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FREE EYE EXAMS FOR SERVICE DOGS

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Free eye exams for service dogs

She has been blind for 13 years. So, when Lisa Davidson, of Warminster, PA found out about the ACVO/Merial National Service Dog Eye Exam event, she was elated. She completely relies on her guide dog, Eagle, for assistance. "I think it's great these animals are being represented because they have a very special job to do," says Ms. Davidson. "Eagle has opened many doors for me, to allow me to become independent. It's so important that his eyes are working."

And, that's exactly the reason for the event. Guide dogs, handicapped assistance dogs, police detection dogs and search and rescue dogs selflessly serve the public. So, for the month of May 2010, the Center for Animal Referral and Emergency Services (CARES), in Langhorne, PA, is teaming up with the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (ACVO) to launch the third annual ACVO/Merial National Service Dog Eye Exam Event. Dr. Robert Peiffer, a board certified veterinary ophthalmologist at CARES will provide free eye exams to eligible dogs throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Delaware. Dr. Peiffer's participation is part of a national effort of more than 150 board certified veterinary ophthalmologists in the U.S. and Canada who will provide free sight-saving eye exams to thousands of service dogs.

HOW TO REGISTER FOR THE 2010 EVENT

To qualify, dogs must be active "working dogs" that were certified by a formal training program or organization or 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 16. Once registered online, the owner/agent can contact CARES directly to schedule an appointment, during the month of May. The CARES phone number is 215-750-2774. Appointment dates and times 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, please visit www.ACVOeyeexam.org.



Dr. Robert Peiffer of CARES examines Eagle during last year's event.

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