

My Internship at The Gabriel Foundation  
By Kodi Pinnell  
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*"When once you have tasted flight,  
you will always walk the earth with  
your eyes turned skyward; for there you have been  
and there you will always be" - Leonardo da Vinci*

TGF received this email request in early Spring 2008:

“Hello, my name is Kodi Pinnell and I am a senior in High School this year, and I was just curious about if I could possibly do a summer internship at The Gabriel Foundation. I have been working with parrots since I was fourteen, and to be quit honest the reason I got into it was because I saw the foundation on Animal Planet’s Adoption Tales. I am eighteen now, and I would love nothing more than to be able to do an internship there. I have a lot of references and I would appreciate any information you can give me!!”

We took Kodi up on his desire to spend time at TGF’s Aviary and Adoption Center as an intern. He is a terrific fellow, and was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone at Team TGF. Being an intern is something that requires time and energy from everyone involved with the process from start to finish in order for there to be success. Kodi was a willing student and learner, and also a darned good teacher himself. It is such a joy for all of us when we share our knowledge with the next generation. We thought that you’d enjoy reading about Kodi’s experiences directly from his daily diaries. These are reprinted with Kodi’s permission and have not been edited. Enjoy!

6-15-08

Well hello everyone! My first day here at The Gabriel Foundation was phenomenal. Jaci and I got picked up at the Denver Airport by Julie Murad herself!!! We went to get coffee and from then on it went very exciting. As soon as I got settled in I was paired up with a woman named Colleen (I think that’s how you spell it) and it was a very interesting day. First I was put to work vacuuming out building C, and then we got all of the food and water dishes and cleaned them and then we re-fed and watered them. After that we went and got all of the amazons, conures, and macaws out from their flights and we put them in their individual cages. It really was extraordinary to see so many parrots living in harmony in huge flights. One of my favorite parts of my tour was getting to see all of TGF’s cockatoos! I have never seen so many in one place in my entire life. It is just so sad to think that there are so many people out there who get these majestic creatures and they don’t even take the time to clearly understand them at all. It makes me so sad. I am hoping that by being here that I will be able to somehow help these magnificent creatures. Oh and I had a chance to eat dinner with Julie, and it was great. We had hamburgers, potatoes, and asparagus! Then on top of that we had amazing cherry pie and

ice cream! And by the way.... Julie did manage to find me some Dr. Pepper here in Colorado!!!

6-16-08

Today was very interesting. I worked in building C again, but this time I worked with a guy named Travis. He was really cool, and I learned a few things from him. I'm sorry if I sound like a three year old when I write this, but I'm tired! Building C has over 80 amazons, conures, Indian ring necks, lorries, macaws, and 80 various other small birds including parakeets, love birds, parrotlets, cockatiels, and Princess of Wales! It really is a full time job, I spend over eight hours a day cleaning, feeding, and playing with the birds. Also I got dive bombed today by a blue fronted amazon named Biff. Sadly for Biff, he only got the back of my shirt, and it was all because I was talking to his buddy, whom I believe is a Mexican redheaded amazon. I tell ya'll what it is never dull around here!

6-17-08

I swear that no day here is ever going to be the same as the last. I worked with a man named Edgar, and he told me he didn't speak much English, but I can assure you he knew more English than I knew Spanish! We worked quickly today, and we finished early. So then we went over and helped out the people over in Building B. Over there they have large macaws, cockatoos, greys, and eclectus! I was nearly be-headed by a blue&gold, because I asked someone if he went in a specific cage and so he pointed to the one in the corner, but boy was he WRONG! Once I put him in his cage, he freaked and went straight for my shoulder and face! I was so startled, but luckily I was not afraid and I kept my cool. I also got to use my new favorite phrase "Guacala Cochino" to a little boy who was there with his mom and he thought that was hilarious! So now my week is complete since I have said that!

