

Featured Volunteer: Kelly Schrimsher  
By Shauna Hill



In this newsletter we feature a volunteer who oversees a very important aspect of our website, the Lost and Found section. She is Kelly Schrimsher and through her tireless work there have been many happy reunions between lost companion birds and their appreciative human companions. Let's take some time and get to know the wonderful lady who manages those endless lost and found postings.

Kelly grew up in an animal-loving family. Her mother always had pets in their home. She remembers as a small child having kittens, cats, dogs, and fish tanks, then moving up to a goose, cows, a Shetland pony and colt. Years later when the local news station reported wild mustangs being rounded up by the BLM (Bureau of Land Management) her mom called Kelly from Nevada about the adoption program. Since she had property at the time they made it a family project and agreed to adopt 3 four-month-old wild fillies, out of Palomino Valley. They hand-tamed the fillies and later hired a trainer to saddle break them. Looking back, shelter cats, rescue dogs, box turtles, parakeets, cockatiels, an iguana, goats, a pot belly pig and others joined her pet family so Kelly always had a special interest and a place in her heart for animals of all kind.



Kelly with one of the colts

Kelly has a 24-year-old son of whom she is very proud. He's finishing college and is in the US Coast Guard Reserves. Kelly worked for years until being injured on the job and later diagnosed with a life-changing illness which interrupted her ability to work. She currently resides in the town of Paradise in the tall pines and redwood trees filled with deer and the occasional mountain lion. Her hobbies are limited due to health issues and she can no longer garden so she has acquired a talent for painting goose eggs.



Kelly first heard about Mickaboo through a neighbor. She found the name alone was interesting. She was facing many changes and felt she needed to do something worthy so she decided to try fostering. She had a spacious home with many years of experience working with a variety of animals so she felt somewhat qualified. Kelly says "don't get me wrong, I do like the little species but I wanted to go big". A Macaw's large beak could be intimidating but she was drawn to the species' intelligence level and the need for foster homes at the time.

Once she was approved, the first call Kelly received was about some birds at the Sacramento Shelter. She recalls that there were three Budgies and a couple of Cockatiels. A few days passed and more Cockatiels arrived. Then two Amazons: Fred and Ethel. It wasn't much longer after when a neighbor showed up unannounced at her door with a very smelly and extremely dirty Greenwing Macaw in a substandard cage. When test results found this Macaw would require long term care due to illness, Kelly's fosters were placed elsewhere and she became a special needs foster parent for some of the Papilloma-infected birds that came into Mickaboo's foster flock. Mickaboo is forever grateful for the volunteers who designate their homes for birds with this illness (but that is another article indeed!). After the Papilloma Macaws were adopted she continued to foster until moving from the area.



Ellie helping Kelly with Lost & Found ads ☺

Currently Kelly has just one bird, Ellie, a Mickaboo Blue and Gold Macaw, since the drastic changes in her abilities make it difficult to handle the care and requirements for more than one large bird. Ellie is a rescue who was found in the Alameda Shelter night drop box. She was misunderstood and deemed "too mean to adopt" and was put up for auction. When no one participated or placed a bid she was slated to be euthanized. Mickaboo rescued Ellie and Ellie eventually made her way to Kelly's house in West Sacramento. Ellie was treated for an invasive infection that required surgery and repetitive injections in her trachea, Ellie remains a compulsive plucker but well-loved.

Kelly's Mustang "CJ" has been retired and spends her time grazing freely. All of Kelly's other pets have since passed with the exception of her loyal ol' dog Cody. Kelly has to keep reminding herself not to acquire any more pets because her mother has a houseful that she will inherit!



CJ, On Arrival



Beautiful CJ Today

Kelly has been a huge help to Mickaboo in many ways. In 2008 she started helping the Lost and Found team; shortly thereafter she became the Lost and Found Coordinator. She is also a member of the Macaw Team. Some of the helpful information she shared if you lose or find a bird:

There are hundreds upon thousands of lost and found birds in the United States. Thankfully with the help of the internet, websites, specialized groups, dedicated volunteers, animal care centers, rescues and resources available to pet owners, the chances of recovering a lost pet is much higher than in the past.

*Prevention:* Practice safe handling. Wing clipping is helpful but harnessing the bird while outside is suggested. Double check the hardware on cages and secure collapsible cages. Always hold the bottom of travel cages and secure portable cages that are not hinged or welded because the bottoms are known to fall out and the bird can fly away. Bird owners might consider tattooing or micro-chipping and registering their bird in the event they become lost or stolen.

