The Official NEEWSLetter of Foster Parrots & The New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary



Join the Movement!

n 2016, the United Nation's Convention on International Trade in Endangered ■ Species (CITES) ruled to upgrade the status of African grey parrots to Appendix I, thereby banning the international trade in these parrots in an attempt to stop the decimation of the species throughout central and western Africa. However, corruption, poor regulation and rampant, illegal poaching of this species and others continue to erase these birds from the wild at an unsustainable rate. Throughout the Americas, wild parrots are being decimated by illegal poaching activity, with some areas seeing the poaching of nestlings and eggs happening at a rate of 100% seasonally. Worldwide we are haunted by images of parrot breeding, collecting and home situations representing millions of parrots who are housed or bred for the market under conditions that do not support a flourishing life. It is time to acknowledge and reject the devastation caused by the international wildlife trade.

Extraction from the wild results in suffering, abandonment, death, extinction, and

he breeding of parrots in captivity <u>has not</u> decreased the global assault on parrots in the wild. As the popularity of parrots as pets continues to gain momentum around the world, the pressure on wild birds increases, leading to wealthy individuals and societies preying upon regions and communities where poverty and lack of economic opportunity render life vulnerable to extraction across multiple species lines.

in the destruction of natural ecosystems, environments and indigenous cultures. The high consumerist demand for exotic pets, animals kept for exhibition or entertainment, trophy animals, lab animals and animals used for experimentation persists without acknowledging the needs and well-being of each animal we commit to life in a cage.

In 2018, with great hope and determination, Foster Parrots, Ltd. and partner organization, One Earth Conservation, announce the launch of the "No Cage Is Big Enough" campaign, a global initiative to unite organizations, conservationists, students, researchers, communities and compassionate individuals everywhere, and to unify our voices as advocates for the liberty and freedom of all animals. It is our hope that, someday, the sight of a bird in a cage will be offensive and unacceptable to everyone, everywhere on the planet. We seek freedom for all, for humans cannot flourish until we come to understand how our desires do not merit the imprisonment of any living being.



Abuse, Public Perception & The Law By Karen Windsor

he fountain in the hotel lobby glittered with the shine of thousands of copper wishes, and the gentle trickle of the water lent itself to the cool tropical theme that defined the lobby at the King's Grant Hotel. A half dozen patrons sat at the lobby bar, sipping amber colored drinks from elegant glasses, and balancing cigarettes absently between their fingers as they exchanged quiet conversation. In the middle of the lobby, surrounded by the lush foliage of philodendrons, palm trees and feathery ferns, an old green parrot sat in a cage. No one noticed that the cage was rusted or that it was held together by chains and twisted wire. No one noticed that the cage wasn't big enough to enable to the parrot to open or stretch its wings.

"Mom, look! Look at the bird," a small child shouted as she pulled her mother by the hand to the side of the macaw's cage. The mother hoisted her bag onto her shoulder as she knelt down beside her daughter. "What a beautiful bird!" the mother exclaimed. She didn't notice that the sand beneath the parrot's cage had become an impromptu ashtray, or that what was left of the water in the parrot's dirty water cup had an oily and iridescent quality. She smiled as she stood up and began to walk with her daughter toward the elevator.

The little girl continued to stare at the old parrot as her mother led her away. Her mother didn't notice – but the little girl did – that the bird never even looked at them.

his passage reflects the true story of Captain, a military macaw who had been kept as a tropical lobby prop at the King's Grant Hotel in Danvers, Massachusetts in 2000. The accompanying photo is an actual photo of Captain, taken by Foster Parrots' founder, Marc Johnson, during one of his many visits to the hotel where he tried repeatedly to offer help to improve the life of the sad old macaw. It was during this series of visits that Marc observed a shocking truth: despite the number of people who walked past Captain every day, and despite how many people stopped to take a closer look or talk to the bird, no one saw the condition of the cage. They only saw the beautiful bird inside. No one noticed the air of defeat that had settled deep within the soul of the parrot, isolating the bird even at night when the bar was busy with smoking,



Photo of Captain by Marc Johnson

drinking, laughing people. It didn't occur to a single patron that there was anything wrong with a parrot, alone in a small, rusty cage, in a smoky hotel lobby where intoxication increased long into each night. In the eyes of an endless succession of people, the sight of Captain in his terrible old cage was perfectly normal.