6-18-08

All I can say for today is WOW!!! I was moved to building A, and worked with a man named Sergio. He is very nice, and it was the first day that I have needed earplugs! I went into the room with all of the conures and quakers. Out of all ten or so quakers there, only one liked me..... so Marie is on my good list for liking me. I also got to bring in a large number of macaws and cockatoos that live in building A. After work today I decided to go and hang out with a goffin's cockatoo named Pretty Bird Chicken. He was a hoot; he just danced and played with me for nearly an hour. He cracked me up! Hopefully I will be able to send you a picture of him, along with a couple of a few other birds. Once I was done with that, I went off on a wild adventure, Jaci and I went for a golf cart ride. . . . well I rode and Jaci ran. Well we got about half a mile down the road and the darn thing ran out of battery! So Julie, Sergio and I had to go down and tie the golf cart to the Suburban and drive it back to the house! I mean only these things could happen to me, and no one else. So all in all it was a crazy day. Julie made me a grilled cheese sandwich and it had tomatoes and onions in it, Gran it is worth a try. . . . . but they weren't as good as yours so calm down Gran. Well it is late, and I have to get up early so I will talk to ya'll later.

6-19-08

I met a very interesting character today..... and his name is Billy Bob. The poor guy was apparently attacked by other cockatoos in his flight, and they injured his beak pretty badly. He, of course, is also very plucked. He lives in the clinic on the grounds in a little box cage because he is not supposed to climb around on his beak yet, so after I got done with work today I went and read to him for about thirty minutes, and I plan on doing the same tomorrow. I was also attacked by Ricky Roo, the lovable Moluccan, twice. It was probably because yesterday we had to reattach his metal chest plate because he mutilates himself. I worked in building A with Sergio, and it was a little bit different today. We actually hosed down the entire building, and power washed all of the cages! It was interesting. We managed to pull it off even quicker than usual, and Sergio was very happy. I really am having a lot of fun, and the days just seem to fly by!

6-20-08

Well I finally got bit. It was by a little Meyers Parrot named Jasper (I'm sure you'll be glad to hear that Bridgett!!). I was changing his paper in his cage and he climbed out of it and was sitting on the door. So I picked him up and started to skritch his head, and he was cool with me. We talked for a few more minutes and then I put him in his cage, and he bit down. It was honestly quite a surprise. It was just enough to make me bleed and get the point across that he did not want to be placed into his cage. So I had him step up off of my hand onto a towel and placed him again in his cage, and we were just fine after that. I worked in Building A again today, and again Ricky Roo did not appear to be happy with me. I also got to talk with Billy Bob today and he was a little more animated. I also played with Pretty Bird Chicken and he got very tanked up (he is a 20-plus year old Goffin's cockatoo). He nipped me a couple of times, but nothing too serious, he is quite a handful. I am hoping that I will get to work with each of them tomorrow. It would be very cool to get to do that. I am very happy to be here, and I am continually learning daily.

6-21-08

Lucky for me I was able to get to go to the place where all of TGF's newspaper comes from, and it was interesting. I feel that I can now say that I have dumpster dived. We showed up to the newspaper place ( I'm not sure what it is called) and Travis made me jump in the dumpster full of old newspapers. It wasn't dirty, but it was a little crowded and I am glad I did it. Who would have thought that I would have traveled all the way to Colorado just to dig for newspaper! And no lie, I'd do it again and I think that everyone should get to do this at least once in their life! I think that it is also just now really hitting me that I'm not going to get to see PJ until August! Honestly, I really do miss her. Other than all of that, my day was pretty straight forward and I worked in Building A with Sergio. I am really getting confident with the way things work and that feels great. Sergio and I make a great team, and we usually finish everything early and we have a little more time to do a little bit of extra things, such as fixing up birds cages and even getting to seriously interact with them. I am really enjoying myself here, and Julie has been an amazing host so far.

6-22-08

First week is under my belt, and it feels exciting to be a part of something bigger than myself. I have done things that I would never get to do at home. Exciting things have already happened in my first week, and I can't wait for the next! We went to a pet adoptions' fair type thing, and it was very interesting. It was a lot like pets in the park, and we got some donations there, but the most exciting part of it all is that we were able to help people better help understand their parrots. Today something very cool happened. While I have been working with Pretty Boy Chicken, I have also been working with a very shy umbrella cockatoo named Moiya. For this entire week she would not step up or even accept a head skritch, but today she actually stepped up for me! Not only did she step up for me, but she climbed on my lap for a cockatoo cuddle! I am so proud of myself for being so patient with her, because for the first five days she would run away from me! After we cuddled, she did a few laps running and hopping on the floor just screaming and laughing. It was really exciting to see a bird shed its shell of fear and just let loose. I am very glad that it happened, and I can't wait to see what will happen tomorrow. Also Pretty Boy Chicken is being very excitable towards me, so I am going to see if I can better manage him tomorrow because I would love to see him get a wonderful home that I know he deserves!

