



Media Fast Facts

(Pronunciation: A-leesa Ann Roo-sh)

www.aarbf.org

The Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation (AARBF), founded in 1971, works to enhance the quality of life of burn survivors and promote burn prevention education throughout California. AARBF works with local hospitals, fire departments, safety coalitions and other organizations across California to develop innovative programs and services to serve this community, we call "family" statewide.

Signature Services and Programs

Have you heard of Stop Drop and Roll? Created by the Foundation in 1972 as a simple way to teach children what to do if their clothing caught fire it's been taught to millions around the world.

Champ Camp: Established in 1985, we have become the world's largest camps for child burn survivors this annual event allows burn survivor children from 5-17 to be together, free from stares in a safe environment with their peers. Approximately 150 children enjoy a free camp experience with the smiles and actual research to prove the experience is invaluable, each year. (<https://www.aarbf.org/project/champ-camp/>)

Firefighters in Safety Education: The Firefighters in Safety Education program trains firefighter volunteers and provides materials to teach elementary school students how to protect themselves from fire and burn injuries. More than 20,000 students throughout California benefit from this program annually. Ask about how the program led to a child saving her family in a house fire. (<https://www.aarbf.org/burn-prevention/>)

Wildfire Preparedness: As California faces devastating wildfires year-round, AARBF has stepped up to provide resources to those injured in the fires, working closely with firefighters and hospital burn units. (<https://www.aarbf.org/wildfirepreparedness/>)

Other survivor services: AARBF provides a number of supportive services for those affected by burn injuries, including: Support Groups, Hospital Visits, Financial Support, Recreational Events, etc.

Things to note when talking to Burn Survivors:

Please address **them as survivors, not victims.**

Permission. At our youth programs please don't speak to children without verifying parental consent. We can identify children whose parents have given consent.

For privacy reasons **we usually cannot disclose how survivors were injured and given the traumatic and physical/psychological nature of the injuries we prefer you don't ask**, though most will be willing to share on their own. We can, however, introduce you to survivors willing to discuss the cause of their injuries and their recovery.

Information About Burns:

Burn injuries (not wounds) are some of the most painful injuries and often require a lifetime of care. For burn survivors, the injured skin does not grow and stretch normally, so survivors will have dozens of skin graft surgeries to allow for growth. Some child survivors have had more than 20 surgeries before they become teenagers.

Burns are referred to by degrees, the higher the number the more severe the damage, and by percentage of the body involved. (e.g. 4th degree burns over 60% of the body). Burns are often accompanied by smoke inhalation and other injuries as well. It is estimated that for every 1% of their body that is burned, a patient spends one day in the hospital. Severe burn survivors often spend many months in the hospital receiving highly specialized care.

Infant and toddler scalds are by far the most common burn injuries. Other common causes include:

Fire- home fires, motor vehicle fires, firefighting, increasingly escaping wildfires

Scalds- boiling water from stove, bathtubs

Electricity- even lightning

Contact - stove top, iron, engines

Chemical - acid, bleach

FAQs

Q. Do you have someone we could talk to you about (Fire, Injury, Firefighting, Volunteering)?

A. We can help you find an expert whether it's our Executive Director, Firefighters, Burn nurses or doctors or child or adult burn survivors, we can connect you to interviews regarding of burn treatment, education and prevention.

Q. Are you a non-profit?

A. We are a qualified 501(c) non-profit and accept donations and volunteers. **We really appreciate the media mentioning our website (www.aarbf.org)** and find survivors and volunteers as a result of your great work.

Q. What is the history of the Foundation, how did it start?

A. Founded in 1971 after 8-year-old Alisa Ann Ruch was fatally injured in a backyard barbeque accident. Alisa Ann's parents partnered with Southern California firefighters to create the AARBF. Today we serve California with our main office located in San Francisco and a statewide network of AARBF staff and volunteers.

Q. What departments and hospitals do you work with?

A. We regularly work closely with the California fire service, hundreds of county and city fire departments and virtually all of the state's burn hospitals and doctors including close partnership with seven regional hospitals where we provide extensive survivor services and outreach.

Q. What is Champ Camp? Why is it so important for child survivors?

A. Champ Camp, the largest summer camp for burn injured kids in the United States, hosts an average of 150 kids each summer. It costs \$1,000 per child, but is completely free to all campers, paid for by the Foundation. More than 3000 children have attended camp. Many have attended for decades and a number now return as camp counselors. Camp provides a place for children to be away from stares and questions, to be with others who "look like and understand them". It is a fun, safe place to aid in their long healing journey. It is staffed by volunteers from all professions, but a high percentage of firefighters and nurses. It is held each summer outside of Fresno, at an established summer camp that gives our survivors, (many who wouldn't get a chance to ever attend camp) access to a ropes course, go-karts, swimming and waterslides, bb guns, arts and crafts and other fun activities.

Q. What other services do you provide to survivors?

A. It's a long list you can see on our website but other services include hospital visits to provide initial information and resources; Peer support through monthly support groups; Emergency Relief Fund for financial assistance during hospitalization, including housing, food and medical assistance, medical supplies, including pressure garments to alleviate pain; Image enhancement services, including cosmetics consultations, wigs, and camouflaging make-up; Scholarships for burn survivors seeking a higher education; retreats and Training for professional service providers, including nurses and firefighters.

Contact: Katrina Arthur, Operations Manager karthur@aarbf.org