There was nothing that could legally be done to help Captain in the year 2000. That a bird's sensitive lungs should not be subjected to cigarette smoke in a hotel bar, that a cage was too small to accommodate even half of a bird's wing span, that a sunflower seed and peanut diet could keep a parrot alive, but without providing adequate nutrition, that a water bowl was ringed with algae or that piles of droppings were accumulating beneath the cage, mingled with sand and cigarette butts... none of these conditions were grounds for legal intervention in the beautiful, tropical hotel lobby.

Foster Parrots, Ltd. is frequently contacted by people who have observed parrots in egregious retail or private situations and are seeking information about how to help. One such appeal came across my desk this past January, describing the plight of a baby Harlequin macaw in a New Hampshire pet store. "Over the course of the last few months since he hatched, I have visited him four times," the woman explained. "His condition seems to be worsening. He has plucked almost all his feathers now and is continuously hitting his head against the walls (he is kept in a terrarium sort of enclosure, no areas to perch or spread his wings)."

Legal protection for animals in the U.S. leaves a lot to be desired. The Animal Welfare Act of 1966 is the only federal legislation in effect in the country to regulate the care and treatment of animals. This legis-

lation does not extend protection to birds, rats, mice, reptiles, fish or amphibians. It also does not extend protection to animals in pet stores. Regulations on a state-bystate basis vary widely. Less than half the states in the country actually mandate that food and water be provided to animals with some regularity. Some of these only mandate food and water for cats and dogs. But several states boast commendable legal protections for animals. According to the Animal Legal Defense Fund's 2016 report, states with some of the strongest legal protections for animals include Illinois, Oregon, Maine, California and Rhode Island (the top 5). Several states regulate pet stores with language that specifically includes birds. But no regulations in any state specifically mandate that any form of enrichment be provided for birds in retail situations and, needless to say, regulations focused on the psychological well-being of psittacines in captivity are not even within the realm of possibility in the U.S. legal system today.

What we do know about the Harlequin macaw in the plexiglass case in the pet store in New Hampshire is that she is a profoundly social, psychologically vulnerable baby who still needs her mother, but who is struggling to make sense of a life without a mother and without a single meaningful connection to another living creature (macaws in the wild depend on their parents for up to 2 years). We know that social isolation and the lack of a nurturing, supportive relationship at this critical time in her development is actually impacting her physical brain, and will gravely affect her ability to develop into a normal, psychologically healthy, well-adjusted adult bird. Where the normal, natural behavior of any macaw presents challenges beyond the abilities of most pet enthusiasts, the damage being inflicted upon this baby by her breeder and her retailer guarantee a life of struggle for an insecure and developmentally compromised bird who may never have the opportunity to nurture a comfortable, long-term relationship with another living creature. She is expressing her distress through stereotypic and self-destructive behavior, but none of this warrants legal intervention. The conditions at this pet store are not remarkable. Standard requirements are being met.

Abuse, Public Perception & The Law

(cont'd from page 2)

In a separate incident, during one of the coldest Januarys on record in the northeast, Foster Parrots was contacted by "Laura", a woman whose neighbor was breeding what appeared to be hundreds of canaries in an outdoor aviary in his backyard. "My issue," she explained, "is that he has been leaving those doors open for hours on end every day, usually at the end of the day when the sun is down... When we walk by and the doors are open, I can hear tons of them singing and flying around. The entire thing strikes me as nothing short of horrible abuse/neglect... We have an ACO in town, but they don't seem to care or have the knowledge about anything other than dogs and cats."

While two large doors on the front of the aviary could be closed, this would provide little protection from sub-zero temperatures during a severe New England winter. The structure appeared to be in questionable condition. It was unclear whether or not adequate thermal support was being provided inside the aviary. In fact, Massachusetts animal welfare law mandates that structures housing animals - including birds - must offer an ambient temperature relative to species, health and age of the inhabitants. Law also states that structures must be impervious to moisture and constructed of materials that can be cleaned and sanitized. Regulations also address issues of compatibility and overcrowding for birds or animals housed in groups.

While an officer did arrive to investigate the complaint, the outcome was not very satisfying. "The officer went by the place and the doors were not open," Laura reported. "She asked him to wrap the building in plastic. Two hours later she went back and he had complied... I guess that's it. Seems to me birds don't get as much protection from the law as they should. But [the officer] was satisfied."

