

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

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Blue & Gold Macaw, "Bugsy" by Eli Ackerstein

**LOOKING AT THE END  
OF A SUCCESSFUL AND INSPIRING YEAR!**

The 2014 year is winding down, and as we begin to look forward with hope for a productive year ahead, it's important to stop and reflect on the challenges and successes of the past 12 months. With a new Sanctuary Director and Humane Education Director on staff, a new wild parrot conservation partnership underway and facility development always moving forward, we know that the growth and achievements of Foster Parrots on behalf of the birds are always the result of the faith and support of our dedicated contributors. Foster Parrots' fortitude comes from *you!*

Our final NEEWSletter of the year brings you a story of survival, introduces you to two incredible women destined to make an enormous impact on the future and spirit of the organization, provides an update on the progress of conservation work in Costa Rica and – as always – launches our Year End Mini-Match! Hope you enjoy the NEEWSletter! **May the year ahead bring us all a sense of purpose and connection as we work for the protection of parrots – and all animals – world wide.**

## Revisiting “Scudder’s Parrot Depot”: A Survivor’s Story



In the late 1980’s when Patti Millet had come on hard times and needed to find a refuge for her 7 parrots, Scudder’s Parrot Depot, located in Roy, Washington, came highly recommended with decades of parrot breeding and care experience to their credit. Patti visited the Depot, and although she was not allowed to view the many outbuildings and aviaries where, it was claimed, breeding birds would be negatively impacted by an intruder, what she did see was pleasing enough, and Martha Scudder was friendly and reassuring. Patti’s birds, she was promised, would be loved and pampered as residents of the Parrot Depot.

Over the next decade Patti would regularly call to check up on the status of her birds, and she and Martha cultivated a wonderful long-distance friendship.. Consequently, in 1997 when Martha’s daughter-in-law, Suzanne Scudder, called Patti to tell her the truth about Scudder’s Parrot Depot and inform her that all but one of her birds, a cockatoo named Ivy, was dead, Patti’s grief could only be matched by her shock and disbelief.

Scudder’s Parrot Depot, over the years, had deteriorated into squalid, horrific facility. Years of neglect and extreme deterioration in standards of care had culminated in what could only be described as a hell on earth for hundreds upon hundreds of parrots who languished and ultimately died there, who suffered in filth and in darkness in aviaries and buildings that let the rain and the cold in but blocked out the sun, who struggled to survive amongst the bodies of dead and dying mates, and who ultimately succumbed to disease, starvation and dehydration.

Prompted by Suzanne’s information, Patti made an unannounced visit to Scudder’s Parrot Depot, determined to take home her one surviving parrot. When she arrived she was not allowed to venture deeper into the property or see any of the birds or

aviaries. She was detained at the front house where scores of baby birds were being housed, and what she witnessed there made her feel sick. Cages stacked upon cages, baby birds living in dirty, crowded and unsanitary conditions, bigger babies injuring smaller, younger babies, all of the babies crying and begging for food.

From the corner of her eye she caught the movement of something small and brown scoting across the floor toward her. It took her several moments to understand that what she was looking at was a very tiny baby Goffin’s cockatoo. It was caked in filth. It had no feet. It was using its stumps and wings to propel itself across the cold, dirty, concrete floor. Watching the little cockatoo struggle, Patti was overcome with a full sense of the anguish, tragedy and suffering of hundreds of parrots who had been imprisoned here, who had languished, lost hope and died here with no one to care. She was overcome by the grief of suddenly understanding what she had done to her own precious birds when she had entrusted them to the care of Martha Scudder. She reached down, scooped up the little baby bird and felt it press itself against her, desperate to be comforted and to be close to something warm. She had failed her parrots and with no way to gain access to the aviaries or locate Ivy amongst dozens of other cockatoos, her last surviving parrot was doomed. She could not save them. But she could save this one. The little baby Goffin’s Cockatoo, whom she would name Digit, was stolen away by Patti in a paper bag. Over the next 20 years she would pour all of her grief and guilt into her love for this one little survivor.

