



*For immediate release*

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## **AARFWorks Breaks New Ground**

### **AARF plans progressive community pet resource center**

For nearly five years, Atlanta Animal Rescue Friends Inc. (AARF) has worked to find permanent homes for animals in need. Now, AARF needs a home of its own. But the leaders of this innovative, progressive grassroots group are aiming to build a facility that will be much more than just a shelter – they want to create a self-supporting community resource.

“Our goal is to help pets leave the rescue and adoption cycle permanently,” says AARF Executive Director Susan Leisure. “The key to finding homes for pets and keeping them in those homes permanently is the accessibility of resources that address both health and behavioral aspects of humane pet ownership.

“We want to create a community pet resource center where we can not only help dogs and cats find permanent homes, but also provide resources to keep pets in those homes.”

The \$8 million facility, to be called AARFWorks, will include approximately 32,000 square feet of service, training and education classrooms and executive space, providing an array of services both for potential pet adopters and current pet owners, such as training and boarding.

The facility will include two buildings: one housing a pet wellness clinic, cat adoption center and administration offices; the other containing dog adoption suites and a community adoption center.

Architect Rick Bacon of Bacon Group Inc. in Clearwater, Fla., who designed the plans for the facility, says the uniqueness of AARFWorks lies in the combination of boarding and rescue services. “To be able to mix the two is going to be an interesting concept. The boarding will generate income to support the group,” he says.

Animal shelters and care facilities represent about 80 percent of the design work Bacon does, and he says AARFWorks is the first facility he has seen to combine rescue and boarding services in this way. Fortunately, he says, AARF is at the forefront of a new way of thinking in designing animal shelters and care facilities. “The days of the dog pound are long gone – the whole concept is outdated,” he says.

The target area for AARFWorks, set to break ground in late spring, is the Tucker and Stone Mountain area – a portion of DeKalb County that is underserved in terms of pet resources. The DeKalb County animal shelter has one of the highest euthanasia rates in the metro area and the lowest adoption rate. AARF is dedicated to changing that. “We realize that asking adopters to make a lifetime commitment means that we are making that commitment, too,” Leisure says.

*To donate toward the construction of AARFWorks, call (678) 318-1886 or e-mail [info@aarfatlanta.org](mailto:info@aarfatlanta.org). Donations of \$100 or more will be recognized in the new facility. Naming levels range from \$10,000-\$1 million. For more information, visit [www.aarfatlanta.org](http://www.aarfatlanta.org).*

## **What Makes AARFWorks Different?**

- 1) Training and education classrooms
- 2) Pet wellness clinic
- 3) Premium boarding suites for pet owners
- 4) Community adoption center
- 5) Separate cat and dog adoption suites
- 6) Administration offices for a constant presence from AARF’s leaders