

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF FOSTER PARROTS, LTD. & The New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary



Oakley & Friends - Photo by Michaela Kennedy

“Psst! ‘Tis The Season For Year-End Giving!”

Pictured here, Oakley and friends, Inca and Lightning, enjoy a lovely summer day in their outdoor aviary at The New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary. With a heavy schedule of construction inside and outside of the sanctuary over the past year, the summer months seemed to fly by in minutes. Now, here in New England, we’re bracing ourselves for what promises to be an exceptionally cold and snowy winter. As always, we will emerge in the spring with renewed dedication to improving the lives of parrots both in captivity and in the wild, and with compelling new ways to keep our supporters connected to the lives of the birds and animals at the NEEWS. A recent report on charitable giving indicated that 80% of charitable donations in the U.S. go to 1% of non-profit organizations. Countless small non-profits working in the trenches and doing great work in their communities struggle to continue with only tiny streams of funding. As we close out the 2016 year and prepare for what will come in 2017, we hope that you will keep Foster Parrots and other small but mighty non-profits in mind this holiday season!! Supporting the last of our 3 annual fundraising events - **the Year-End Mini-Match** - is a beautiful way to show your love for the birds! So c'mon inside and read the NEEWS!

A Caique Story...

By Karen Windsor

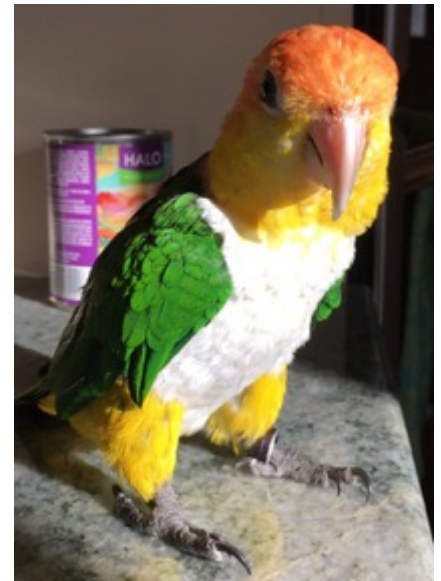
It was back in 2003 when Foster Parrots arranged to have a meeting with PetsMart management and district representatives at their Braintree store location. The meeting was organized to address PetsMart bird sales and conditions in which the birds were kept in the stores. While waiting for the meeting to begin I wandered over to the bird section and noticed a very young caique parrot huddled miserably on the bottom of its display case. She was too young to perch. Obviously she was unweaned, cold, insecure and needing her mother. My heart broke for her. I turned to Foster Parrots Founder, Marc Johnson, and said, "That bird is too young to be here. She's already 'damaged goods' and her life has barely begun." I wondered how long it would be before an unhappy consumer with an unmanageable caique would call me to say, "I bought this caique from PetsMart and all she does is scream and bite... could you take this bird?"

Sadly, that day would never come. Less than a week later we received a call from our contact at the local animal hospital. A baby caique from PetsMart had been brought in with severe crop burn, the result of having been hand fed formula that was too hot by an inexperienced sales associate. The baby died.

That was the trigger that launched Foster Parrots on a 3-year battle to initiate legislation in Massachusetts that would prohibit the commercial sale of unweaned baby birds in the state, and also prohibit the transportation of unweaned babies across state lines in either direction. Unfortunately, facing aggressive opposition from the American Federation of Aviculture, The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Committee and the watch dog organization, Animal Interest Alliance, we were crushed under the heel of industry interest and were finally forced to abandon our battle to secure legal protection for baby parrots. The image of that lonely little caique cowering alone in her glass case, however, has stayed with me through the years.

Last week when I received Dan's email entitled "Biting Caique", I prepared myself to read a surrender request from a person hoping to unload their unruly parrot. Instead I was surprised by a compassionate young man seeking advice as he worked to help a deeply troubled little bird he had 'rescued' from PetsMart. "Every time I went in there I would see her," Dan explained. "So one day I asked about her. Turns out the poor bird is a year and a half old. They had been unable to sell her, so she'd been shuffled between stores. They offered her to me for an adoption fee of less than half her retail price. I felt badly for her so I bought her. I thought I could help her. When I went to pick her up they used gloves and she was very frightened. I should've noticed the red flag."