### Battles Lost ...

Talking to the authorities and to anyone who would listen, Patti Millet began a personal crusade to have Scudder’s Parrot Depot closed down. She was not the only one. Seattle veterinarian, Tracy Bennett and an engineer and an animal welfare activist from Redmond, Washington, Larry Gallawa, took up the battle and brought it into the public eye. Late in 2002 inspections of Scudder’s Parrot Depot resulted in documented allegations of abuse, neglect and animal cruelty. Thus began the controversial legal battle that waged for the next four years as Larry Gallawa, Dr. Bennett and animal welfare advocates fought the breeding industry in an attempt to secure basic legal protection for parrots by establishing licensing criteria for commercial breeding enterprises. Despite overwhelming documentation of death and disease at the Scudders facility and the testimony of veterinarians and avian experts as to the need for legal regulation of the industry, strong and well-funded opposition from avicultural industry giants like the American Federation of Aviculture crushed the effort. Proposed Aviary Licensing Ordinance 2006-81 for Pierce County was voted down at the Public Council meeting on October 10, 2006.

What happened in Washington State underscores the conflict that persists between the avicultural/breeding industry and the avian welfare community. Until aviculture stops opposing legal regulation and, instead, stands beside us to initiate and enforce legal protection, standards of care and licensing regulations for any and all facilities providing care for large numbers of parrots, there will always exist a cavernous divide between the two groups who both claim to love and stand for parrots.

## ... And Battles Won

This past summer Patti Millet, now in the autumn of her years and anticipating soon not being able to continue care for the “special needs” cockatoo she rescued 20 years ago, contacted Foster Parrots. “I promised Digit that I would take care of him forever,” she said, “but we are growing old and I know I have to begin to make arrangements for him. I need to know he will be ok. But who would be willing to care for a disabled bird like Digit?”

Foster Parrots would. Our staff and volunteers have more than enough compassion and love to devote to a bird like Digit, and having the opportunity to care for a Scudder’s Parrot Depot survivor will be an honor and a privilege. Digit will be welcomed into the sanctuary at the onset of the new year.

Please look for updates about Digit on Foster Parrots’ Facebook in January. For more information about Scudder’s Parrot Depot and the legal battle on behalf of parrots in Pierce County, Washington, you can visit [www.parrotprotection.org](http://www.parrotprotection.org)



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## Welcoming Two Incredible New FP Staff Members!



### Danika Oriol-Morway – NEEWS Sanctuary Director

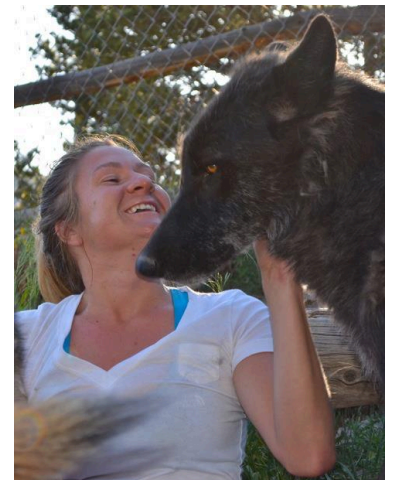
The position of Sanctuary Director at The New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary is demanding beyond most people’s wildest dreams, but within moments of sitting down with Danika during her interview we were pretty sure we had found our girl. She had a positive, down-to-earth energy about her and a confidence that let us believe she could think on her feet and had the resourcefulness to deal with any situation that might arise. But bigger than that, we saw someone who had enormous love and respect for animals, and the ability to take possession of the organization and make it her own.

“My love for animals was realized at a very early age, starting with my grandmother who turned her home into a cat rescue in Concord, MA. Grandma Floy spayed, vaccinated and placed stray cats into homes around the Boston area for over 50 years. Looking back I know my love for animals was not simply a genetic inheritance from Grandma Floy, it was a life time of watching her devote her heart and soul into helping the most helpless.”