Today I worked in Building B again, and it was interesting again. I worked with Alonso again, and he was a little more talkative today. I was able to work with a bare eyed cockatoo named Treasure, and he was very weird. All he wanted to do was sit on my shoulder and of course get head skritches! I think that he has very good potential for being a very good pet bird. I cannot wait until tomorrow to see what I can experience next! Well I will send ya'll an email next week telling ya'll about all of my many new adventures if that's what you want to call them).

For all of those who don't know about TGF check out the website at [www.thegabrielfoundation.org](http://www.thegabrielfoundation.org); it is full of info!

6-23-08

I finally got to work in building B today, and it was crazy. This is the building that houses the majority of the cockatoos, and about ten or so macaws and that's it. Some of them are super crazy, and others are very chill. It just shows how you can never stereotype a specific type of animal, because like us they are all individuals. The guy I worked with today is Alonso (and not Alfonzo like I thought, lol), and he is not very talkative. Like the others he told me he doesn't speak very good English, but his English is way better than my Spanish. I really did enjoy getting to work there finally, and again it reminded me of PJ. It surprises me though how few of them are actually not plucked! Most people assume that all of the birds here are here because they were rescued, but this is not the case. Most are here because they did not meet the owner's expectations as pets, and so they were put up for adoption. Quite a few of them are very friendly towards people while others are more than likely damaged mentally for life. I just have to remember to not give up on any of them.

Building A was a little different today. I actually knew where a bunch of the birds went, and I knew where to put the dishes in the little bird room! I was proud of myself, because for the first time working here I felt like I knew what was going on! I had a great day with Pretty Boy Chicken, I am working on teaching him to jump on cue, and so far it is working great. He will do it all voluntarily, and the best reinforcer for him is a towel. I never would have thought it, but it is true. It feels to me like I am training Jaci all over again. I was great fun today. Moiya and I are still working on building a trusting relationship so I really haven't been working with her too much. Billy Bob is doing great, and I did not get a chance to see Treasure today. Tomorrow I get to go to the The Birdbrain and I am thrilled.

6-24-08

It was my first day off. I was able to go to The Birdbrain and it was really cool. It was a lot bigger than I thought it would be. I also got to eat Thai food, and it was really good. The store is full of books too, which is really cool. I think that I am going to go crazy here, having all of these things at my finger tips! It really is just too much fun here. I was also able to work with Pretty Boy and Moiya for a few minutes today, and they are doing great.

6-25-08

Working in Building A was awesome today, I almost knew where everyone and every bowl went. Sergio and I work great together, we are now like a well oiled machine. Patti, Andrew, and I did a few beak trims today which I am glad that they are done now. I also went around and sprayed the birds in their flights, and despite the heat not everyone wanted a bath. That's just typical of parrots though. I have Pretty Boy hopping on cue now, and he is doing awesome at targeting (which we started only today). Tomorrow we I get to go and help with the met the birds at The Birdbrain, and that will be a nice change of pace. Wiley, an umbrella cockatoo, is going home and that will be very good for him. He is a very exciting and rambunctious guy, and he will be missed in the Umbrella room. We went out to eat today at a place called The Wine Café ( at least I think that's what it was called) and it was amazing! I had calamari, pizza, and cake! The service was incredible and it was an all around great experience.

6-26-08

Today working at The Birdbrain was interesting. We had a lot of people show up, and we had a bird go home. I was wrong when I said it was Willey the Umbrella, it was actually Willey the Bluefronted Amazon. I was very pleased to see a positive outcome for a bird. We also had a pair of Peach Fronted Conures hopefully find a home. All in all I think that today was awesome. I have never seen so many people so dedicated to parrots in my life! I was there from eleven until four thirty! Before that I worked in Building A with Sergio, from around eight to nine forty-five. I do miss home a little now, and I hope that everyone is doing just fine! I wish that everyone would write me a little more.....

