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.
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.

**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.
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.

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.
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.

**LIFESAVING ANIMAL TRANSFERS**

- **Total Animals Transferred to Other Shelters**: 597
- **Cats Transferred to Shelters in Washington and California who Didn’t Have Enough Cats to Meet Adoption Demand**: 99
- **Total Animals Transferred In to ARL**: 361
- **States Animals Were Transferred In From**: 10
- **Retired Racehorses Transferred In from Florida who Were Not Handling the Hot, Humid Climate Well**: 6
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.
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

MAKING AN IMPACT ONE BY ONE

YEAR 2020 IN REVIEW

IN THE SHELTER

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

IN THE COMMUNITY

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DOG</th>
<th>CAT</th>
<th>SMALL ANIMAL</th>
<th>BARN ANIMAL</th>
<th>TOTAL(^3)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STRAY/IMPOUND</td>
<td>2,075</td>
<td>3,296</td>
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<td>OWNER SURRENDER</td>
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<td>TRANSFERS IN</td>
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<td>OTHER</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>61</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL IN</strong></td>
<td>3,403</td>
<td>6,045</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>167</td>
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<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>ADOPTIONS</td>
<td>1,818</td>
<td>4,686</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>7,181</td>
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<td>TRANSFERS OUT</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>597</td>
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<td>RETURN TO OWNER</td>
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<td>RETURN TO HABITAT</td>
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<td>EUTHANIZED(^2)</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>DIED IN CARE</td>
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<td>94</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>113</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL OUT</strong></td>
<td>3,445</td>
<td>6,651</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>176</td>
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**LIVE RELEASE RATE**

- **92%**
- **91%**
- **94%**
- **95%**

**TOTAL OUTCOMES**: **10,853**

**2020 INTAKES\(^1\)**: **10,210**

**2020 OUTCOMES\(^1\)**: **10,853**

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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.
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

ARL-IOWA.ORG

1-10 INTAKES
11-50 INTAKES
51+ INTAKES

2020 Intakes by County

2020 Intakes by State

ARL-IOWA.ORG