Danika’s administrative background at a tech start-up called **Blinkx** in San Francisco and then at the **Mara Hoffman** fashion company in New York yielded her valuable workplace skills... but something was missing: *Animals!*

In search of a meaningful life experience, Danika left the corporate world and moved to Colorado to offer herself as a volunteer at **Mission: Wolf**, a sanctuary for wolves and wolf-dog hybrids. Before long she stepped into a leadership role as Operations Manager. “It was my experience at Mission: Wolf that changed my life forever, and empowered me to pursue a career in the animal welfare movement. I have seen first hand the power of how the human-animal connection can help people not only to work together, but also how it helps individuals grow emotionally and psychologically. I believe that through education, outreach and leading by example animal sanctuaries are a powerful tool to encourage people to be advocates for animals and the environment.”

Without severing ties to Mission: Wolf, an organization that she will forever be connected to, Danika returned to the east coast to be close to her family and to complete her education. She enrolled in the **Masters in Animals and Public Policy Program at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University**, and is completing her thesis as this newsletter goes to press. Her passion and compassion for animals of every species is boundless. “I am advocate for animals, people, and the earth we live on. I live my life by the simple rule to love all things no matter the form or ability. There is beauty in everything.”



## Michele Parrett – NEEWS Education Director

Michele Parrett joined Foster Parrots as a volunteer in March 2013, thanks to persistent encouragement from her dear friend and long time Foster Parrots supporter, Cornell Bialicki, who knew that her years of parrot experience and knowledge were lighting her path. Michele was not so sure. “Foster Parrots won’t want me,” she insisted. “I used to own a *bird store!*”

We are grateful that Cornell kept pushing and that Michele took a chance, because her background gives her a unique perspective and deep understanding of issues facing parrots that are invaluable assets to our avian welfare and humane education initiatives.

Michele holds a Master’s degree in Italian literature from the University of Connecticut, and has spent most of her professional life working in administration and human resources. As a graduate assistant, Michele taught Italian and Spanish language courses to undergraduate students. As the assistant to the vice president of an international textile firm, Michele served as interpreter, translator and ESL instructor. She conducted mill tours, new employee orientation, sexual harassment training and safety training. As the executive assistant to the managing partner of a law firm, Michele was in constant contact with people from all walks of life. “The people,” she says, “are always the best part of any job. Every conversation is an opportunity to learn something!”

And yes, she co-owned a parrot store!

Because education was an integral part of the store’s mission, Michele was able to focus her energy on doing that one thing that she loved above all else: educating people about parrots! Over the years she has spent countless hours talking to people about parrots, answering questions, consulting on behavior issues, and conducting workshops on parrot care. Her direct experience with parrots and the challenges they face as pets played a role in her decision to close her store – and ultimately lead her to Foster Parrots. When it comes to parrots, Michele says, “We need to admit that we don’t know everything. We’re learning more every day, and we have to keep moving forward. We have to keep the conversation going.”

With sincere appreciation for open-minded people who want to make the world a better place, Michele is an enthusiastic advocate for humane education initiatives. “Ultimately, our goal is to encourage people of all ages to become thoughtful, responsible earth conservators. We want to help people realize that each and every one of us truly can make a difference!”



## Hatched To Fly Free: Costa Rica Update

With the release of the film “Parrot Confidential” last year we were honored to play a part in bringing national attention to the complex issues faced by captive parrots in our “concrete jungle”. The film touched many who were unaware of captive parrot issues, and introduced all of us to the noble efforts of a dedicated, intuitive and determined group of people in Costa Rica. We at Foster Parrots had heard about Chris Castles and his work to reintroduce Scarlet and Great Green macaws back into areas where they once flew without fear, but only after the release of the film were we able to fully grasp the impact that Chris Castles, Jenny Pettigrew, Charlie Fayers and Rachel Godden had been making in Costa Rica.

Foster Parrots now is honored to be working with Chris and the new “**Macaw Conservation: Hatched To Fly Free**”, which has recently been established on 7 ½ acres of land on the Osa Peninsula in Southern Pacific Costa Rica. With Phase I of the project nearing completion (communal living quarters) we begin plans and fundraising efforts for the construction of a series of aviaries that will not only accommodate breeding macaws for the release program, but also offer permanent sanctuary for parrots in Costa Rica who are not eligible for rehabilitation or release.

