



## Elena Bicker



Elena Bicker, executive director of Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF) in Walnut Creek, California achieved executive leadership success in a 501(c)3 charitable organization as well as for-profit corporations. Her achievements in these arenas are a result of her entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to sound fiscal business practices and quality services.

Bicker came to ARF in 1993 as a volunteer and joined ARF's staff in 1998. In her first year, she generated more than \$1 million in funding. Her marketing and strategic planning skills quickly led to her promotion as the organization's marketing director, where she was responsible for public relations, corporate events, sponsorships, exhibits, and advertising.

Bicker was promoted to executive director of the organization in 2006, where she currently oversees the \$6.5 million day-to-day operations of the 37,700 square foot facility, as well as ARF's thrift store in Concord. Under her tutelage, adoptions at ARF's shelter have increased, the capital debt of \$3.1 million was retired, and an endowment was established for the first time in the organization's then 17-year history. She streamlined efficiencies while growing people and animal programs, allowing an increase to 87 cents on the dollar dedicated to ARF's life-saving programs. This in turn, has elevated ARF from a 2-star rating to a 4-star rating (the highest rating possible) on Charity Navigator, the nation's premier independent charity evaluator. ARF has held this four star status for the past 13 years—a milestone reached by only one percent of charities.

A prominent member of the animal welfare community, Bicker develops long-term collaborative shelter relationships with national and local agencies. In 2007, she joined the Lindsay Wildlife advisory board and received special Congressional Recognition for "Outstanding & Invaluable Service to the Community" as a graduate of Contra Costa Leadership, where she remains active. Ms. Bicker served on the Board for the Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau and was named to the 2017 list of "Dynamic Forces" by Walnut Creek Magazine. In 2016, she was honored with an induction into the Contra Costa Commission for Women's Hall of Fame for "Women Demonstrating Leadership". She was also honored as a "Maddie's Hero" by Maddie's Fund for advancing the welfare of U.S. companion animals.

Prior to following her dream into animal welfare, Ms. Bicker spent 11 years with GE Capital. Elena earned her bachelor of science in business administration from St. Mary's College in Moraga. Ms. Bicker resides with her husband, Bill, in Danville with their ARF rescue dogs—a black labrador, Jax, and a golden retriever, Mia.