6-27-08

What a day! It started like any other, I worked in building A with Edgar. After all the birds were in I had a cockatoo party in a type of meeting room/aviary. It was loads of fun, we had of course Pretty Boy Chicken, Moiya, Caesar, and BillyBob. We just kind of hung out and got used to the idea of hanging out there, Tuesday we will start more formal training like we have been doing in the lobby. Crate training is next for all of us, so everyone wish us luck. Tomorrow Patti, Tom, and I are going to Breckenridge, CO to pick up some bird cages. I am very excited, it is up in the mountains and we are going to have lunch up there. It is wicked awesome that I am getting to have all of the cool opportunities!

6-30-08

What an awesome day! I worked in building B with Alonso for a little while, and then shortly thereafter I went to Breckenridge! What a beautiful city, and the snow on the mountains was amazing. I have learned something about Colorado today. . . . The people here love their bikes and their dogs! It is too cool to live in a place like this. Patti, Tom, and I got the cages (which barely fit in the truck) and it was off we go again. I feel so blessed to be able to talk to people about birds all the time and not one of them tell me I'm crazy! O, building B was good. I got to help bring the birds out, and then I changed papers and cleaned cages. Sadly I did not have any bird interactions today, other than taking them out! I can't wait until tomorrow so that I can start crate training a few of them! Wish me luck , because by the time you get this I will probably still be working on it!

7-1-08

I felt like writing that as far as crate training went, today was a failure. But this statement would be far from right. Although Pretty Boy Chicken did not get into the crate, he did get a little closer than he did yesterday. So we might not have achieved our goal, there is always tomorrow. I worked in Building B before we attempted the crate stuff. We had a bird that got its toe bit, and as usual no one is saying who did it. Alonso and I had a few good conversations today, so maybe he is going to open up a little bit. Oh, even though the crate stuff didn't go over too well we did manage to get much better at targeting! That is a big step for us! I am really enjoying my stay here more and more, and I feel that everyone is finally accepting my presence, and hopefully I will get to find some hiking trails around here.

7-2-08

What an incredible day, as far as training is concerned. Not only did Pretty Boy Chicken get closer, but he actually touched the crate! Things were great, and for the first time today he actually touched my hand. Usually he will only step up onto my arm, but today

he stepped up onto my hand! What an awesome day. I also got to take an official tour of TGF which was led by Karen. It was very good, and a lot of the tourers (if that's even a word) had a lot of questions. I learned a ton about different specific things at TGF. Tomorrow I am going to help Julie give a speech about birds' complex brains to a group of MENSA people. These are apparently highly intelligent people, and it will be really cool to get to hear Julie speak. Oh, I worked in building A today with Sergio, and his son Junior pulled a hilarious trick on me. Junior is about four-ish, and when I do the dishes I put them in a very hot, high pressure sanitizer. While I was loading it Junior turned it on and the hot water sprayed all over my face. I was in complete shock and he just laughed and laughed at me. I couldn't get mad, because I think that I would have done the same thing to one of my friends! Needless to say my day was pretty exciting, and I look forward to tomorrow. And tomorrow I am planning on going hiking for real!

7-3-08

I finally went hiking, and it was really cool. I went down into a canyon and we got to hang out in the creek there. I climbed rocks while the dogs swam and smelled everything. I took two of Julie's dogs and obviously Jaci. The MENSA conference was very weird. The people there were very smart, but most of them seemed to lack in common sense. It was very interesting, and the people may have been weird but they were all nice. I also did not get any smarter by hanging out with them. It was worth a try though. Tomorrow I continue with Pretty Boy Chicken's training, and I'm sure it will go great.