For up-to-the-minute information about the progress of HTFF, please check out the HTFF Facebook Page! To make a contribution to the project or to sponsor the construction of an aviary, tax deductible donations can be made through Foster Parrots at [www.fosterparrots.com](http://www.fosterparrots.com). Make your check payable to “Foster Parrots”, but don’t forget to note “HTFF” on your donation!



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## Shelter Outreach Educational Series

Unwanted parrots are no longer a problem limited to parrot rescue organizations. Humane shelters across the country are now seeing parrots in unprecedented numbers. Traditionally focused on cats and dogs, humane shelters often lack the training, equipment and physical accommodations to adequately deal with parrots in transition. But... ready or not, *here they come!*

In an educational initiative organized by **The Avian Welfare Coalition** and funded by **The Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries**, a series of Shelter Outreach & Education programs are now being offered to help strengthen the response to parrots entering the shelter system so that we may achieve a positive outcome in regards to interim care and placement.



**On March 28, 2015 Foster Parrots and the Avian Club at Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine** will jointly host a Shelter Outreach & Education program in a dynamic seminar inviting regional shelters, veterinarians and veterinary students to learn about caring for parrots in the shelter setting. Avian health and wellness evaluations, disease considerations, handling techniques, physical accommodations, adoption considerations and the importance of flight and social support are all topics that will be covered in this all-day seminar. Speakers will include **Dr. Anthony Pilney, DVM, ABVP, from The Center for Avian & Exotic Medicine in New York, Denise Kelly, president of The Avian Welfare Coalition, and Foster Parrots’ Humane Education Director, Michele Parrett.**

A special presentation on **Human Dimensions of Conservation: Sheltering & Shelter Medicine In The Field** will be delivered by **Rev. Dr. LoraKim Joyner** whose Central American conservation efforts focus on embattled flagship species like scarlet macaws and yellow naped Amazons in Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

**Marc your calendar and plan to join us at Tufts University in March! Look for further details in Foster Parrots’ March Newsletter and on FP Facebook!**

**NATIONAL BIRD DAY IS JANUARY 5<sup>TH</sup>!  
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO TO CELEBRATE BIRDS???**

Not limited to parrots, National Bird Day reminds us honor and celebrate the beauty, diversity and ecological importance of birds all over the world! Foster Parrots will commemorate the occasion with a NEEWS Ed Hall and FP Facebook display of awe-inspiring art created by the students of the Benjamin A. Friedman Middle School in Taunton, MA.

We hope you will all take the time to reflect on the impact that birds have had in your lives – and do something positive to honor the day!



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**YEAR END MINI-MATCH!!!**

Fundraising in support of the birds and animals at the New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary and the work of Foster Parrots is a continuous effort! Foster Parrots holds 3 major fundraising initiatives annually: The March Matching Fund Drive, The Fall Fundraiser Extravaganza, and the Year-End Mini Match!

Most of our supporters have been with us for many years. Together we have built a beautiful, permanent refuge for over 450 parrots needing life-long care, shaped inspiring humane education and outreach programs, have helped countless parrots over the years through rescue and placement services, and have extended protection to parrots in the wild. Without you *none of this would be possible!*

We hope you will continue to support Foster Parrots by contributing to one or more of our annual fundraising initiatives.

This year, as always, our Board Member, Dr. James Hahn, helps us end the year on a strong note with a \$1000 matching donation and a **Year-End Mini Match Challenge!** Most exciting of all, contributors of \$100 or more will be entered into a drawing to win this beautiful, original Amazon portrait, donated by artist **Tina Marie Kotliarchuk** of “**Of Feathers & Fur Portraiture**”.

Please consider including Foster Parrots in your year-end giving! Your tax deductible donation can be made securely on-line through PayPal or Network For Good by visiting our website at: [www.fosterparrots.com](http://www.fosterparrots.com) or by sending your check to:

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*From all of us at Foster Parrots, thanks so much for caring about the birds and for making 2014 an unforgettable and successful year! Looking forward to the 2015 year and the chance to give more, do more and learn more on behalf of parrots everywhere!*