Disappointing. Hopefully the officer was able to establish that there was an adequate heat source, which would be one of the biggest concerns. But this is a distressing situation, nonetheless. No bird should have to live this way. If this man is not actually in violation of the law, he's providing the bare minimum. Unfortunately, the bare minimum is often all that's covered by existing laws.

One of the most widespread impediments to legal action in cases of animal abuse is enforcement of the laws that are supposed to protect animals. In states and towns across the country, oftentimes there's a disconnect between the laws on the books and a municipality's ability to physically handle a rescue event. When that rescue event is centered around birds, the typical outcome is a large number of birds landing on the doorsteps of animal shelters that lack the knowledge and facilities to accommodate them. Furthermore, even when laws may be in place with language that includes birds, very often people fail to recognize situations of abuse and neglect when they pertain to birds.

So, what can we do when we suspect we are witnessing the abuse of a parrot? It's important to understand the extent of legal protection for animals in one's state. We must self-educate, and perhaps even be prepared to educate law officials, who may not be aware of the full extent of their animal welfare regulations, especially in regards to birds. Some excellent sources of information about animal welfare law from state to state are offered by groups like Born Free USA, the Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) and the National Agricultural Law Center.

In some areas, unfortunately, animal welfare laws are extremely weak, non-existent for certain situations, or may not include birds

When legal recourse is not an option, there are still ways in which we can help.

- Offer to Educate People sometimes simply do not know that they are providing poor care and may appreciate guidance.
- 2. Lend a Hand Sometimes people lack the resources to improve the lives of their birds. Offering help, and perhaps even on-going support in the form of groceries, fresh produce, a larger cage, toys and enrichments or assistance in creating a quality home environment can mean the world to a parrot and to the person who loves him.
- **3. Involve the Authorities** Despite inadequate or non-existent animal protection laws, local officials may



Photo by Matt Smith of Project Perry in Central Virginia

be willing to confront a situation and alert a perpetrator that there is public concern. This can sometimes help create an impetus for change.

- 4. Public Shaming All too often our concerns for the welfare of birds or animals can be met with hostility. In cases where a pet store, breeder or other retail situation is complicit in the suffering of animals, a campaign of public shaming via social media and/or lawful picketing outside of the establishment can have an impact on business practices.
- 5. Take it to the State House Initiating legislation in one's state to increase protection for birds and animals is a challenging and lengthy process, but the rewards cannot be overstated.

 Animal welfare agencies like ALDF and Born Free USA can provide legislation models, and as elected officials, legislators are generally amenable to working with constituents to confront important issues.

By virtue of the fact that parrots are profoundly social creatures, social isolation in itself is a form of cruelty suffered by captive parrots for centuries. The sight of a lone bird in a cage, however, has been burned into human consciousness to the extent that we accept this as "natural". Furthermore, standards in the breeding and pet industries have traditionally shaped practices around the needs and conveniences of humans, typically to the detriment of the birds. Consequently, most people have no concept or point of reference in regards to what constitutes abuse and suffering in captive birds. The time has come for us to collectively acknowledge the cruelty and change the way we "use" and care for parrots.

Feral Arts Ushers in the New Year with Studio Renovations and Two Talented New Artists By Danika Oriol-Morway



eral Arts had an amazing 2017! After receiving the program's first grant through the generosity of the Bafflin Foundation, we were able to complete critical renovations to the workshop and grow it into a beautiful and professional space that can now invite and accommodate more artists, mediums and events. Starting in late Spring 2018 we will begin a once a month open studio and movie night at the Feral Arts workshop, where we will invite the public to meet our artists, explore our workshop and enjoy an outside movie projection that highlights animal, environmental & social issues significant to the work and mission of Foster Parrots and NEEWS.

Without skipping a beat, 2018 has already started off with a bang! Once renovations to the workshop were completed, two new amazing artists joined our team. We are proud to introduce our newest members of the Feral Arts team, Christina Poblador and Andrea Van Dexter!



Born in the Philippines where she received her BFA in Studio Arts from the University of the Philippines in 2009, Christina Poblador became one of her country's first few artists to pursue glass. She is an artist and

a feminist exploring the art of glass blowing, performance and scent in contemporary art. Her work interprets autochthonous narratives from Philippine history and culture and shapes them into conceptual creations that reflect her love for nature and her unique, cross-cultural personal experience. Her work has been exhibited extensively in the US, Europe and Asia and we are honored to have her here with us!