7-4-08 & 7-5-08

Well I didn't write yesterday because we got back a little late after watching some fireworks. I worked in building A yesterday with Sergio and it was a very short. We just went in and fed and changed paper. Then we had the rest of the day off. I went and got to go shop with Julie and Kathleen (boy am I lucky). I really don't like shopping, and it was pretty boring. It was just one of those things that just had to be done. It paid off because I got a good barbeque lunch, and then we went and watched Hancock. It was a very good movie and I recommend it. Then we went to Ponderosa Dr. and watched the fireworks. I enjoyed getting to see all of them as did the rest of us (Tom, Patti, and Julie). Today I worked in building A all by myself! It was so crazy, and without the help of the office staff I would have been there forever! I thank God that they like me, because I'm sure I was flailing everywhere. I got to work with Pretty Boy Chicken today. We made a little more headway with step up training (he only liked to step up onto my arm, and we are working on stepping up onto hands) and we did the same on crate training as a few days before. I think that it wasn't good to have two days off, but he'll get back into the swing of things. Dinner was fun because we have two people staying here for the night from San Antonio who are adopting a Lilac Crowned Amazon. It really is neat to get to see birds go home, and dedicated people who are willing to drive such distances for them. I am hoping that by the end of next week Pretty Boy Chicken will be actually standing inside of the crate and also stepping readily up onto my hand. It will be very interesting to see if we can go the distance. Everyone keep us in your prayers. Also, this is a little depressing, but my Papaw is slowly dying of brain cancer and I really need ya'll to pray

that he has an easy ride with it and that my Gran has the strength to deal with the situation. Thanks everyone!

7-6-08

It was a pretty straight forward day, I worked in building A with Edgar. All of the birds except the two doves moved out of quarantine. Oh, and the good news is that two birds got adopted today! Gabrielle the Lilac Crowned Amazon, and Jimmy the Yellow Naped Amazon. It was a great day, and I am very happy for the birds and the people. I just love it when things work as great as they do here. I had a lesson in patience today with Pretty Boy Chicken. I took the entire crate apart, and he didn't even touch it! It was a little discouraging, but like always when he is ready he will get the job done. It has been another great week here in Colorado, and I hope everyone is having a good summer too!

7-7-08

As they say the first step is always the hardest, and it is true. The nice thing about the first step is that it leads to the second, third, and so on. It was funny because we weren't doing any kind of formal training we were just hanging out outside with a couple of other cockatoos and his favorite towel was inside of the crate. He hesitated a little, but then put his foot on the crate! It was a really cool moment, and for those of you who have never trained an animal to do something like this you probably don't know the feeling I'm talking about. It was very rewarding to see that it is possible, and to not give up. I am off tomorrow and I'm going to Littleton to help Travis move some aquariums. Maybe in the afternoon I will be able to do some more training. I also got to go hiking/boulder jumping. I took Jaci, Dot, and Jacky. It was a lot of fun, but I am very tired from it. I also worked in all of the buildings today! It really was a long day, but it was full of many rewards!

7-8-08

Today was very different. I helped Travis move all of his reptiles from his house to his new apartment. He has a black throated monitor lizard, skink, box turtle, king snake, and a pac-man frog. It took us a few hours, and it was very interesting. After that we went hiking at Castlewood Canyon (which is where I have been hiking) and it was a huge adventure. We started out on the trail, but thanks to Travis we ended up off the trail. We climbed all the way to the top, and miraculously the dogs made it too. We went wherever we wanted, and it was worth it. I really had a blast, and I think that Travis did too. I also got pretty far in crate training. Pretty Boy Chicken got all the way in the crate, and he walked around the rim because we don't have the top on it for now. On an amazing note, Billy Bob actually put a foot on the crate too, and it was only his first day! It was very exciting to get so far with two birds, which I did not expect. It really has been a very exciting week, and it is only Tuesday!

7-9-08

An interesting thing happened today, I actually didn't work in any of the buildings, I just worked as an enricher ( basically I did enriching around the aviaries). I only pulled weeds today, but tomorrow I will be really enriching the flights, and the cages. I am doing this all week, and it should really very exciting. Also today Pretty Boy Chicken got on the rim of the crate again. BillyBob didn't feel like coming out, so I didn't push the issue. Everyone else came out, and it was a very good day. I just have to remember to keep on being consistent.

