

2020

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Impact Report



CHANGING LIVES

IN AN UNPRECEDENTED YEAR

In a year unlike any other, the Animal Rescue League of Iowa continued to be there for pets and people in our community. The coronavirus pandemic brought big challenges – ever-changing safety guidelines, a surge in the need for pet food assistance, fewer volunteers, a loss of event revenue, and more – but we looked for and found ways to continue to serve our community with zero interruption of services.

Thanks to your support we were able to stay on the front lines, rescuing animals in need, helping keep families together and finding new ways to provide second chances for homeless pets.

9,896
LIVES SAVED

7,181
ANIMALS ADOPTED

12,060
ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES
CALLS DISPATCHED

43,937
MEDICAL TREATMENTS GIVEN

1,234
LOW-COST SPAY/NEUTER
SURGERIES PERFORMED

3,742
PETS RECEIVING FOOD ASSISTANCE

1,066
BEHAVIOR HELP CONSULTATIONS

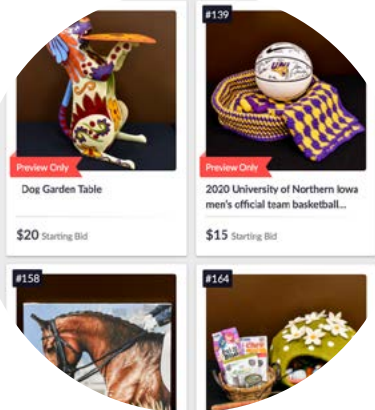


ADOPTIONS BY APPOINTMENT

When the pandemic hit in March, we moved to adoptions by appointment and later a virtual line system to protect our staff and the public while continuing the lifesaving work of finding pets great homes. In the first several months of the pandemic we adopted a record number of pets, as more families found themselves at home and in a great position to help their pet get settled in.

FOSTER HOMES

Anticipating a large drop in volunteer help due to the pandemic, early in the year we put out a call to find Temporary Crisis Homes for dozens of pets in our care. We received an overwhelming response – more than 160 applications within the first 12 hours. The outpouring of support allowed us to move pets out of the shelter and into temporary homes, while also opening up space for new arrivals.



VIRTUAL EVENTS

The need for social distancing and mandated gathering restrictions meant we had to cancel or re-imagine almost all of our events this year and challenged us to get creative to continue to raise funds for the pets in our care. We broadcast as many events through the web as we could, including Iowa Dog Jog, The Cat's Meow, The Mane Event and our biggest event of the year, our Raise Your Paw auction.

PET FOOD PANTRY

In mid-March, we rushed to open a free Pet Food Pantry for people who were struggling to feed their pets. The pantry at ARL Animal Services was open five days a week and also provided pet food deliveries to those who could not leave their homes. In 2020, we distributed nearly 40,000 pounds of food to 1,500 families and 3,700 pets, helping more pets stay out of the shelter and in homes with the people who love them. The Pet Food Pantry remains open.



SOME OF OUR 2020 MILESTONES

COFFEE CATS CAFÉ OPENS



A partnership years in the making, Iowa's first cat café opened in late July in West Des Moines, featuring adoptable cats from the ARL. In its first five months, 164 cats have already found homes.

TNR HITS 1,000



In August, our trap-neuter-return program, Operation CatSnip, spayed its 1,000th community cat. The milestone in humanely reducing Des Moines' community cat populations was reached within just 18 months of the city's ordinance change allowing TNR.

HF737 SIGNED INTO LAW



In a major legislative victory, House File 737 ushered in significant improvements to Iowa's companion animal abuse statute. The law went into effect July 1.

FULL BELLIES, FASTER ADOPTIONS



2020 brought an improved way to feed the pets in our care. Our Full Bellies Food Program ensures our pets receive a consistent, high-quality diet, significantly reducing digestive issues that can cause pets to stay in the shelter longer.

KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER

As the pandemic took its toll on our community, more people found themselves struggling to provide for their pets, including many who had never needed help before. Our community outreach programs served thousands of people and pets in 2020 by providing veterinary assistance, food assistance and more, helping keep pets with the people who love them.

1,234

PETS RECEIVED
SPAY/NEUTER SURGERIES

35

PETS IN
CRISIS FOSTER

451

PETS RECEIVED
VETERINARY ASSISTANCE

3,742

PETS RECEIVED
FOOD ASSISTANCE

ISABELLA'S STORY

After an accident happened at home, Isabella's family rushed her to the emergency vet and were told she had a broken leg that would cost thousands to repair. They spent everything they had, including their savings, to get Isabella the immediate help she needed, but it wasn't enough. Wanting what was best for her, they made the heart-wrenching decision to surrender her to the ARL so she could receive treatment and find a new family. The kids left a note on her cast that read, "We love you forever," before tearfully saying goodbye. Isabella was under the care of our vets for weeks, but we knew she had people who loved her, so when she was well enough, we reunited her with her family. Now Isabella is as good as new and the family is whole again.



MAKING MIRACLES HAPPEN



2020 was a year of challenging medical cases and multiple large-scale cat rescues. In partnership with local authorities and thanks to your support we were able to provide emergency and ongoing care when these pets needed us the most and assist in investigations to hold their abusers accountable.

BEFORE

AFTER



TOBY

Just a few days into 2020 an ARL Animal Control Services Officer responded to a call of a woman hitting, choking, throwing and stomping on her dog. The officer witnessed the abuse on site and got the dog to safety. We found bruises, puncture wounds and many old injuries. Toby's former owner pleaded guilty to animal neglect, and Toby has a new, loving family.



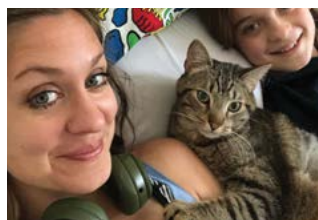
DAWN

Dawn was found in the cold severely burned and crying in pain. She underwent surgery at the ARL and spent months recovering from her severe injuries, first at the ARL and then in a foster home. She made an amazing recovery over the next 3+ months and was adopted by her foster family.



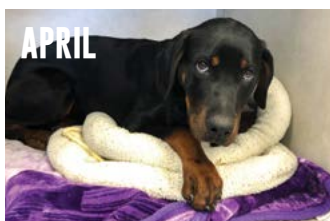
CAT HOARDING CASES

Our Mobile Response Team assisted authorities across Iowa with multiple cat hoarding cases throughout the year, including one in February where 70+ cats were rescued from a basement. In all cases the cats were suffering from illnesses from living in terrible conditions, and some were also suffering from starvation. Sadly, there were some whose conditions were so bad we were unable to save them, but for the rest, after weeks and sometimes months in recovery, they are now in loving homes.



THUNDER

Thunder arrived at the ARL with a massive infected wound on his back and underwent a lifesaving, 1.25-hour-long surgery at the ARL. After another month of healing, he was adopted by a wonderful family that includes kids, dogs, and cats.



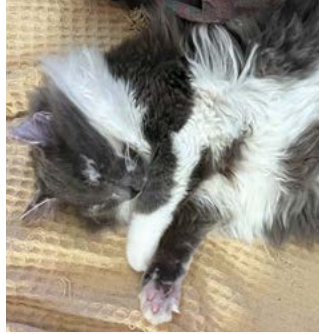
DEWEY

This poor pup arrived suffering from a badly broken leg after being hit by a car. He underwent surgery that involved a plate, a pin, screws and surgical wire. After several weeks of rehabilitation, he was adopted, and not long after was joined in his home by another ARL friend.



SOPHIE

Sophie was rescued after being stabbed multiple times and nearly drowned. After two surgeries and many weeks of recovery, she was adopted by a family who was instrumental in her rescue. Her abuser was found guilty of animal torture and another person involved in the case was also charged.