Andrea Van Dexter, of North Kingstown RI,



works primarily with intaglio printmaking and drawing. Her subject focus tends to be biological illustration; she was lucky enough to study drawing birds from life under the tutelage of John Muir Laws in California in 2012, and is excited

to spend more time with birds at Foster Parrots/ NEEWS. Andrea is drawn to the exploration of

social inequalities and systemic violence. This often aligns with specimen rendering (biological illustration) not as a metaphor but as evidence of the resulting tragedy stemming from intersections of human and animal interaction under such pressures [such as bird poaching/trafficking in Indonesia.]

We are incredibly excited about the work that Christina and Andrea will be creating during their time here and we know that their vision, creativity and talent will help bring an exciting new dimension to our drive to spread awareness and tell the stories of the amazing animals who call NEEWS home.



Foster Parrots is proud to announce our first 5k Road Race to benefit Foster Parrots & The New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary!

Sunday, May 6, 2018 at 10:00 am Misquamicut Beach, Westerly RI

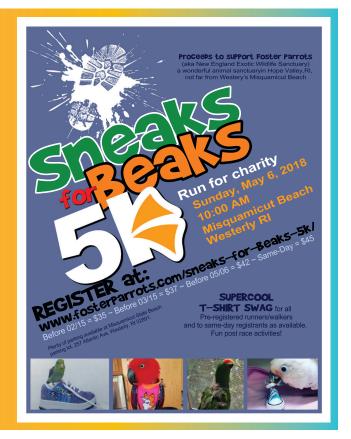
- Preregistration before 03/15/18 \$37
- Preregistration before 05/06/18 \$42
- Same-Day Registration \$45

Plenty of parking is available at Misquamicut State Beach parking lot, 257 Atlantic Ave, Westerly, RI 02891

Sponsors are needed! Please consider sponsoring us at one of these levels. Because #NoCageIsBigEnough

\$250 Egg Level \$500 Hatchling Level \$1000+ Fully Fledged Bird level

To register and for more details visit our website at: www.fosterparrots.com/sneaks-for-beaks-5k/



Adoption Spotlights



Max: Black Capped Conure

ittle Max is a 12 year old black capped conure who is strongly human bonded and loves attention! He has a preference for men and would love nothing more than to sit on a shoulder 24/7 while chirping softly in your ear and supervising all of your activities. Max is not shy! He's fine with other pets and doesn't mind the excitement of children. He has a great appetite and healthy eating habits, enjoying fresh apples, bananas, mango, strawberries, blueberries and vegetables like corn, peas, carrots

and green beans. He can be a little nippy and "cage territorial", but he's easy to bribe with a food treat when it's time to clean the cage and change the bowls. Of course, Max is a conure, and conures have loud voices! Max will use his voice to elicit attention when his person is being neglectful. The best way to manage Max will be to ensure he's a part of the family activities with a dependable daily routine and plenty of out-of-cage and one-on-one time. Max is currently waiting at the adoption center at the NEEWS to meet you!

Angel: Goffin's Cockatoo

ngel is an adorable 18 year old Goffin's cockatoo. She is human-bonded and loves to snuggle with her person of choice! She strongly prefers men, so she will need to be placed in a home with a male presence. Angel loves to be the center of attention and she enjoys dancing and playing with her people. She will do best with someone who is home throughout the day to give her plenty of direct attention. She loves to play on top of her cage, but can become "cage territorial"

at times. This is something her new family will need to work on with Angel. She has lived in a home with dogs in the past and they got along just fine. Angel has plucked the feathers from her chest and legs due to loneliness and stress, but we still think she's beautiful! She is located in Middleboro, Massachusetts, and will remain with her current family until we can find a great adoption match!





Wilson: Green Winged Macaw

ilson is a 28-year old green winged macaw who is devastatingly handsome despite a plucking habit that began just a couple of years ago!