7-10-08

Another unusual day. I basically worked pulling more weeds, and I reattached most of the flight covers. It was interesting, because the macaws were the ones that mobbed me the most. It was funny, because it happened in both of the flights that I covered with macaws! Also the funny part to me was how the Blue Throated Macaws were the ones who just seemed to want to find out what I was doing, and not trying to get rid of me, it was a fun experience. It was hot today, and the clouds just weren't coming at all! All in all, it was a fun day, and tomorrow I am really going to enrich flights and cages. They need it, and so do I. I didn't have time for any training today, I worked from eight to around six! It was very hard, and it left me no time for myself, or any of the other birds. Tomorrow is going to be different, and I keep telling myself that. I am going to get to enjoy my Friday, and I am looking forward to the class on Saturday.

7-11-08

I lied to myself. I worked on the flights today, and I was doing the same things. There weren't any shade clothes on a few of the flights in building B, so I put some on. It was a lot more challenging than yesterday, because a few umbrella cockatoos were hell bent on destroying my shoes! Not only that, but they wanted to take the zip ties away from me! They were here to make my job a little more interesting, and take up a lot more time. I didn't have the time to do any training, but I did manage to play with a few of them (and of course Pretty Boy Chicken). I also went hiking at Castlewood Canyon, but at a different part of the park. Travis showed me a new spot, and it was really cool. Tomorrow is the class, so I am really looking forward to it!

7-12-08

Well, I didn't get to go to the class I had to work here at the aviary instead. It was okay though because the class is always going to be available so that's just how I have to look at it. This week just hasn't been good for training, I've just been a little too busy I guess. My goal for next week is to do more training, and so far the crate training has been awesome, so I'm sure it will go great, and hopefully we will make a little more headway than we have been. A good thing about today is that I made a ton of foraging boxes which is something I like to do. I am going to get to pass them out tomorrow so that should be exciting. I also helped some volunteers pull weeds in the large umbrella

cockatoo flight. We also went and watched Walle, and it was a great movie. I thought it was very funny. So my days are always fast and exciting! Can't wait until next week. What a week this has been! I really hope ya'll enjoy reading it!

7-19-08

I am famous! Today I was on the news with Julie on a pet adoption segment. I was thrilled, and it wasn't anything like I pictured it to be. There were tons of cameras and machines everywhere, and everyone was a lot calmer than I thought they would be. I also got to help with the grooming at The Birdbrain. It was interesting to get to help with that, and we weren't very busy. It is never dull around here, and even though I have been gone a week, I feel as if I have been here all along. I appreciate everyone who has written me, and sent cards and flowers. It is very touching to think that all ya'll care that much about me and my family. Tomorrow I am going to the Celtic Festival here in Elizabeth, and I am so excited! I get to see real life sheep herding, and that is on my things to do list.

7-20-08

Well it is true that birds and the Scottish can mix. Today I worked at the Celtic Festival and it was a really good time. Of course everyone asked the same typical questions: Does it talk, does it bite, and are they expensive? They are starting to sound like a broken record, and it is very hard to not scream at any of them. Julie says that she wants to get a shirt made that says: Yes they bite, they talk when they feel like it, and they are an endless money pit! I would wear that shirt, and I think many other people who read this would too. After that I went back to the aviary, and hung out with Pretty Boy Chicken. Since that week that I was gone he seems to be a little perturbed with me that I didn't come and see him all last week. I also I am trying to project my human emotions on the situation and try and humor myself. Tomorrow we are going to start to get back to a structured training program. I think it should be very easy to start it back up. Oh, and he willingly stepped out of his cage onto my hand today, and for he and I that is a HUGE change. I was so thrilled, and sadly I didn't have anything to reinforce it with except a large amount of praise and enthusiasm. It was a big deal to me. I am excited because tomorrow Andrew and I are going to work on a lot of enrichment things, and I am NOT going back on the top of the flights!

7-21-08

It was a very different day. I moved a ton of stuff around, and that was pretty boring, but little did I know that later my knowledge would be put to the test. I actually got to help a man who is looking to adopt a bird. He got to meet the birds, and I hopefully I taught him something that he didn't know about watching a bird's body language, and becoming more observant. I think that as people we don't pay as much attention to the little details as we'd like to think. I also got to do a little bit of enrichment out in the flights. It was a

very good day. I didn't really have time to do any training, but I did get to hang out with a few birds for a little while today.

