puppies Behind Bars, an organization providing psychiatric service dogs to soldiers coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan. "I'm deeply appreciative of the veterinarians that participate in this," says Puppies Behind Bars President and Founder, Gloria Gilbert Stoga. "I think it's a wonderful service."

How to Register

To qualify, dogs must be active "working dogs" that were certified by a formal training program or organization or are currently enrolled in a formal training program. The certifying organization could be national, regional, or local in nature. Specific service groups are listed on the Website at www.ACVOeyeexam.org.

Owners/agents for the dog(s) must FIRST register the animal via an online registration form beginning April 1, at www.ACVOeyeexam.org. Registration ends May 16th. Once registered online, the owner/agent can locate a participating ophthalmologist in their area and contact that doctor to schedule an appointment during the month of May. Appointment dates and times may vary depending on the facility and are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

To learn more about and register for the ACVO/Merial National Service Dog Eye Exam Event, visit www.ACVOeyeexam.org.

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