

"...an organization that benefits not only pigeons and doves..."

by Palomacy volunteer Isabella McCracken



Isabella and foster pigeon Lola at COO-CHELLA 2018

When I was in the 7th grade, I went to summer camp at a local animal shelter. On one of the days, a Palomacy volunteer came in to present on pigeons. At the time, I thought the whole concept of rescuing pigeons was a bit weird, but I didn't know how much it would end up shaping my future.

Later that year, when my friend rescued a lost racer pigeon named Eleven, I knew just who to contact. Not much longer after that, I converted a playhouse in my backyard into an aviary, and started fostering Eleven along with many others over my time as a foster volunteer. Being completely responsible for another being at a young age taught me so much responsibility and leading the very same presentations at animal shelters that told me about Palomacy taught me public speaking.

It is so obvious when someone is petting a pigeon for the first time that they are not only bonding with that being, but also seeing how valuable compassion for everyone can be. People realize that there is more to these individuals' lives than just being "rats with wings". In a way, Palomacy is an organization that benefits not only pigeons and doves but all animals, human and nonhuman, and serves a very vital role in our society. It teaches everyone to have compassion for those different than them, as it has for me.



Isabella and Rhea and their families rescued Eleven in 2015



Isabella and Yeti 2015



Isabella and Eleven volunteering as Palomacy ambassadors

Now, five years after first becoming a foster volunteer with Palomacy, I am a senior in high school. Because of Palomacy, I am also an animal rights and environmental justice activist. I am able to speak in front of hundreds of people without being terrified, and I am able to have compassion and see past the stigmas placed upon so many individuals. I am also so grateful for the opportunity to care for pigeons and the support that Elizabeth provided me in doing that.

*Palomacy Director's Note: Since the very first contact Isabella made with Palomacy to get help for self-rescuing pigeon-racing survivor Eleven, she has been an extraordinary volunteer, advocate and colleague in this work. She has grown with the years, but she came to us so responsible and wise! As a foster volunteer for four pigeons over these years, Isabella provided their care 365 days a year, saving the lives of birds who would have had nowhere else to go had it not been for her. As an outreach volunteer, she has introduced many hundreds of people to who pigeons really are, helping Palomacy to inspire compassion where there had been none. And, as Isabella says, the benefits are not just for pigeons and doves.*





Outreaching



Made by Isabella