He's a good boy who, of course, has the voluminous voice typical of large macaws, but he is generally quiet and loves to hang out and be a part of the family. Wilson's current family loves him deeply, but lack the kind of time and home-centered life that Wilson needs in order to thrive. He's lonely! So he's looking for a special person or family capable of giving him the level of social support he craves. Wilson has a preference for women, so a female primary care-giver would be ideal. A cage is fine for sleeping, but

through most of the day Wilson needs to be out and a part of the daily activities. He has had an issue with fatty liver disease, but this is not uncommon amongst older birds in captivity, and can be easily addressed through a diet based in healthy, fresh produce and a milk-thistle supplement, which protects the liver! Wilson has received excellent veterinary care and is otherwise a healthy boy. If you think you have room in your heart and in your home for a sweet macaw, this may be your bird! Wilson currently resides with his family in Brewster, Massachusetts, where he will remain until his new home can be found.

Group of Four Male Parakeets

These birds have lived compatibly as a flock their whole lives, and because parakeets are true flocking birds, these will need to be adopted in pairs or all together as a group. Foster Parrots strives to raise accepted standards of care for birds! Consequently, we're looking for a home that can provide something beyond a standard parakeet cage. It's easy to provide

a sizable aviary that lends to a higher quality of life for parakeets, and can be creatively transformed into a dynamic home environment! These birds are a little skittish, and will prefer to spend more time with each other than with their human guardians, but their happy chirping will certainly liven up their new home! These little guys are currently waiting for adoption at the NEEWS.





Interested in Adopting a Parrot?

Interested in adopting one of these parrots or any of the dozens of other birds on our waiting list? We need you! There are so many birds in need of homes! Applicants should be aware that social support is one of our highest adoption priorities. If you have time and love to give, please consider

reviewing our requirements for adoption and submitting an adoption application by visiting our website at: https://www.fosterparrots.com/adoption-rescue/ If you are interested in one of the birds featured here, please indicate that on your application!

The Last Pig An Interview with Film Producer, Allison Argo

he latest film by six-time Emmy winner, Allison Argo, *The Last Pig* is an emotional and cinematically beautiful journey through the lives and hearts of former pig farmer, Bob Comis, and the animals who defined and ultimately changed the course of his life. No matter where you stand in your relationship with animals, *The Last Pig* will forever impact your understanding of the sentience of pigs and all animals who are farmed for food, forcing you to own your values - and your choices. Here is the Allison Argo interview:



1. What was the inspiration or impetus behind your quest to explore the world of pigs and factory farming through film?

I've long been concerned about animals caught in the horrors of the farming industry, but I was at a loss for how to share their stories through film. I wanted to try to reach viewers who wouldn't watch an overtly graphic or preachy video. I felt that much of the public simply won't watch a film with brutal undercover video; these images are tremendously important, but I felt it would be more productive to find a different way to expose the issues. When I read a few of the essays that Bob Comis, a pig farmer, had published on the Huffington Post, I know his story was the perfect vehicle to reach a broader audience – and also to create a beautiful, poetic, compelling film.

2. Farmer Bob Comis had compassion for his pigs, but he did, in fact, raise pigs for food. How did he find emotional balance in this dichotomy? During the filming process, how were you able to find balance?

He wasn't able to find emotional balance, and this is what led him to get out of the business of slaughter. This is what makes the story so inherently dramatic and emotional: he was caught in an ethical bind that was tearing him apart.

Honestly, I wasn't prepared for the emotional impact documenting his story would have on me as a person. I knew that we'd have to film in the slaughterhouse at some point since it was an integral part of Bob's life, but I didn't realize it would be so emotionally brutal. I will never be the same, having known the pigs whose lives were taken from them that day, I didn't know



those particular pigs as well as I knew others, but I knew them well enough to feel the tragedy of cutting a living being's life short. Pigs are so full of joy – they love every smell and taste and moment that life has to offer. Taking that from them (when they're still babies, by the way) felt like a crime. And I couldn't help but feel that, somehow, I was a part of that crime. I feel a collective shame for the way we humans treat other animals. I had long been a vegetarian, but I quickly became vegan while making the film.

3. Factory farming — as well as freerange or humane farming — is a cornerstone industry in the U.S. Why were you compelled to focus on pigs rather than other food animals?

It was the farmer as an individual who drew me to this story. In his essays, he was extraordinarily open and raw, willing to share his crisis of conscience in an honest and almost disarmingly personal way. The fact that it was pigs he was raising was a big bonus for me. I've always loved pigs – their sense of joy and humor, their intelligence and their intense socialness. It was also a key part to Bob's story that he loves pigs.