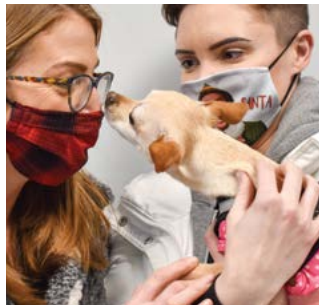
HANS & GRETA

In one of the most horrific cases we encountered in 2020, a box of 9 kittens was set on fire, with 2 of the kittens suffering severe injuries. Both Hans and Greta underwent surgery, but sadly Greta, the most severely burned of the kittens, passed away from her injuries days later. Hans made a miraculous recovery at the ARL and was eventually adopted by a family who is experienced with animal burn survivors.



DUKE & MARIAH

Duke and Mariah arrived after being nearly starved to death by their owner. We later learned Duke had actually been stolen from his real home months prior and his family had been looking for him all this time. We reunited him with his family, and Mariah was adopted into a new loving home. The person responsible for their neglect was charged with 2 counts of animal neglect.



LUCILLE

Lucille was one of many pets this year who arrived with severe hip or leg problems that required surgery to relieve their pain and improve their quality of life. Lucille's case was the most severe and required double-knee surgery to allow her to walk normally. She is currently recovering in a foster home. Once she's fully recovered, her foster family plans to officially adopt her.



FAWKES

This sweet gecko was found abandoned in a filthy, moldy tank in the cold. She was severely emaciated and had developed a permanent limb deformity from a lack of nutrients. We weren't sure she'd live more than a couple of days, but she bounced back thanks to our knowledgeable staff and now is healthy and happy in her new home.



EXOTIC BIRDS RESCUE

Our Mobile Response Team assisted police in rescuing 11 exotic birds living in filthy enclosures in a trash-filled house. From severely overgrown beaks to overgrown nails to feather-plucking and self-mutilation, the birds were in rough shape. Nearly all the birds have now found homes with experienced bird owners. Their previous owner was charged with 4 counts of animal neglect.

LIFESAVING ANIMAL TRANSFERS

Working together saves lives, and our transfer program continues to evolve to give more pets second chances. In 2020, we began a partnership with the ASPCA that has opened new doors for ARL pets outside of Iowa and has given animals from overcrowded shelters across the country the chance to find new homes in Iowa. Here's a glimpse at how our Rescue Ride Relocation Program changed lives this year.



TRANSFER OUT

597

TOTAL ANIMALS TRANSFERRED
TO OTHER SHELTERS

99

CATS TRANSFERRED TO SHELTERS IN
WASHINGTON AND CALIFORNIA WHO
DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH CATS TO MEET
ADOPTION DEMAND

TRANSFER IN

361

TOTAL ANIMALS
TRANSFERRED IN TO ARL

10

STATES ANIMALS WERE
TRANSFERRED IN FROM

6

RETIRED RACEHORSES
TRANSFERRED IN FROM FLORIDA
WHO WERE NOT HANDLING THE
HOT, HUMID CLIMATE WELL



NOT JUST A NUMBER

The ARL's behavior department ensures the mental and behavioral well-being of all animals in our care and provides behavior help to pet owners in our community. In the shelter, pets with special behavior needs are placed in our behavior modification program, where they get daily customized care from our staff and volunteers for as long as they need.

Here are just two of many success stories from 2020.

ARCHER'S STORY

Archer arrived injured, lacking in confidence and terrified of small spaces. He couldn't be in a stall, and loading him into a trailer could take over an hour. He was extremely defensive and easily overwhelmed, taking a long time to calm down. One of his biggest stressors was having his legs touched. Step by step, our team used positive reinforcement to gain his trust and build him back up. It took weeks to get him comfortable with a trailer and having his legs handled. For a long time, we weren't sure if he'd ever be ridden, but we didn't give up. By the time he was adopted, a year after he arrived, he was a different horse! Now he's in a loving home looking toward a future filled with trail rides and carefree days.