7-22-08

CSU Veterinary facility was amazing! They might not have been quick, but they were efficient. We took two birds, plus Lyn's bird, to have some blood work done. We had two Mealy Amazons, and a Cape parrot. The Mealy's were there to have their blood pressure checked, and the Cape was there to see if she could see. One of the Mealy's has hypertension, while the other doesn't, and the Cape Parrot can see. It is very confusing, because it would be easier to help the two birds that are in TGF's care if we only just knew what was physically wrong. I guess life can never be easy huh. We were on our way to the vet's at 9, and we didn't leave there until 3! We didn't make it home until 6! It was quite a day. I saw interesting types of dogs, and got to meet a few interesting people. I hope that I can get to go back before I leave! Sadly, I didn't have any time to do any training today. . . hopefully tomorrow.. .

7-23-08

Today I felt like I accomplished nothing at all. I felt like I was just working in circles, every time I got started on something, something else would pop up. I started out putting stuff away and ended up helping Karen help people meet birds for adoption. I also helped Julie take her car to the mechanic. Then I came back and helped out with a little cleaning, and then the rain started pouring down. It was quite a scramble to get them in. We managed to get all of A in, and then I went and helped in building C. I got soaked, and so did everyone else. None of the birds wanted to come out and hang out because of the storm. It was just an all around interesting day. Tomorrow I am driving to CSU by myself to pick up a bird. That will definitely be an adventure. Everyone wish me luck.

7-24-08

Well I didn't have to go get the bird from CSU. So it worked out really well, I didn't get stuck in traffic, and the bird got to go home. Today was my "day off", and I helped out at the aviary, and went Tom and I went and pick up the suburban from the mechanics. In the afternoon I had planned on going hiking, but the weather again did not permit it. It is actually good that it is raining, because believe me this part of Colorado needs it. It just wasn't a very interesting day. Oh I almost forgot, I went and saw Batman! It was awesome, and I highly recommend it. Heath Ledger did an amazing job at his role as the Joker. I think that even people who don't like those super hero type movies should go out and give it a try, it really is worth your time and money. Tomorrow we have people coming from the Humane Society (not a local one, but the head people) to have a tour. It will be very interesting to see their reaction to the aviary, because most of them will probably have mostly been around dogs and cats.

7-25-08

I was right about those HSUS people (Humane Society of the United States). They were floored by all of the birds we have, and at the level of care they receive. Well, I have been quiet about something that is going on here. A few weeks ago a group of macaws were taken from a couple up in Virginia. There are 31 of them, and the court appointed TGF to be their guardians for 18 months. It has been a very tricky situation, and I urge that if anyone has questions then they should go on to TGF's website and draw their own conclusions. A lot of people in the VA area are drawing the wrong conclusions about it all. Carol and Sue, I'm not sure if ya'll have any kind of influence in any of your bird clubs, but give it a try. I think that the entire situation is blown way out of proportion. TGF was APPOINTED the guardians of these birds, they did not sign up for this at all. I think that some of the people in the VA area need to look at the facts, and not let their emotions get in the way of the information. I just don't understand where they're getting any of their facts. I know that Julie would appreciate an email thanking her for her hard work and dedication to the birds. It is really tough for her, she is only getting negative emails and she could really use some positive ones. Thanks ya'll.

7-26-08

I went to meet the birds today, and I had a very good time. I met a few new people that volunteer with TGF, and got to hang out with a few old friends from last time. Hopefully we may have found a few new potential homes for the birds. I also got to talk with a guy from Australia, and he will be staying with us for a few days next week, we talked about the difference in birds. Over there people will pay anywhere between \$15-18,000 for a Blue & Gold Macaw! And only \$1,500 for pretty much any species of Black Cockatoo (except for the Palm). It was crazy, and he thought it was crazy the prices people will pay for a black cockatoo (for those who don't know it is usually between \$12,000 all the way up to \$20,000!). It was an exciting day, and I am very tired. So that was pretty much my day, and hopefully, much to my mother's dismay, I am trying to narrow down which bird that I might be taking home with me. . . We'll just see what kind of emails I'll get after that statement.