4. Were there any segments in the filming of *The Last Pig* where you may have questioned your ability to continue, or when you had to stop to regain your composure? We imagine there must be moments like this in all of your film projects. What does it take to push you through?

When Bob loaded the last seven pigs onto his trailer, it was a bitterly cold, bleak day. The last pig was smaller than the rest, and Bob had to help him onto the trailer. That moment absolutely shattered me. Driving to the slaughterhouse I had to follow Bob's truck in my own car. Staring at the old red trailer rattling down the road in front of me, with that little pig inside, was pure trauma. I was sobbing so hard, I could barely see the road. I've shed many tears during the process of making films, but this was unbearable. When I'm at a screening now and watch that shot in the film, I still lose it. I always whisper an apology to those pigs. My only comfort (and it's small comfort) is that perhaps filming this moment and sharing it with others will make a difference... so that these pigs did not die in vain. That's my only consolation.

Join us for an exclusive screening of *The Last Pig* with Allison Argo!



Please join us at The New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary for a screening of The Last Pig and an intimate gathering and discussion with renowned animal welfare documentary film producer,
Allison Argo.

Saturday, June 2, 2018

Reception & Vegan Fare: 3:00pm - 4:00pm

Film Screening: 4:00pm - 5:00pm

Discussion with Allison Argo: 5:00pm - 6:00pm

Tickets: \$15.00

Reserve your tickets today! Space is strictly limited. For tickets and information please visit:

www.fosterparrots.com

To learn more about the film visit www.thelastpig.com

To answer your broader question, it's believing that sharing their stories will raise awareness and improve the lives of others like them... this is what keeps me going.

5. What would you like your viewers to understand, above all, about pigs and/ or about why you feel a story like this must be told?

I hope that *The Last Pig* will help people connect the dots between what's on their plates and the living being that once was.

Really, my greatest hope is that those who watch this film will be inspired to ask themselves the same difficult questions the farmer asks himself during the film: who am I at my core? What do I really believe? Is my life - and the way that I live it - truly aligned with my beliefs and my moral convictions? Can I be a better, more sensitive and compassionate person?

This film has made me more mindful, caring and compassionate in my everyday life. Towards animals, towards people, towards myself... <a>⑤



We hope you will consider supporting this year's March Matching Fund Drive — the birds and animals at the sanctuary and all the programs of Foster Parrots, Ltd. depend on you! Every dollar makes a difference!

YOUR SUPPORT ensures that 400 parrots & other displaced exotic animals at The New England Exotic Wildlife Sanctuary can depend on outstanding, nutritious diets, specialized veterinary care & lives in beautiful, enriched aviary environments.

YOUR CONTRIBUTION puts strength under our rescue efforts, helping us to alleviate suffering, restore dignity, and truly support the individual needs of every bird who comes into our care.













YOUR DONATION supports our efforts to impart a deeper understanding of our roles and responsibilities in the lives of birds and animals everywhere through a diversity of humane education programs and art initiatives that forge an essential connection between people, animals and the earth we all share.

YOUR PARTICIPATION ensures the effectiveness of our conservation partnerships in Central and South America as we work to protect the freedom of wild parrots and all animals in their natural ranges.

Never underestimate the impact of your gift! Please consider making a donation in March.



Donations can be made on-line by visiting www.fosterparrots.com

It's safe, secure, and so easy!

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

On behalf of all the birds and animals at the sanctuary and those who fly free because of your support - THANK YOU! Without you, none of this would be possible.



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Please Support our Annual March Matching Fund Drive!

During the month of March, your donation has twice the impact!

All donations dated in March will be matched up to \$20,000

We hope you will consider supporting this year's March Matching Fund Drive!
The birds and animals at the sanctuary and all the programs of Foster Parrots, Ltd. depend on you!

Yes! I want to support the work of Foster Parrots with a tax-deductible donation of:

	\$25	\$50	\$100	\$200	\$500 _	Other
Name:						
						_ Zip:
E-mail:						
	r dedication: _					

Please mail checks to:

Foster Parrots, Ltd.
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Hope Valley, RI 02832



Donate on-line by visiting: www.fosterparrots.com
It's safe, secure, and so easy!