



What is ARF?



The catalyst for Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF) came on May 7, 1990 at a televised baseball game between the Oakland Athletics and the New York Yankees. In the middle of a lively inning and amidst cheers from spectators, a stray tortoiseshell cat took a wrong turn and suddenly found herself on the playing field.

Trapped in the enormous Oakland Coliseum and frightened by the roar of the crowd, the frantic cat dashed around the field, desperately leaping at any means of escape and eluding the players and umpires who tried to capture her. Panicked and unable to find a way out, she slinked towards the infield, exhausted from her ordeal. Tony La Russa, then-manager for the Oakland Athletics, coaxed her gently into the A's dugout where she would spend the rest of the game in safe confines.

Tony and his wife Elaine, a life-long animal advocate, were dismayed when they discovered the little cat would likely be euthanized at any East Bay animal shelter. They exhausted every lead in hopes of finding a safe haven. At long last, they were able to place "Evie" – named after Oakland A's team owner, Evie Haas – in a permanent, loving home where she could live out her natural life.

The experience awakened Elaine and Tony to the desperate circumstances in public animal shelters and the plight of homeless dogs and cats, and it inspired them to take action. They co-founded ARF in 1991 with the goal of rescuing dogs and cats before they ran out of time at municipal shelters.

In donated office space with a small team of driven volunteers, ARF worked tirelessly to save the lives of more than one hundred dogs and cats its first year. It wasn't long before ARF's board of directors realized that of equal importance to rescuing animals was the remarkable role they play in the lives of people. ARF's dual mission of "People Rescuing Animals... Animals Rescuing People®" was born.

Today, ARF is renowned as a local leader and national model in the animal welfare community. Since its inception, ARF has celebrated 46,500 adoptions and performed more than 52,000 spay and neuter surgeries to combat pet overpopulation. Its 50,500-square-foot headquarters is home to an array of innovative outreach and education programs bringing people and animals together to enrich each other's lives.

Organization Information

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501(c)(3) Non Profit Corporation
Federal Tax ID #68-0240341

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