The bird Dan brought home bit compulsively out of fear and flew in a panic against the bars of the cage whenever he would come near. Dan was heartbroken but determined to help her through her trauma. He named her Becky, and over the course of their first week together he was able to make some progress. Although little Becky was still fearful, she had begun to accept food from his hand. We discussed certain training techniques and strategies for breaking down her barriers and teaching her to trust.



White Bellied Caique Photo by Carrie Pantazelos

Over the last decade researchers have uncovered layers of compelling information, helping us to understand the emotions and psychological complexity that underlie parrot intelligence. Our knowledge, however, has miles to go before it can really begin to impact our perception of parrots as pets and change the way we treat birds in the commercial market. To this day it is still widely believed that hand-weaning a baby parrot is the way to ensure the bond between the human and the bird. In fact, this method of socialization via parental deprivation has served to undermine the social and psychological stability of generations of captive bred parrots. This is an issue recognized to the extent that hand-rearing of captive parrots became unlawful in the Netherlands in 2014.

Studies published by Dr. Gay Bradshaw of Kerulos Center in Oregon have established correlations between human PTSD and manifestations of trauma experienced by animals of higher intelligence like elephants, primates and parrots. Difficulty in forming meaningful social and emotional attachments, phobic behavior, displaced aggression, stereotypy (repetitive, exaggerated movements) and self-harming are all behaviors observed in humans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorders. These same behaviors have been widely documented in highly intelligent and social animals who have been subjected to what can only be described as psychological torture in captivity. Parental deprivation and social isolation of parrots during their neonatal stage has long-term consequences, compromising normal psychosocial development and the ability of parrots to mature into well-adjusted adult birds.

Several years ago, in a gesture to appease activists and acknowledge public and professional concerns, Petco announced that it would no longer sell large parrot species in its stores. Without the public fanfare exercised by Petco, PetsMart stores appear to have followed suit. While we must applaud the fact that Moluccan cockatoos and Scarlet macaws are no longer on display in



PetsMart and Petco stores, it's important to assess whether or not a caique or conure or cockatiel is any less intelligent or any less psychologically vulnerable than large species parrots. It's important to examine whether or not these smaller species are any less at risk when subjected to commercial breeding or retail situations, or if their experiences in the hands of uninformed or casual consumers are somehow less significant just because they are small.

In a recent paper published by the Journal of Avian Medicine and Surgery by the Association of Avian Veterinarians, avian vets from across the country were asked to respond to a series of questions regarding whether or not parrots should be kept as pets. The majority of avian veterinarians surveyed supported parrots as pets while acknowledging that human-avian relationships could certainly benefit from increased education. But the questions that beg attention are whether or not we have the right to subject parrots - breeder birds and babies alike - to completely unregulated commercial

breeding and retail practices and, based on the psychological impact of the commercial experience on parrots produced for the pet trade, do all young parrots have the same chances of succeeding as pets?

Little Becky may not have stood much of a chance, but she got lucky. She caught the eye of a young man with a big heart, capable of making a commitment to the life of a less than perfect parrot.

Little Visitors Helping Parrots!

Participating in their first Lego League Competition, "Animal Encounters", fourth and fifth graders from the **Our Lady of Mercy Middle School Robotics Class** in East Greenwich chose parrots as their ambassador animal and spent an afternoon at The New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary, meeting and learning about our sanctuary residents! These young animal advocates are working to identify the greatest challenges faced by parrots, and explore solutions to captive parrot issues. Many thanks to the OLM Robotics team for caring about the lives of the birds, and congratulations for being the *first ever* All Girl Team at OLM!



Three members of the OLM Robotics Team take a break from parrots during their visit to give a little love to a big dog! Nemo welcomes the girls to visit any time!

Look Who Made The Cover!

Tackling the overwhelming need for veterinary care for low income, elderly and disabled pet guardians, the "Pets In Need Veterinary Clinic" was established by **The Rhode Island Companion Animal Foundation** in partnership with the **Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RISPCA)**. Located on Amara Street in East Providence, the Pets In Need clinic helps animals keep the people who love them by offering low and no cost medical support in situations that have traditionally forced low-income guardians to relinquish or euthanize sick or injured pets.

Our own avian vet, Dr. Hank Wietsma, and Dr. E. Finocchio of the RISPCA have worked tirelessly over the years to set the wheels in motion, and are two of thirty vets from around the state who volunteer their services for the clinic. Congratulations to Dr. Wietsma, and Dr. Finocchio who spearheaded the program, and also to Dr. Alison Elias and her staff at the Pets In Need Veterinary Clinic! All are being honored as Rhode Islanders of the Year!



