2021 Impact Report

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CELEBRATING A 90% SAVE RATE

81% 85% 84% 89% 90% 91% 92%
The Animal Rescue League of Iowa has hit yet another milestone to celebrate, one we could never have accomplished without the help of the community we serve. That community consists of city, county and state governments, pet owners and pet lovers, national and local animal organizations and of course, you! The milestone is a 90% live release rate — what’s often referred to as “no kill.” We’ve been at or above 90% for three consecutive years, and this year we reached our highest rate of lives saved ever!

How did we get here? We got here with governmental decision makers who passed ordinances that allowed trap-neuter-return programs for community cats. And through adopters who looked past one-eyed or three-legged or diabetic pets and adopted them in record numbers. We did it by partnering with national and corporate organizations who, through grants, partially funded public support services that helped keep pets in their loving homes rather than be surrendered because their owners couldn’t afford spay or neuter procedures, food while between jobs, or help with some unforeseen veterinary expense. We got there because other animal organizations in Iowa expanded their own capacity rather than directing owners to bring their pets, sometimes from hours away, to the ARL. And certainly we got there through the financial support from all of you who make all of our lifesaving programs possible.

Will the ARL now start using the “no kill” label? Because that term brings with it a lack of consistency with how it’s defined and applied and creates divisiveness among some animal organizations, we continue to oppose its use in favor of those labels that encourage cooperation, diversification of efforts and, of course, saving even more lives. We will, however, remain committed to only euthanizing animals that are dangerous or suffering and only after we have exhausted all other humane and responsible options — never for time limits or space issues.

Nationally, animal welfare organizations are setting aside their differences in a renaissance of cooperation to help as many animals in as many ways as possible and the ARL is at the forefront of that effort. We can celebrate together a 90% live release rate, along with the programs and people that make our organization unique. We continue to dedicate our resources and efforts to saving as many animals as possible, just as we always have. TOGETHER, we will continue this upward progression. I hope you will join us to save even more lives in 2022! Thank you!

Tom Colvin, CEO
Animal Rescue League of Iowa
February brought a blizzard, dozens of dogs in need of rescue, and no time to waste. It was one of our most harrowing rescues of the year. The dogs were living in horrific outdoor conditions in the eastern Iowa town of Marengo when we received the call for help. We set off on the 90-mile drive just as the blizzard was beginning and arrived to find dozens of fearful dogs confined in pens with little shelter. We rounded them up as temperatures dropped sharply and snow filled in around our vehicles. Driving back, the storm and multiple accidents made many roads impassable. What should have been a 1.5-hour trip took over four hours. But it was all worth it when the dogs woke up indoors, safe from the frigid temps the next morning. Over the following weeks and months, our team slowly, steadily worked to gain their trust and treat their many medical needs so they could find the warm, indoor homes they have always deserved.
When times are tough, it’s often pets who hold families together, and we know that when money is tight, people will often feed their pets before feeding themselves. With many in our community continuing to feel economic stress because of the pandemic, in 2021 we expanded our pet food assistance programs to provide more pet food and supplies, as well as greater accessibility, to help keep pets with the people who love them.

We converted our pop-up Pet Food Pantry events at ARL Animal Services to a Pet Food & Supply Pantry, available to walk-ins six days a week for pets in need. We also expanded our program to reach families with pets who are food insecure by working with DMARC and Food Bank of Iowa pantries to add pet food and supplies alongside the human food at their distribution sites. We also began working with community groups to deliver pet food and supplies directly to people experiencing homelessness.

Beyond food assistance, we continued to support people and pets in other ways, including offering housing for pets during crisis, veterinary assistance, and multiple low-cost vaccine and microchip clinics throughout the year.
When Jacqueline’s cat Pablo suddenly began limping, she rushed him to the emergency vet, where she was told testing alone would run several hundred dollars. It was more than she could afford. With nowhere else to turn and wanting what was best for Pablo, she made the difficult decision to surrender him to the ARL so he could receive the medical care he needed and find a new family.

Our veterinarians found Pablo had a lot of swelling and an abscess, but X-rays showed no broken bones, so we started him on pain medications and antibiotics to fight infection. The next morning he was already so much better, and he continued to recover as the days went by. We knew he already had a family who loved him, so once he was ready, we called Jacqueline.

