



Hello Kitty gets a head scratch from Lost Dog & Cat Ranch co-founder Pam McAlwee.

pets go to their adoptive homes. The group has helped with HSUS-led rescues, accepting several heartworm-positive dogs from a hoarding raid who needed behavioral training, as well as dogs from a Missouri puppy mill rescue, pets displaced during Mississippi floods, shar-peis from a breeder surrender in Ohio, and more.

Each weekend, an army of volunteers (the rescue has about 2,400) transports dogs and cats to adoption events at pet stores in Virginia and Maryland. The rescue estimates that it has rehomed about 18,000 dogs and cats since its founding in 2001.

McAlwee and Underwood have been friends and business partners for almost 30 years, splitting their time between running restaurants and helping pets.

There's no legal relationship between the cafés and the rescue, nor does the rescue receive a set percentage of the restaurants' profits, but McAlwee and Underwood contribute a lot to keep it going—at least \$100,000 a year, sometimes much more.

It's the perfect arrangement, McAlwee says. "The bigger we grow, the more money we make, the more we're able to help more animals." — Jim Baker



Restaurants for Rescue

At Virginia cafés, restaurateurs pursue their passion for saving pets

On a wall at the Stray Cat Café in Arlington, Va., a giant kitty rendered in vibrant colors stalks toward the viewer, a white feather in his mouth. An enormous cat eye peers from a doorway, and a huge paw rakes in a football-size chunk of kibble that spills from an overturned trash can.

Meanwhile, down the street at the Lost Dog Café, painted pooches are having a great time, some roasting a pizza over a fire, some playing a game of pool. (Sorry, no dogs playing poker.) Diners at both restaurants get a great beer selection, plus vegetarian and vegan options and fun food items like Mouse Tails (curly fries) and Cats-a-Dillas at the Stray Cat Café and a variety of pizzas named for dog breeds at its sister establishment.

It's not all fun and games, though: The imagery represents what's foremost in the hearts of co-owners Pam McAlwee and Ross Underwood and where they like to spend their hard-earned dollars. The restaurants support the lifesaving work of the nonprofit they founded, Lost Dog & Cat Rescue Foundation, and its Lost Dog & Cat Ranch.

The rescue takes dogs and cats from overcrowded shelters and other at-risk situations, providing spay/neuter, vaccinations, and any needed medical care before the

Lost Dog & Cat Rescue Foundation and Lost Dog and Stray Cat Cafés in Arlington, Va.

► **RURAL RETREAT:** The rescue's Lost Dog & Cat Ranch, set on 61 acres in Sumerduck, Va., offers a peaceful setting for about 150 dogs and cats to prepare for the final leg of their journey to a new home. Dogs enjoy indoor/outdoor runs and playtime, while cats have a house to themselves, with a screened porch and plenty of places to perch or snooze.

► **LOVE LOCALLY:** Restaurant regulars know about their hangout's big heart. "I can walk up and down the street and see [people with their] dogs coming, and I'll say, 'Oh, hi,' and they'll go, 'We got him from you guys,'" Pam McAlwee says. "So we've kind of saturated this neighborhood."

► **EXPANDING THE PACK:** In May 2009, four men who'd grown up working at the Lost Dog Café opened a franchise in Arlington, then later two more. All have the same menu and colorful murals (above right) by local artist Jessica Lovelace. But McAlwee and her partner are picky about growth. "If you want to have the name Lost Dog Café, then you have to give back to the animals," she says.