Dr. Hank Wietsma makes the cover of Rhode Island Monthly Magazine

In 2007 when Foster Parrots moved from Massachusetts to Rhode Island with close to 300 parrots already under our care, we made the decision to name our new property 'The New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary' in order to put parrots in their proper context beside other captive exotic animals who are inappropriate as pets. Our philosophical views are rooted in the belief that, if we are unable to meet the fundamental physical, social and psychological needs of an animal in our homes, we have no right to keep that animal in captivity. We have a long way to go before, as a society, we can really begin to acknowledge and honor the sovereignty of animals and their right to live parallel to us rather than beneath us. But any time we have the ability to connect even one person in a meaningful way to the lives and experiences of the birds and animals at the sanctuary, we come one step closer to creating a world in which preservation and protection are prioritized over destruction. Our future as a part of a multi-species, global community depends on this.

Meet Our Non-Avian Residents -Photos by Brian Jones



Zilla - Female Green Iguana



Francine - Red Eared Slider (1 of 13 turtles)



Mack - Sulcata Tortoise (1 of 8 tortoises)



Daisy - Patagonian Mara



Ginger & Brownie - Bunnies



Mitch - Hedgehog



Nemo - Official Greeter



Lulu - Official Tour Guide



Bee (1 of 10,000)

When Love Hurts

On September 16, 2016 our associates from **Rhode Island Parrot Rescue** were called by authorities to the scene of what can only be described as Hell On Earth in Weston, Connecticut, where over 100 birds and between 40 - 50 snakes and reptiles were seized from the home of renown conservationist and exotic parrot expert, Daniel Kopulos. The smell of decay hung in the air and signaled the tragedy well before the house even came into view. Donning hazmat suits and respirators, rescuers entered the residence and began the heart wrenching task of pulling surviving birds from filthy cages... and pulling bodies from the debris.

Most perplexing of all was the fact that this happened at the home of one of the most well-known figures in the avicultural community. Owner of "Fauna NYC", a high-end exotic bird shop formerly located on the upper west side of NYC, and the Executive Director of the Animal Preservation Alliance, Kopulos was a widely respected authority on parrot care and conservation. His fall from grace has stunned colleagues in aviculture and enraged the avian welfare community.

The Weston, CT, hoarding case was the third such case involving parrots to hit the headlines between June and September of this year. Authorities seized 400 animals, including 251 birds, from a Bellmore, New York, home in June. In July, 337 birds and 8 dogs were seized from the home of Cardiologist Dr. Abhay Trivedi in Dekalb County, Georgia. At least 30 dead birds were recovered from that home, with necropsies confirming starvation and dehydration as the causes of death.



Amazon survivor from the Weston, CT hoarding case

Animal hoarding cases are impossible for most people to comprehend and are complicated to navigate legally. They can represent circumstances of extreme animal abuse and neglect, but are typically symptomatic of profound mental illness. Blind to the fact that animals are clearly suffering and dying under their care, hoarders believe they are saving and helping their animals. Hoarding cases are further complicated by the fact that animal cruelty laws and avenues to legal protection for animals are poorly defined or woefully inadequate in many states. And where intervention and prevention would clearly be more desirable than dealing with the tragic aftermath of hoarding situations, legal ambiguity and the energy, expense and expertise required to confront hoarders often deter intervention until those situations become extreme.

Nearly 3 months later The Rhode Island Parrot Rescue continues in their struggle to care for the 112 surviving birds in their modest facility, located in Warwick, Rhode Island. The on-going court case has prevented them from adopting or otherwise distributing the birds. The dedicated volunteers at RIPR are exhausted, but their commitment to improving the health of the rescued birds and erasing - at least on some level - the trauma that has been etched on the souls of these survivors is as strong as ever. Costs of food, veterinary care, toys and enrichments and general supplies continue to stretch RIPR's limited resources. Rescue events like this require the participation of all of us in the avian care and welfare community. Please consider making a donation to help. Contributions can be made on-line through RIPR's website at: www.riparrots.org