When we brought Pablo out to see her, their bond was obvious. She called “mi amorcito” (“my love”) from across the room, and he responded with loud meows. Now Pablo is good as new and he’s back home with the family who loves him.
2021 was a year of challenging medical cases and multiple large-scale 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.

CAM
When Cam arrived, he was so afraid and in so much pain from a severe skin infection, he wouldn’t let us touch him. Over the course of several months, under the care of our medical and behavior teams, we gained his trust, healed his skin, and helped him build confidence so he could enjoy life again. He is now in a home with a loving family.

OLAF
Olaf was found frozen to the ground during a bitter cold snap. He had severe frostbite on his back paws, as well as parts of his front paws and tail. If he’d spent any more time in the severe cold, he would have died. After undergoing surgery on his paws, he spent time healing in a foster home with one of our surgical technicians, who later adopted him.

JAX
When Jax arrived, he was skin and bones, weighing about half of what he should have. He was the first in a string of seven thin and emaciated dogs who arrived over the course of a few weeks. All were from separate cases in Des Moines, and for one, sadly, help arrived too late. Our medical team gave lifesaving care to Jax and the other 5 survivors, and all were adopted into loving homes. The person charged in Jax’s case pleaded guilty to animal neglect.

MULTI-CAT RESCUES
ARL Animal Services assisted authorities with multiple cases of cats living in overcrowded conditions in Des Moines this spring. In all of the cases the cats and kittens were suffering from illnesses, and some were also very thin. Others clearly had experienced little human contact, and our behavior team worked with them for months before they were ready for adoption. Sadly, there were some whose medical conditions were so severe we were unable to save them, but the rest have now recovered and are in loving homes.

JUNIE
Junie arrived as a young puppy with her collar deeply embedded in her neck, less than a half inch away from her jugular. The person responsible for her had never adjusted her collar as she grew. Under the care of our surgical team, she made a full recovery over a number of weeks, and she now has a new family and a cat friend. The person responsible for her injuries was charged with animal neglect.
HIGHWAY BOBBY
Highway Bobby was just a tiny kitten when he was found by the side of a road with severe trauma to his back end. Our surgical team amputated his tail and reconstructed the injured area. Even after surgery we were unsure he would survive, but over many weeks in our Miracle Medical Ward he made a full recovery. He now has a home with three other cat friends.

MINIATURE HORSE RESCUE
14 miniature horses in terrible condition were rescued from an eastern Iowa property. Many had severely overgrown hooves, some so long they had started to corkscrew. Several were underweight and many were not used to people or their touch, making helping them even more difficult. The horses received emergency hoof trims and were treated by equine veterinarians. After weeks of medical and behavioral care, nearly all the horses have now found homes.

LIBERTY
Liberty was just a few weeks old when she was found at the bottom of a dumpster under piles of trash. We rushed her to the ARL and gave her emergency care. The first few days were rocky, but she bounced back and eventually made a full recovery. She was adopted by a wonderful family and has a dog friend and several kids to play with.

MARION COUNTY RESCUE
Our Mobile Response Team rescued 43 animals living in terrible conditions at a property in Marion County. The dogs, cats, rabbits, horse and pot-bellied pigs were living alongside deceased animals with no food and no clean water. All had multiple medical issues, and sadly there were some whose conditions were so bad we were unable to save them. It took weeks for many to recover and find homes. The horse, named Jack, is still under veterinary care at our Second Chance Ranch.

POTATO
12-week-old Potato arrived with a badly broken front leg. After undergoing surgery he spent several weeks recovering, first at the ARL and then in a foster home. Once he was ready, his foster family decided to officially adopt him. He’s now happy, healthy and enjoying life with two dog brothers.

OATMEAL
Oatmeal 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. Oatmeal’s case was one of the most severe and required double-knee surgery to allow her to walk normally. After weeks of recovery at the ARL and in a foster home, she was adopted and now is enjoying life with a new family.
Near the end of 2021, we conducted our largest puppy mill rescue in ARL history. In October and November, the ARL led the massive operation to remove 514 dogs from horrific conditions at the hands of Daniel Gingerich, an Iowa breeder accused of 190 violations of the Animal Welfare Act. The ARL, working with several other rescue organizations, removed dogs from multiple properties in Southern Iowa.