*If your bird becomes lost:*

- Visit Mickaboo's [reading room](#) for tips about this topic
- Notify your surrounding animal care centers
- Use the internet.
  - List the bird as lost/found at <http://www.petharbor.com/>. You can register on the Pet Harbor website to receive notices.
  - You can also list in Craigslist in the Pets section and in the lost and found section. Be sure to leave a phone number and keep the ad updated. If the ad expires there will be no way to contact you in the event the bird is found weeks or months later.
  - Google search "lost and found bird websites". There are pages of sites on which you may list your information. If you have a Facebook account, post your information and ask your "friends" to "like and share".
- Post flyers in your neighborhood. Be sure to post in high foot traffic areas such as school yards, recreational areas, shopping centers, parking lots etc. as a lost bird may associate people with food and safety.
- Place the lost bird's cage outside where it can be seen and fill it with food, water and favorite treats. If crows or other outdoor birds are a nuisance you can place bread crumbs in a different location away from the cage so the crows do not block the path or obstruct your bird's ability to return home.
- If your lost bird has a mate or a neighbor has a companion bird who can help call your lost bird, secure him/her in a cage and place it near the location where your bird became lost. Early morning and afternoon hours are suggested, when birds are most vocal and call to their flock.
- Your city newspaper allows a three day lost/found pet ad at no charge. You can also use their online classifieds.
- Notify the neighbors and contact companion bird rescues. If Mickaboo has any volunteers in the area we might be able to help.

Time is of the essence when a bird is lost! Refer to our [website](#) for additional websites (please note we are continuously updating our information). You can also visit our [new Facebook link](#) where we can post pictures and help circulate information to reach many.

*Finding a bird:* Post information as you would for a lost bird, with one exception. It is best to keep the identity of the bird private. Ask the person attempting to claim the bird to describe the bird. Do not advertise the leg-band number, any scars, missing toes, identifying markings, vocalizations or other points that will positively identify the bird. To help protect the bird from being claimed by anyone but the rightful owner, put "describe to claim" on the flyer, or on the ad. It is within your right to ask for pictures, proof of ownership, veterinary records, a sales slip, or a list of the words the bird speaks, from individuals trying to claim the bird.

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I asked Kelly if there was one Mickaboo experience that stood out in her mind. One of the nicest experiences was the generous toy giving by the [Parrot Toy Angels](#). Each of Mickaboo's 300-350 foster birds at the time received a toy gift, truly something wonderful. The amount of bird toys donated to Mickaboo was unbelievable, the love and support behind the project was the nicest thing she had seen in years. The other experiences that stood out were the heart-wrenching stories about companion birds and how they find their way to Mickaboo, rather it be from illness, accidents, family abandonment, found on the street, shelter intakes, not wanted anymore, impulse purchases or surrendering to Mickaboo for being too loud, but the thing that stands out most to Kelly is to see how passionate everyone is about rescue. "The willingness to help, the coordinated efforts, the honest and genuine heart and care behind the cause is remarkable", says Kelly.

As usual, I like to have our Featured Volunteer summarize why they feel others should consider volunteering for Mickaboo. Kelly responded:

"I would recommend Mickaboo based on their family-friendly approach toward educating those who are interested in learning about companion bird rescue, avian health, diet, care, adoption and much more. The world has learned a lot about these complex creatures and it's no longer okay to feed companion birds in our care 'an all seed diet', house [them] in rusty cages, and breed irresponsibly. The avian community has developed and evolved, we are much smarter than we were 20 years ago and I think Mickaboo has been a leader in this aspect. Mickaboo is a non-profit organization who offers a free bird care class that helps to educate and update. We have Species Coordinators who help answer questions, and volunteers who have come to the rescue of countless numbers of companion birds who would otherwise been left with a future unknown. I cannot think of anyone who hasn't opened their heart and home when needed. Why would I recommend volunteering with Mickaboo? In today's economy we are faced with many challenges and our Rescues and Shelters are no exception. The amount of pets that have been left behind in foreclosed homes, become financial burdens, unwanted, or dropped off due to loss of job is at crisis levels. Shelters and Rescues are overflowing with pets who are in need of adoptive homes so there's no better time to join a worthy cause, or a better community of volunteers all striving to help companion birds in need."

Well said Kelly! Thank you for all you do for Mickaboo and for taking the time to let us get to know you better.