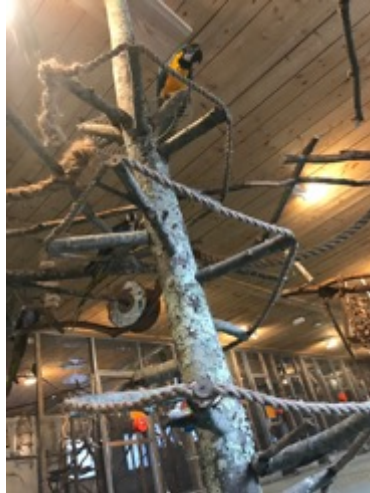
Introducing "Feral Arts" A Unique New Foster Parrots Program

*"Within Foster Parrots Sanctuary,
we have created a sanctuary for free flying artistry."
By Danika Oriol-Morway*

Inspired by renowned urban artist, Travis Moonschein, what originally began as a rudimentary welding workshop for his animal inspired sculptures has grown into an active arts incubator and studio on site at the NEEWS. We now have 3 artists in residence who are all active members of the Foster Parrots family. Joined by Sean Maze and Patrick Schofield, Travis and his team have accessed recycled materials and equipment to transformed an unused 3,500 sq. ft. garage into a large, fully functional woodworking, welding and painting studio that has already provided a platform for the

work of our artists. It is here where Travis worked through the summer, creating an entire gallery show of large metal animal sculptures and several animatronic wolf themed arcade games that were publicly displayed at venues such as Lot F Gallery in Boston, Gallery 5 Arts in Richmond, Virginia, and 17 Frost Gallery in Brooklyn, New York. His latest project has been to convert an old school bus into a “tiny home” to be used for future summer intern housing at the sanctuary. Foster Parrots Enrichment Specialist, Patrick Schofield, has built unique, sculptured bird perches and custom fabricated aviaries echoing the beauty of our birds. Sean Maze, currently the lead interior carpenter for onsite workers cabins for the sanctuary, is also skilled at creating animal inspired wood and ice sculptures. Our team at Feral Arts has created a special opportunity for The New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary as we expand our reach and embrace the local art community as participants in animal advocacy and welfare through artistic expression.

Anyone who has witnessed the transformation of the NEEWS over the past year has seen the skill of this team of artists. Renovations to the studio building are on-going and we will be seeking grant support and targeted donations to help us meet our 2017 developmental goals. However, our team thrives on a good challenge, and the collective creativity that transformed our main sanctuary building will now help transform the Feral Arts studio. We have found there is beauty in everything and creative potential is limitless. Our time-frame for completion of renovations is mid to late fall 2017, at which time we will invite local artists to collaborate with our team on various projects designed to bring awareness to the work of Foster Parrots and other animal welfare and environmental issues. As the Feral Arts program develops we will host workshops and volunteer opportunities for the greater community, so that people can participate in artistic expression rooted in the essential connections between art, animals and the natural environment.

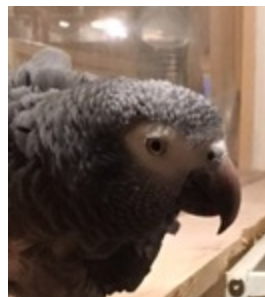
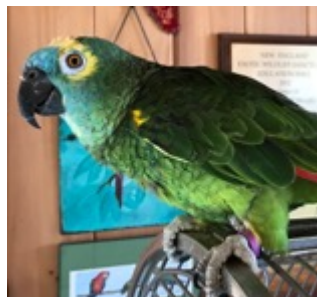


Feral Arts Mission Statement:

“Feral Arts is a community art cooperative providing a platform for unbridled creativity inspired by animal welfare values and environmental stewardship. The Feral Arts studio and incubator offers opportunities for unstructured learning through artistic expression and traditional vocational skills. Hosted on the site of the New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary and Nature Center, this art-based initiative encourages individuals to find inspiration by working with and around our animals and the natural beauty of rural Rhode Island. Feral Arts invites participants to learn, apply or experiment with any and all artistic mediums or traditions, providing dedicated space for innovation and advocacy channeled through the language of art and cooperation. Feral Arts is fueled by the power of hands-on experiential learning that promotes a sense of pride, independence and empowerment in making the world a better place.”

Announcing Foster Parrots’ New Adoption Center!

