



**For Immediate Release**

**Media Contact:**

Jillian Spitz  
614-402-0909

[jspitz@fwv-us.com](mailto:jspitz@fwv-us.com)

**Veterinary Ophthalmologists Provide Free Eye Exams to Service & Working Animals through the ACVO® and StokesRx Annual Event in May**

Registration for the 2018 National Service Animal Eye Exam event in U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico opens April 1

**MERIDIAN, Idaho (February 20, 2018)** – Board certified veterinary ophthalmologists across the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico prepare to provide more than 7,500 Service and Working Animals with free eye exams during the month of May as part of [The American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists \(ACVO®\)](#)'s 11<sup>th</sup> annual [ACVO/StokesRx National Service Animal Eye Exam](#) event.

The American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists is an approved veterinary specialty organization of the American Board of Veterinary Specialties that board certifies veterinarians as ophthalmologists. The organization developed the ACVO/StokesRx National Service Animal Eye Exam event in 2008, and since its inception, nearly 60,000 Service and Working Animals have received free screening eye exams — including approximately 7,500 in 2017 during the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event. ACVO received a Veterinary Innovation Council (VIC) Innovation Award from The North American Veterinary Community (NAVC) in 2018 for the program's success, innovation and its saving of Service Animal owners more than \$2.6 million since 2008. More information can be found [here](#).

Honor, a three-year-old yellow lab Service Dog trained by [Freedom Dogs](#) in San Diego, received her first free eye exam during the ACVO/StokesRx National Service Animal Eye Exam event in the 2017 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event (picture can be found [here](#)). Like many Service Dogs, Honor works loyally each day to help her handler, Marine, Cpl. TJ Melhus, with tasks such as, medication retrieval, retrieval of dropped items, blocking people from approaching, alerting of people approaching from behind, and redirecting anxiety attacks through pressure from her chin.

"It was so important for Honor to take part in the ACVO/StokesRx National Service Animal Eye Exam event for the first time in 2017," said Katie Stoll, Honor's trainer/puppy raiser at Freedom Dogs. "The free eye exams provide Service Animal handlers with the comfort of knowing their animals are healthy — sight is an asset these dogs use each day to keep their handlers safe."

Around 300 board certified veterinary ophthalmologists throughout the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico will donate their time and resources to provide free screening exams to Service and Working Animals in

May. In addition to dogs, other Service or Working Animals including horses, miniature horses, donkeys, alpacas and cats can receive free sight-saving exams.

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. The following types of Working or Service Animals may qualify: guide, handicapped assistance, detection, military, search and rescue, and current, registered therapy animals – all whom selflessly serve the public.

This year's event is sponsored by [ACVO](#)<sup>®</sup> 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 2018 EVENT:**

To qualify, Service and Working Animals must be "active working animals" that have been trained through a formal training program or organization, or are currently enrolled in a formal training program. The training organization could be national, regional or local in nature. [More qualification details are available here](#). Owners/agents for the animal(s) must FIRST register the animal via an online registration form beginning April 1 at [www.ACVOeyeexam.org](http://www.ACVOeyeexam.org). 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. 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 owners/agents are encouraged to register and make appointments early.

### **About the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists<sup>®</sup>**

The American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists<sup>®</sup> (ACVO<sup>®</sup>) 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<sup>®</sup> approved residency and pass a series of credentials and examinations. For more information, please visit [www.ACVO.org](http://www.ACVO.org).

### **About Stokes Pharmacy**

Stokes Pharmacy is a national, full-service compounding pharmacy specializing in the art and science of the custom formulation of prescription medicines for humans and animals. Leading the way in innovation, Stokes invites veterinarians to prescribe compounded medications online securely, quickly, and accurately via [iFill](#), a cloud-based prescription management system. For more information, visit [stokesrx.com](http://stokesrx.com).

# # #