

# ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE of BOSTON



CONTACT:

Mike DeFina, Media Relations Officer

(617) 293-3530

[mdefina@arlboston.org](mailto:mdefina@arlboston.org)

For Release on:

May 26, 2021

## **A Century of Service: ARL Marks 100-Years of Helping Animals on Cape Cod**

Today, the Animal Rescue League of Boston (ARL) officially kicks off its commemoration of a historic milestone – 100 years of serving animals in need on Cape Cod!

For a century, ARL has been a dedicated resource to the Cape Cod community, and that commitment continues today through its Animal Care and Adoption Center in Brewster.

“As an organization we are incredibly proud of this historic milestone,” said **Dr. Edward Schettino, ARL President and CEO**. “ARL’s work on Cape Cod is critical and with a century of work behind us, we are in a wonderful position to improve and expand our services to continue to be a community resource for decades to come.”

ARL’s Brewster location will be immersed in history with commemorative signage and a special photo array highlighting the past century. Visitors to the facility will have the opportunity to be a part of the celebration through special animal adoption and donation hang tags, and the opportunity to take home celebratory SWAG items.

Additionally, ARL will host several private events for donors who make ARL’s continued success on the Cape possible. The program for each event will revolve around a historical documentary film highlighting heartwarming adoption stories from the Cape, produced by ARL volunteer Kim Roderiques and cinematographer Geoffrey Bassett. The documentary will debut at the first event at Chatham’s Orpheum Theater in September.

“I have had a love affair with the Animal Rescue League since adopting our first family dog, Snubby, in 1975,” **ARL Volunteer Kim Roderiques** said. “The ARL has been a pillar in the Cape community finding homes for countless animals for one hundred years. Having the opportunity, thanks to a grant from Rockland Trust, to document their journey through the lens while sharing the most moving and riveting stories of animals surviving and thriving, along with acknowledging those who have been integral in making adoptions successful, is a dream come true.”

As a companion piece to the documentary, Kim Roderiques, will also be creating an exclusive photo book containing a collection of images related to ARL’s history, including animals that have been adopted from the Brewster Animal Care & Adoption Center. The production of the photo book has graciously been sponsored by Agway of Cape Cod, and supporters can obtain a copy by making a suggested donation to ARL.

Adopt an animal from ARL’s Brewster location? Then your pet has a chance to be featured! Log onto <https://padlet.com/mgraf15/ARLsCapeCentennial> to upload your photo and your story, and your ARL pet could be a part of history!

ARL supporters can also celebrate this historic milestone virtually through the Cape Challenge Match. **Thanks to the generosity of a select group of local businesses and individuals across the Cape, every gift, up to \$17,000, will be matched dollar-for-dollar until October 12, 2021, doubling the impact for animals in need on Cape Cod. Text 100CAPE to 44321 to receive a secure link to our donation page.**

### **ARL Cape Cod Historical Narrative**

**For ARL historical photos, click Dropbox link below:**

**[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/wn1fpmkupxczny1/AACm-YPfv\\_uc11sGw2F1B-L7a?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/wn1fpmkupxczny1/AACm-YPfv_uc11sGw2F1B-L7a?dl=0)**

### **The Beginning**

ARL was founded in 1899, and its expansion to Cape Cod officially began in 1921, when Founder and President Anna Harris Smith hired part-time rescue agent William H. Irwin, a Cotuit resident. But, the seed for the expansion was actually planted 11 years earlier.

In 1910, Margaret Morse Coffin, a newly appointed ARL Director and part-time Cape resident, sat down with Anna Harris Smith to discuss the founder’s desire to expand ARL’s reach to the peninsula approximately 50 miles southeast of Boston.

Mrs. Smith stated that she was receiving many letters from Cape residents “begging that we (ARL) help animals in distress.”

When hired, Mr. Irwin was able to assist countless animals, including community cats and livestock, and visited schoolhouses to teach children about kindness to animals. However, in 1924, just three years into service, due to a lack of funding ARL was unable to “consistently keep Mr. Irwin employed” but would continue to call upon him for special circumstances.

In 1930, ARL decided once again to expand services to the region as the need began to grow.

Two full-time agents were hired – one to serve Harwich and the surrounding communities, the other to be stationed in Eastham to serve the Outer Cape.

