

MERIDIAN, Idaho, April 4, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- To Nancy Moore, her dog Giza was no ordinary black lab. Trained at Guide Dogs for the Blind, Giza served since 2010 as Nancy's sense of vision and navigation. Last year, however, Giza guided Nancy off a sidewalk, and Nancy knew that Giza needed to be examined by a veterinary ophthalmologist. As someone on a fixed income, Nancy was concerned about the cost of the examination, but then learned of the ACVO®/StokesRx National Service Eye Exam for qualified Service and Working Animals. She registered in April and Giza received a free screening eye exam by an ACVO board-certified veterinary ophthalmologist, providing her with the information she needed to care for Giza.

The 10th Annual ACVO/StokesRx National Service Animal Eye Exam Event will take place in veterinary clinics from May 1-31, 2017. The event was originally prompted by ACVO's recognition that many of its board-certified ophthalmology specialists were providing free eye exams across the country. By expanding on these individual events and creating the annual event in 2008, the ophthalmologists have been able to perform more than 52,000 free eye exam screenings – 7,400 in 2016 alone (click [here](#) for the 10th Anniversary Infographic and more statistics).

"Nancy and Giza's story showcases just how important healthy eyesight is to Service and Working Animals and their owners," said Stacey Daniel, Executive Director of ACVO. "This year, we're excited to celebrate the 10th anniversary of this event with our partners, and we are truly grateful that so many of these selfless animals have been seen and assisted free-of-charge by our veterinary ophthalmologists."

The goal of the ACVO/StokesRx National Service Animal Eye Exam Event is to provide as many free screening exams as possible to eligible Service and Working Animals across the U.S., Canada, and Puerto Rico, throughout the month of May. Service and Working Animals that may qualify include: guide, disability assistance, detection, military, search and rescue, and also certified-current, registered therapy animals – all whom selflessly serve the public. For the 10th Anniversary, a record number 290 ophthalmologists are expected to participate.

This year's event is sponsored by ACVO® and Stokes Pharmacy, as well as several generous industry sponsors. Participating board-certified ophthalmologists volunteer their services, staff and facilities at no charge for Service and Working Animals and their owners/agents to participate in the event.

HOW TO REGISTER FOR THE 2017 EVENT:

To qualify, Service and Working Animals must be "active working animals" 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. **Owners/agents for the animal(s) must FIRST register the animal via an online registration form beginning April 1 at: <https://www.acvoeyeexam.org/qualifications-expectations/>. Registration ends April 30.** Once registered online, the owner/agent will receive a registration number and will be allowed access to a list of participating ophthalmologists in their area. Then, they may contact a specialist to schedule an appointment, which will take place during the month of May. Times may vary depending on the facility and are filled on a first-come, first-served basis, so clients should try to register and make appointments early.

About the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists®

The American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists® (ACVO®) is an approved veterinary specialty organization of the American Board of Veterinary Specialties, and is recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association. Its mission is "to advance the quality of veterinary medicine through certification of veterinarians who demonstrate excellence as specialists in veterinary ophthalmology." To become board certified, a candidate must successfully complete a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree, a one-year internship, a three-year ACVO® approved residency and pass a series of credentials and examinations. For more information, please visit www.ACVO.org.

To register for the event, please visit: <https://www.acvoeyeexam.org/qualifications->

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