WOOFY'S STORY

When Woofy arrived at the ARL he was terrified. He crouched against the back of his kennel, not moving or looking at anyone. He had lived outdoors in a pen most of his life and had limited socialization with people. We started him on behavior modification and over the next several weeks Woofy slowly began learning that people were OK. As the weeks went on he started to do normal dog things like playing! After three months in our care, Woofy began meeting adopters and found the patient family he needed to continue this progress. His name is now Kobe, and he has continued to make big strides. He follows his new family everywhere and is loving his life filled with cuddles and playtime.



123

TRAINING CLASSES HELD

1,066

BEHAVIOR CONSULTATIONS
FOR OWNED PETS

248

SHELTER ANIMALS IN BEHAVIOR
MODIFICATION PROGRAM

MAKING AN IMPACT ONE BY ONE

YEAR
2020
IN REVIEW

IN THE SHELTER

FOSTERS & VOLUNTEERS

220	Foster homes
1,573	Pets in foster homes
430	Volunteers*
662	TheraPets visits

MEDICAL PROCEDURES

43,937	Medical treatments given
5,454	Spay/neuter surgeries for ARL animals
1,884	Dental procedures
203	Other surgeries
190	Laboratory procedures

IN THE COMMUNITY

ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES (DES MOINES)

12,060	Dispatched trips
11,440	Animal Control Officer staff hours
559	Citations issued
1,334	Animal cruelty/neglect responses

CRUELTY INTERVENTION (OUTSIDE OF DES MOINES)

124	Animals rescued from cruelty
165	Cases/investigations
4	Law enforcement trainings
51	Law enforcement training attendees
17	Trained volunteers for emergency response

COMMUNITY-OWNED PETS

1,234	Spay/neuter surgeries through free and low-cost spay/neuter programs
1,778	Pets microchipped
451	Pets received veterinary assistance
35	Pets in Crisis Foster
3,742	Pets received food assistance

ADOPTIONS

4,686	Cats
1,818	Dogs
523	Small Animals
154	Barn Animals
7,181	Total

14%

FEWER PETS
IN NEED OF
SHELTER

1 IN 3

LOST PETS
REUNITED

14%

REDUCTION IN
EUTHANASIA



*Lower numbers due to Covid-19 impact

JANUARY 2020 - DECEMBER 2020
ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF IOWA

	DOG	CAT	SMALL ANIMAL	BARN ANIMAL	TOTAL ³	2020 INTAKES¹
STRAY/IMPOUND	2,075	3,296	112	78	5,561	
OWNER SURRENDER	1,118	2,529	412	83	4,142	
TRANSFERS IN	172	173	10	6	361	
OTHER	38	47	61	0	146	
TOTAL INTAKES	3,403	6,045	595	167	10,210	

	DOG	CAT	SMALL ANIMAL	BARN ANIMAL	TOTAL ³	2020 OUTCOMES¹
ADOPTIONS	1,818	4,686	523	154	7,181	
TRANSFERS OUT	48	536	8	5	597	
RETURN TO OWNER	1,292	263	14	9	1,578	
RETURN TO HABITAT	0	540	0	0	540	
EUTHANIZED²	281	532	25	6	844	
DIED IN CARE	6	94	11	2	113	
TOTAL OUTCOMES	3,445	6,651	581	176	10,853	
LIVE RELEASE RATE	92%	91%	94%	95%	91%	

Reasons for Euthanasia

The ARL looks at every animal as an individual and not a number and determines a treatment or rehabilitation plan. We only euthanize animals that are dangerous or suffering, and only after we have exhausted all other humane and responsible options. We do not euthanize for space and there are no time limits on the animals in our care.

