

The Gabriel Foundation- Sanctuary for Homeless Birds

There's good news and bad news about life shared with a parrot; the good news is that they're never going to grow up and leave home! The bad news is that they're never going to grow up and leave home!

As a friend once said to me, "They should make a companion pet that lives as long as we do," to which I replied, "They do! Only, it has 2 legs and is called a parrot." He stared at me in embarrassed silence. Anyone concerned with the healthy future of aviculture and animal welfare is often reminded of the need to make a lifetime commitment to their pet, referring to the lifetime of that animal. With a parrot, due to its potential long life span, it requires the human caregiver to commit his lifetime in addition to making formal provision for its care in the event that the bird(s) will outlive the human.

Julie Weiss Murad, Founder and CEO of The Gabriel Foundation

Nibble was Susan's beautiful parrot, purchased from a reputable breeder. Susan adored Nibble's companionship and affection. Nibble returned her affection and companionship with songs, kisses, and chatty friendship. Susan and Nibble were inseparable for over five years, but when Susan died unexpectedly, Nibble lost her home and caregiver in a single night. Lucky for her, because The Gabriel Foundation was there to care for her.

The Gabriel Foundation is a 501(c)(3) avicultural and veterinary affiliated parrot welfare organization promoting educational outreach, conservation, rescue, rehabilitation, adoption and sanctuary pertaining to the needs of parrots everywhere. Its sanctuary program was developed to meet the special needs of parrots — some of whom live to the ripe old age of 70 years. The Gabriel Foundation is considered a parrot welfare organization, (P.W.O.) and provides for the welfare of parrots in general through its educational outreach programs, website and published materials. The Foundation cares for the welfare of parrots "under its wing" through its MAP certified aviary, providing the highest quality nutrition, environmental enrichment, husbandry, psychological enrichment and the very best in veterinary medical care. The Foundation continues to care for the welfare of parrots that leave the Foundation with long term follow up and on going educational information and support.

The History of the Foundation; Julie Murad, founder and CEO of The Gabriel Foundation, has been involved with companion birds for more than 30 years. In 1992, she made the decision to add a Hyacinth macaw to her flock. She knew a reputable breeder of Hyacinths and asked to be put on the waiting list for a bird. When the pair laid eggs Julie's name went on one of the three eggs in the clutch to be her future companion. Once hatched, he was named Gabriel, and it wasn't long before Julie was fascinated by this charming fellow. Sadly, Gabriel died of an intestinal blockage at 22 months of age. Julie wanted to honor her special friend by helping others learn about the specialized needs of parrots, the plight of parrots in the wild, and provide a resource to serve parrots and their people in need of help, so, The Gabriel Foundation was hatched. Today, Julie continues her work with the Foundation, shares her home with many parrot companions in addition to her dogs, llamas, donkeys and sheep. She is a frequent presenter at major avicultural and veterinary conferences and a published author.

Espousing the rules of Applied Behavior Analysis and positive reinforcement, she provides behavior consultations on the parrot/human relationship. She has spent time in South America, Mexico and Australia observing the behavior of parrots in the wild, and her knowledge of that behavior plays an important role in her work.

The Work of The Gabriel Foundation The Gabriel Foundation aviary provides the highest quality care for up to 250 birds at one time. A six-member board oversees the work of the Foundation, which includes seven programs: Educational Outreach, Rescue, Rehabilitation, Foster care, Adoption, Sanctuary, Conservation. The Foundation provides a haven for birds with chronic diseases, behavioral problems, and old age. Staff members are dedicated to meeting the needs of every bird. They promote the welfare of parrots everywhere by offering educational programs that focus on the birds' specific needs and problems, indigenous habitats, and conservation status. The Foundation has a successful adoption program which has placed nearly 700 parrots into new homes over the past 9 years. The Foundation offers an on-line class dedicated to companion parrot lovers of all levels of knowledge. The "Birdie Basics and Beyond" class is an intensive 4 -week class based on the book "The Complete Pet Bird Owner's Handbook" (revised), by Gary Gallerstein DVM. This class is guaranteed to provide the most up to date and accurate information regarding parrot care.

The Foundation's Education Center is located centrally in Denver. It hosts bird club meetings, toy making sessions, its "Total Bird Health" Seminars, "Meet the Birds", monthly Movie Matinees, and a host of other fun and educational activities. The location also houses "The Birdbrain", a store and e-commerce site destined to satisfy nearly every need of parrot and parrot loving human with an array of the finest products for parrots and the people that love them. All proceeds from The Birdbrain support the programs of The Gabriel Foundation. Shop with a well-informed staff, get the best for your birds, and support the Foundation's parrots at the same time. It's a win-win situation that's for the birds. You can find them on the Web at www.thebirdbrain.com or click on the link on the Foundation's Web site.

The Foundation is in the process of moving to a new state-of-the-art facility closer to Denver and will be able to provide for 400 parrots with its expanded aviary. There will be nearly 12,000 square feet of indoor areas to house the birds, a lab and treatment area, birdfood prep kitchen, reception area, adoption meeting rooms and specially designed species' rooms to house the parrots when they are indoors. Over 25,000 square feet of outdoor flights is being constructed to provide for the physical and mental health of the Foundation's residents with daily outdoor activity, weather permitting. 24/7 on sight staff will make certain that the parrot's safety is always maintained. With two quarantine rooms, birds entering the Foundation will be able to be accommodated on a rotating basis. The new facility will have plenty of grounds to host special events celebrating the parrot and the neighbors are parrot-friendly!. The relocation is a tremendous undertaking, and a capital campaign is soon to be underway. Any and all support will be greatly appreciated and your donations are tax-deductible.

If you want The Gabriel Foundation to care for your parrot after you die or become disabled, specify in your estate planning documents that your parrot must be given to the Foundation. Additionally, the Foundation asks that you set aside enough funds to cover your parrot's housing, food, and veterinary care for the rest of its life. The Foundation has a series of informational brochures to help you decide how to proceed. If you wish your bird to be re-homed, the Foundation will honor those wishes and work with your bird and a potential adopter to find the best parrot to person match. The Foundation's lengthy adoption process and continual follow up with the adoptive family for the long term help to assure that your bird will be cared for by a deeply committed adoptive family.

The Foundation depends on contributions from people like you to continue its work. Many of the parrots that it receives come in with no financial support to help offset the veterinary exams and laboratory testing required for individual and flock health. You can become a member, sponsor a parrot and even host a fundraiser! If you'd like to help, go to the Foundation's Web site at <http://www.thegabrielfoundation.org>. Or, contact The Gabriel Foundation at 1025 Acoma Street, Denver, CO 80204. Tel: 303.629.5900 or Toll free at 877.923.1009. Send your email to Gabriel@thegabrielfoundation.org.

Editor's note: if you can not identify a potential caregiver for your pets, sanctuaries and lifetime care programs can be a solution. We strongly recommend that you physically inspect any facility to make sure that it could be an environment where you pet would receive adequate love and care.