

INSIGHTS

NEWS AND VIEWS *from*
Dr. Heather Brookshire, DVM, DACVO



ANIMAL
VISION
CENTER
of VIRGINIA

WHY CHOOSE US | SERVICES WE OFFER | CONDITIONS WE TREAT | REFERRING VETS

SPRING EDITION : May 2016

From the Desk of Dr. Brookshire

We love caring for pets of all shapes and sizes, both here at our practice and at off-site locations too. For a second year, our team will soon go on location to provide free ocular screenings for the City of Virginia Beach police dogs and patrol horses. We conduct these exams in May, which happens to be National Service Dog Eye Examination Month. Our staff believes so strongly about the importance of healthy eyes for these compassionate creatures that we provide free exams for qualified service animals all year long. Read all about it, along with other newsy bits and pieces, in this spring issue of *Insights*. As always, let us know what you think about our e-newsletter by sending along a note to me at Dr.Heather@AVCVA.com.

Take care!

Dr. Heather Brookshire



Free Service Animal Screenings, Any Time of Year

May is National Service Dog Eye Examination Month, and many board-certified diplomats of the [American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists](#) (ACVO) will offer free screenings for these hard-working and caring animals. At Animal Vision Center of Virginia (AVCVA), we offer free screening exams on qualified service animals every month of the year. Trained to perform tasks to assist people with visual, hearing and medical impairments, service and working dogs also help police and military units sniff out drugs, assist in search-and-

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Next Lunch & Learn to Focus on Ocular Manifestations of Endocrine Disease

Endocrine glands produce hormones which affect many important bodily functions, including sight. When the hormones are produced in too large or too small a quantity, the imbalance can affect animals in many ways, showing up as cataracts in pets that have diabetes for instance, as corneal disease in animals with hypothyroidism or Cushing's syndrome, or as blindness in animals with retinal detachment due to hypertension. We'll take a look at the eye-related manifestations of [Endocrine disease](#) at our next Lunch &

rescue operations and comfort patients in therapeutic scenarios.

Beginning last year, AVCVA has had the privilege of performing free ocular screenings over a two-day span on 16 police dogs and 12 patrol horses with the City of Virginia Beach Police and Sheriff's Departments. Our team goes on site to perform these thorough ocular examinations to detect signs of ocular disease early so that therapy can be administered as soon as possible.

This early detection of disease allows them to keep up their important work without missing a beat!

To qualify for the exam, service animals must be active working animals that are certified by a formal training program or organization, or are currently enrolled in a formal training program. For more information about the referral process, or to schedule a screening, please contact Dr.Heather@AVCVA.com, or see the ACVO National Service Animal Eye Exam webpage at www.ACVOEyeExam.org.

Caring for the Horses of Untamed Spirit

In addition to our work with service animals, our AVCVA staff also volunteers their time and expertise in caring for the horses of [Untamed Spirit](#), a Virginia Beach non-profit therapeutic and educational riding program with the purpose of providing, promoting and supporting equine assisted activities for individuals who have mental, physical, emotional, and social or learning disabilities.



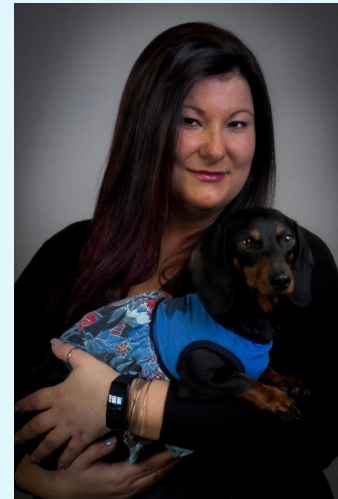
Eye problems are common in horses, due to the prominence of their eyes and their environmental conditions. For the past five years, Dr. Heather Brookshire has examined the organization's therapy horses, even performing laser surgery on Ben to deflate what's known as a "cystic corpora nigra" which was impairing vision in his one visual eye. Ben has since passed away, but was previously the oldest, gentlest and most experienced horse on the farm, and this surgery gave him improved vision for the remainder of his life.

"Dr. Brookshire understands that the horses are part of our family, and I am so grateful that she's been able to come out to the farm for the screenings," said Barb Ford, MA, NCC, who owns and operates Untamed Spirit.

Learn series, June 17 here at our office. These accredited continuing education sessions are open and free of charge to veterinarians. Please RSVP by June 10 to Dr.Heather@AVCVA.com.

Meet the Staff

We have a great team on staff here at the Animal Vision Center of Virginia, and it is our pleasure to introduce you to:



Melissa Nobelett, Office Manager

Next time you're at AVCVA, say hello to our office manager Melissa Nobelett, a Chesapeake local from Great Bridge. Beginning at age 12, she worked on Bergey's Dairy Farm, where she developed a love for animals of all kinds. She has been employed in local small animal care and specialty practices for the past 17 years, 11 of which were spent working in veterinary ophthalmology. "There is no better feeling than helping an animal in need," said Melissa, who describes her work at AVCVA as "the best job in the world." She is the proud parent of two daughters, Brae (14) and Leah (7), as well as three rambunctious wiener dogs: Bruiser, Calvin and Paisley. As office manager, Melissa is dedicated to making sure every visit is a pleasant experience and that each pet parent leaves with a clear understanding of the treatment plan and future goals. She's pictured here

Knowing the horses are cared for frees up resources and time, so that Barb can focus on the group's mission to enrich the lives of people with special needs. "What Dr. Heather and her staff are doing, it's a wonderful gift."

Meet Leo!

We see so many sweet and lovable pets in our practice, and in March we were pleased to meet Leo, a Labrador-Plott hound cross. His owners, the Alexanders, brought Leo in to us because he was constantly squinting.

On examination, he was diagnosed with entropion, an inherited laxity and rolling inward of his eyelid margins. We corrected his eyelid abnormality with surgery, and he has now fully recuperated with no further squinting or discomfort. We are always so happy to help an animal who is suffering with ocular pain.



with Paisley.

What Our Clients Say

"Dr. Heather, Melissa and Ashley are the very best in not only complete vision care for your companion animal, but also in remembering that there is a worried human at the end of that animal's leash. They are extremely knowledgeable and thorough in their explanation of ensuring that your fur-kid receives the best possible vision care." - Denise P.

ANIMAL VISION
CENTER of VIRGINIA

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Virginia Beach, VA

757-749-4838

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday, Wednesday, Friday
9:00am - 5:00pm

Tuesday, Thursday
10:00am - 6:30pm

One Saturday a Month
10:00am - 2:00pm

Find us on Facebook | Visit our Website | Send us an Email | Call us at 757-749-4838



**ANIMAL
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Providing quality ophthalmic care for animals of all shapes and sizes, Animal Vision Center of Virginia is owned and operated by Dr. Heather Brookshire, a board-certified veterinary ophthalmologist.

The Center is located at 521 Old Great Neck Road, Suite 2, in Virginia Beach, VA 23454.

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