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Nearly 7,500 Service Animals Received Free, Sight-Saving Eye Screenings during 10th Anniversary of Annual ACVO®/StokesRx National Service Animal Eye Exam Event

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MERIDIAN, Idaho, June 29, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Service Animals including guide, disability assistance, detection, military, search and rescue, and registered therapy animals, selflessly serve the public. To honor these animals and their work, the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists® (ACVO®) hosts the Annual ACVO/StokesRx National Service Animal Eye Exam Event each May. Last month, a record 300 board certified veterinary ophthalmologists throughout the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico donated their time and resources to provide free eye exam screenings to thousands of eligible Service Animals.

The 10th Annual ACVO/StokesRx National Service Animal Eye Exam Event took place in veterinary clinics from May 1-31, 2017. Since the event's inception in 2008, nearly 60,000 Service Animals have received free screening eye exams – including approximately 7,450 Service Animals this year. In addition to dogs, other service and working animals including horses, mini-horses, donkeys, alpacas and cats have received free sight-saving exams.

Tricia G. has participated in ACVO's annual event for ten years; this year, with her mobility Service Dog, Indiana, a four-year-old black lab. "I believe it is so important to know what is going on with your animal's eyes," explains Tricia. "Dr. Eric Smith and the staff at the Animal Eye Care Center are excellent with Indy and conduct a thorough eye examination, which is helpful as Indy's eyesight is so critical to the selfless work he does on my behalf, including bringing in groceries and pulling the wheelchair into the car."

"The 2017 examinations were the first we performed in our new ophthalmology exclusive facility," said Marcella Ashton, DACVO, of Animal Eye Vet Inc. in Murrieta, CA. "We were happy to see new and returning disabled military veterans with their service dogs who had been made aware of the program by the ACVO-Stokes promotions. Freedom Dogs also brought along volunteers with puppies in training, and we helped them learn how to sit and give their "chin" into your hand for the examination, to ensure their future veterinary experiences have a positive association after their mock eye 'exam'."

"In this year, our tenth anniversary of the ACVO/StokesRx National Service Animal Eye Exam Event, we had a truly outstanding turnout, and we are so pleased to offer these examinations to deserving Service Animals," said Stacey Daniel, Executive Director of ACVO.

"We appreciate the passion of our participating ophthalmologists and our sponsors for making the event a success and for helping so many Service Animals receive such an important screening examination, free-of-charge, for 10 years!"

ACVO's 10th anniversary event was sponsored by its program's

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