Even after the dogs were safe, the numbers grew, with pregnant mamas giving birth to dozens of puppies in the shelter. All of the dogs and puppies needed veterinary care — some of it extensive — and many needed behavioral care as well.

While most of the dogs and puppies are now in loving homes, some are still in our care working their way toward adoption.

Prior to the rescue, the ARL worked for months behind the scenes assisting with the investigation. Gingerich has been permanently banned from breeding and selling dogs anywhere in the country.
Of the 514 dogs rescued, Doree’s story is the most heartbreaking. When she was found she was severely emaciated with multiple fractures to her ribs and spine. Records show she was forced to have puppies even with her excruciating injuries. When we found her, she couldn’t even stand on her own.

Under the care of a team of veterinarians and rehabilitation specialists, she has made slow recovery, and her improvements have been nothing short of miraculous. Through daily hydrotherapy and physical therapy sessions, she has progressed from standing on her own for a few minutes, to walking with the help of a special cart, to very recently walking on her own! One of her veterinarians has been fostering her, and she has been experiencing the comfort of a home for the first time in her life.

While she still has a long road ahead we’re encouraged by her progress. Her journey to recovery wouldn’t be possible without you.
**ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES (DES MOINES)**

- 12,619 Dispatched trips
- 11,596 Animal Control Officer service hours
- 558 Citations issued
- 1,443 Animal cruelty/neglect responses
- 83,156 Miles driven responding to calls

**CRUELTY INTERVENTION (OUTSIDE OF DES MOINES)**

- 626 Animals rescued from cruelty
- 508 Cases/investigations
- 4 Law enforcement trainings
- 215 Law enforcement training attendees
- 6 Trained volunteers for emergency response

**IN THE COMMUNITY**

- 619 TheraPets visits
- 74 TheraPets teams

**COMMUNITY-OWNED PETS**

- 1,664 Pets returned to owners
- 204 Pets microchipped
- 305 Pets receiving veterinary assistance
- 664 Spay/neuter surgeries through free and low-cost spay/neuter programs
- 434 Pets vaccinated through clinics
- 40 Pets in crisis foster
- 1,161 Pets receiving food assistance
- 39,776 Pounds of food distributed

**PET BEHAVIOR SERVICES**

- 169 Dog training classes
- 679 Owned dogs receiving behavior help
- 271 Owned cats receiving behavior help
- 101 Owned horses receiving behavior help

**ADoptions**

- 4,568 Cats
- 2,189 Dogs
- 585 Small Pets
- 157 Barn Pets
- 7,499 Total

**OFF-SITE ADOPTION LOCATIONS**

- 12 Adoption locations

**SECOND CHANCE RANCH**

- 157 Total barn pets adopted
- 38 Horses adopted
- 19 Barn pets cared for from cruelty situations

**FOSTER**

- 316 Foster homes
- 2,062 Pets in foster homes

**VOLUNTEER**

- 507 Volunteers

**OPERATION CATSNIP (TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN)**

- 480 Cats through program

**MEDICAL PROCEDURES**

- 50,176 Medical treatments given
- 5,427 Spay/neuter surgeries for ARL animals
- 2,109 Dental procedures
- 240 Other surgeries
- 163 Laboratory procedures
## ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF IOWA

**JANUARY 2021 - DECEMBER 2021**

### 2021 INTAKES

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<th>DOG</th>
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<th>SMALL ANIMAL</th>
<th>BARN ANIMAL</th>
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<td>STRAY/IMPOUND</td>
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<td>6,622</td>
<td>667</td>
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### 2021 OUTCOMES

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<th>DOG</th>
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<th>BARN ANIMAL</th>
<th>TOTAL²</th>
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<td>ADOPTIONS</td>
<td>2,189</td>
<td>4,568</td>
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<td>416</td>
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<td>RETURN TO OWNER</td>
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<td>RETURN TO HABITAT</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>481</td>
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<td>EUTHANIZED²</td>
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<td>530</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>832</td>
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<td>DIED IN CARE</td>
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<td>89</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>117</td>
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<td>6,380</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>11,527</td>
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**LIVE RELEASE RATE** | 94% | 90% | 93% | 95% | 92%

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### 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.
ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF IOWA, INC.

- **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.
  
  [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]