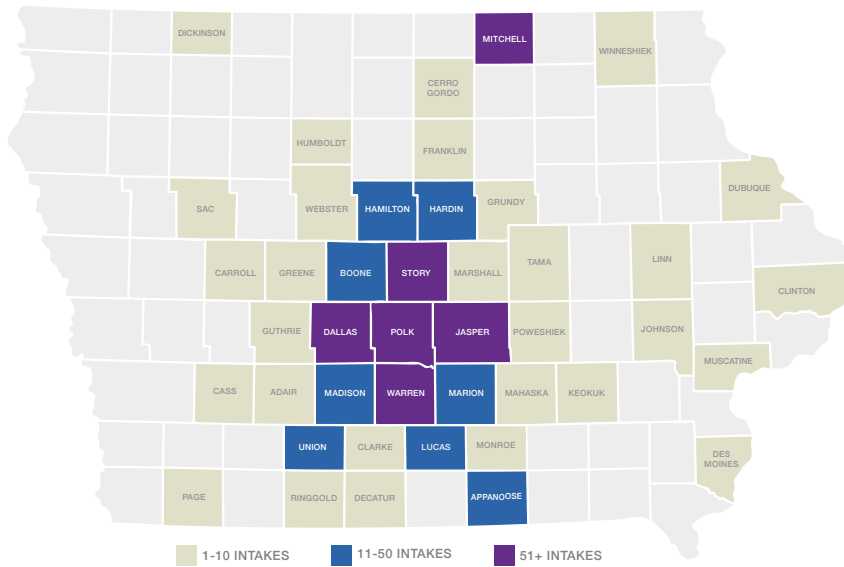
Note: We have attempted to make this report as easy to understand as possible, but if you have any questions, please contact arl@arl-iowa.org.

¹ Does not include wildlife; we partner with several wildlife rehabilitation organizations to care for wild animals brought to us.

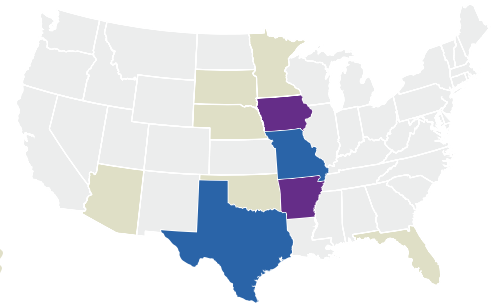
² Does not include owner-requested euthanasia.

³ The number of intakes will not necessarily equal the number of outcomes over the course of a year. The difference represents a net increase or decrease in the number of animals in our care at the beginning of the period and at the end.

2020 INTAKES BY COUNTY



2020 INTAKES BY STATE



- ARKANSAS
- MISSOURI
- ARIZONA
- NEBRASKA
- FLORIDA
- OKLAHOMA
- IOWA
- SOUTH DAKOTA
- MINNESOTA
- TEXAS

CHOOSE A FUND, CHANGE A LIFE

MIRACLE MEDICAL FUND

Provide lifesaving emergency medical care to give shelter pets a second chance.

ARL-IOWA.ORG/MIRACLE

LOYAL FRIENDS CLUB

Help pets every month by joining our Loyal Friends Club with an automatic monthly donation.

ARL-IOWA.ORG/LOYALFRIENDS

PAW IT FORWARD

Keep families together with free/low-cost assistance for pet families in need.

ARL-IOWA.ORG/PAWITFORWARD

RESCUE RIDE RELOCATION

Give pets a ride from overcrowded shelters to a new life in the Midwest.

ARL-IOWA.ORG/RESCUERIDE

FULL BELLIES FOOD FUND

Keep shelter pets' bowls and bellies full with high-quality, consistent food. *New in 2020: All in-kind food donations are now used for the ARL Pet Pantry*

ARL-IOWA.ORG/FOOD

HELP THEM ALL

Provide medical care, food, and safety to shelter pets and keep pet families together in our community.

ARL-IOWA.ORG/DONATE