The agents’ properties would also serve as makeshift shelter locations. In 1946, newly hired agent Hilliard Hopkins transformed his property into much more than an animal shelter. Along with sheltering and finding new homes for animals, Hopkins’ daughter, a veterinarian began a practice on the property. The property still serves animals to this day as Derbyfield Kennel.

During these years, ARL found homes for thousands of animals, assisted countless more in distress on Cape Cod, and became a valuable animal resource for full and part-time Cape residents.

### **Provincetown Shelter**

In 1956, ARL opened the doors to its first official Cape shelter, located on Snail Road in Provincetown, cementing its commitment to sustain the organization on Cape Cod for generations to come.

Named the Captain Joseph R. Atkins and Martha W. Atkins Animal Shelter, this cottage-like building overlooked Provincetown Bay and provided a “homelike atmosphere, making life happier for every animal entrusted to their care.”

ARL continued its work unabated, and just like today, Cape Cod was primarily a seasonal destination for vacationers and outdoor adventurers. Hence, the summer months were the busiest season for ARL’s first years in Provincetown.

Visitors would routinely bring pets along for vacation, and unfortunately there were many instances where an animal wandered off, or was sadly left behind.

ARL’s years in Provincetown were certainly fruitful, however as time moved on and the Cape’s population grew, it was clear that the very tip of Cape Cod was not the ideal location to serve the entire region.

### **Move to Current Location**

In 1967, ARL opened the doors on a brand-new facility located at 3981 Main Street in East Brewster.

The impact and interest was immediate as about 400 people attended the formal opening of the shelter on December 17, 1967; additionally the benefits of having a more centralized location were quickly realized.

According to Cape Agent Donald Westover, “a weak point while based in Provincetown was pet adoption. The area there being so small and population also being small, the pet saturation point was quickly reached...East Brewster is easily accessible from all points on the Lower and Upper Cape.”

Nearly 500 animals found new homes the first year in Brewster, and ARL quickly became embedded in the community, hosting events for local organizations, visiting four elementary schools and hosting about 600 students and head-start groups.

The centralized location also made it easier for ARL to help distressed animals. Mr. Westover recalled a case in November 1967 where authorities in Harwich reached out regarding a severely beaten puppy. The close proximity allowed Mr. Westover to respond quickly, pick up the animal, get him medical care and rapidly launch an investigation into the act of cruelty.

The suspect was found guilty and was banned from owning an animal for several years. “The court gave the League (ARL) custody of the puppy...and I was able to place him in a new home where he is receiving the love and attention he deserves.”

This was just one of the tens of thousands of positive outcomes that would take place at ARL’s Brewster location over the next 54 years.

## **Brewster Today**

The Brewster facility continues to serve Cape Cod to this day. Hundreds of animals find new homes annually, however ARL’s Brewster Animal Care and Adoption Center is much more than an animal adoption center.

Along with dedicated staff, volunteers continue to play a pivotal role in ARL’s ability to serve the community and animals in need. In 2020, despite COVID-19 restrictions, volunteers in Brewster committed 6,200 hours of service – an incredible accomplishment given the circumstances.

The Animal Care & Adoption Center in Brewster is a resource, helping existing and potential pet owners navigate the rigors of having a pet in the home. Additionally, ARL hosts annual vaccination and microchip clinics, and during the pandemic has provided crucial supplies to a number of pet owners in need.

ARL is also a resource to local municipalities, sheltering stray animals and others coming from precarious situations from surrounding towns who don’t have town-owned animal facilities.

While locations, personnel, and how we provide services have changed and evolved over time, one thing has remained constant since 1921 – ARL is committed to serving animals in need, prevent cruelty, neglect and abuse, and to be *the* animal welfare resource on Cape Cod.

**ABOUT THE ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF BOSTON:**

***The Animal Rescue League of Boston (ARL) is an unwavering champion for animals in need, committed to keeping them safe and healthy in habitats and homes.*** Founded in 1899, ARL provides high-quality veterinary care, adoption, and rescue services; while also confronting the root causes of animal cruelty and neglect through innovative community programs, police investigations, and public advocacy. In 2020, ARL served nearly 17,000 animals throughout Massachusetts. ARL is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. The Animal Rescue League of Boston does not receive government grants or public funding (with the exception of limited COVID-19 relief funding) and relies on the generosity of our supporters to help animals in need. For more information please visit us online at [arlboston.org](http://arlboston.org); and be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

###