Establishing the Northeast Parrot Placement Cooperative (NEPPCO) and working closely with our adoption partners has been wonderfully effective, not only in helping parrots throughout the region find the services they need, but also by joining so many like-minded and hard-working organizations together in solidarity. While we will continue to rely heavily on our adoption network, we are pleased to have finally launched Foster Parrots’ on-site adoption center! Adoption candidates will be posted to Foster Parrots’ website and Facebook. Interested in adoption? Please *carefully read* our requirements for adoption and submit your application at <http://www.fosterparrots.com/adoption-rescue/>



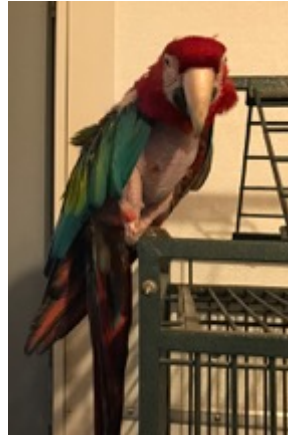
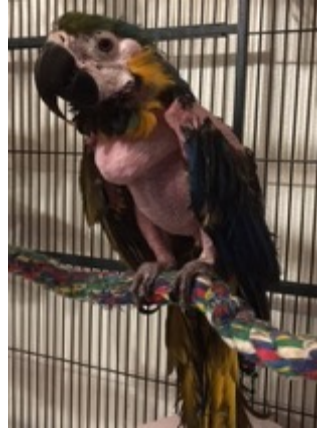
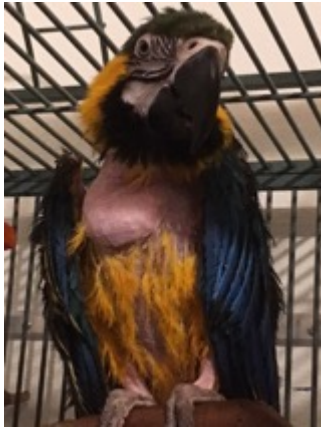
Adoption Candidates Cookie, Cleo, Missy and George

Welcoming Our Newest Residents: The True Meaning of "Rescue"

Faced with over 600 requests a year from people needing placement services for parrots they can no longer care for, it's important to assess which birds can best be helped through adoption, which birds are truly suited for life in sanctuary, and which birds are facing dire circumstances and are in need of emergency assistance. In November Foster Parrots brought in 4 macaws from emergency circumstances. Two green winged macaws came from Boston. A pair of blue & gold macaws arrived in remarkably poor condition from Connecticut. None of these birds had any chance of finding adoptive homes.

The sheer size of large parrot species like macaws and cockatoos, together with widely accepted but woefully inadequate standards of care established by the pet industry pretty much guarantee that the fundamental physical, social and psychological needs of vast numbers of these birds will not be met in captivity.

Bonnie and Clyde, our new green wing pair, are doing well and should integrate well into our macaw colony once they have completed their quarantine period. Ally and Honey are going to require long-term, dedicated care as we work to peel away layers of fear and trauma in hopes of bringing them back to the birds they were meant to be: edgy, confident, joyful, challenging and eager to engage.

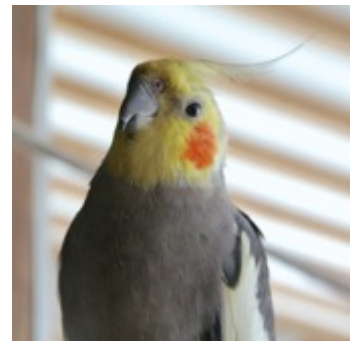
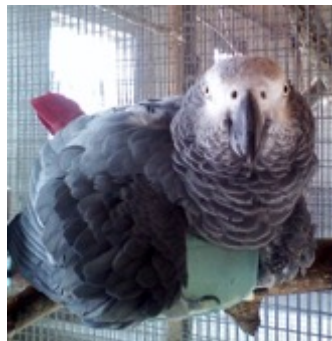


As this incredible year comes to a close, we hope you will consider supporting our

2016 Year-End Mini-Match!

Our matching pool of \$2017 provides a fun incentive for YOU to become actively involved in the lives of the birds and animals at The New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary, and to be instrumental in supporting the important work of Foster Parrots.

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE!



Please consider making an on-line
Donation through our website at www.fosterparrots.com or

Mail your check to:
Foster Parrots
PO Box 34
Hope Valley, RI 02832

Many thanks from all of us at the NEEWS! Without you, none of this would be possible.