7-27-08

The farmers' market is a little flea market type thing in Parker, and it was very nice. We bought a ton of fresh veggies and fruit, it was a lot of fun. We also went to the Vitamin Cottage, and we were allowed to take their boxes, so we took about thirty or so. I filled them all up and passed them out to the birds, and they loved them! I'm sure by next weekend they will all be gone. Then we went and saw Mama Mia, and to be honest it was OK. It was weird to see the former James Bond singing a duet with Meryl Streep, I would have much rather seen another movie, even Batman again. It was a cultural experience, but everyone else liked it because they knew all of the ABBA songs, and I only knew Dancing Queen. The best part was the theater though. We got to sit in the VIP section and had our own server person. Also the popcorn and drinks are free at that theater. It

was a ton of fun, and I hope to get to go there at least one time before I leave! Well I hope to hear some responses from this long email!!

7-28-08

As usual it's always interesting here. That guy from Australia is here staying with us until Wednesday, and he is having a very interesting time with all of the other birds that he wouldn't otherwise be able to see. He got to hang out with the Caiques, and he really enjoyed that and I know they did too. I was sick this morning and everyone else says that it was because it was because of the altitude and the heat. So I drank a lot of water, and took a few Tums and I felt better by the afternoon. Joseph, Kathleen's son, and I went hiking it was fun. For the first time we actually stayed on the trail, and probably went about four or five miles. We took Jaci, Dottie, and Summer one of Julie's Great Pyrenes. As far as the birds go, it was a very typical day. It was just another abnormally normal day.

7-30-08

Sorry, that I didn't have an entry for yesterday. It was just a little hectic with Joseph sharing my room. He reminded me a lot of Tyler, with his crazy antics and weird lingo (he is Kathleen's son).. Today was pretty normal, I worked down at the aviary and then we all went to The Wine Experience Cafe. It was really great, I had a pizza like I did last time, and it was just as great. Dan had to go back to Australia today, so that was his final farewell. I had a good training session with Pretty Boy Chicken, it was mostly just fun and games (what good training session isn't). We just did stuff he already knew, he'll jump on cue and spread his wings on cue. The crate training is still in progress, it's just been a while for since we've worked on it. I really enjoy working with him because he is so eager and full of energy.

7-31-08

Well I think that I found the bird that I want to take home. Her name is Zoe and she is, yet again, a LSC2. I know what all of ya'll are thinking, what about Pretty Boy Chicken? Well I don't think that he would be a good fit for my family at all. He has more energy than our house can deal with right now. He is a great bird, and he would do best in a home where he could be the only bird, that is just my personal feeling. He loves getting into mischief, and I must admit he has been an awesome student and teacher for me. I have been debating between a few birds for a while now, and I'm pretty sure that Zoe is going to be the one for me and my family. I am very excited, and I can't wait to become a part of the adoption process here at TGF. Also, I'm not sure if I have mentioned it or not, but Barbara Heidenrich has asked me to write an article for Good Bird magazine about my stay at TGF. I am very excited, and I am going to get right on that. Other than that my day was pretty straight forward. We have another intern here now for a week, his name is Jimmy. He's from Pennsylvania and I think that he'll be fine.

8-1-08

What a day. That is the only way to describe what it was like today. I am in charge of food prep for the entire aviary, and it has been a blast! I get to make a huge mess, and have fun at the same time. I really am enjoying this new situation. After that I went and helped Alonso in building B, and then I helped Travis and Colleen in building C. Then I

had Sonic for lunch (yes sadly even though I get out of Texas I still can't stay away from Sonic, lol). After lunch I did a few things, but one of the big things I did was that Karen & I made files for some new birds that are coming in. Also we have new birds in quarantine, which just arrived today, and I had to set up their cages. Then the next thing I know we are going to the vet, because one of Julie's dogs (Dottie) is not feeling well at all. They took some x-rays, and the vet is not sure yet what the problem is. Then after that Julie, Jimmy, and I went and ate burgers. It was nice. So that was my day in a nut shell, I haven't done an entry like that in a while, and I hope that ya'll have enjoyed it.

8-2-08

It was a long day. It started at 8, and then ended at 8! I did a lot of the basic aviary work, and then I went with Patti to The Birdbrain where we did routine grooming. We left there around 5:30, and from there we went to do a home visit.. It was interesting, and the people are adopting a Mealy Amazon named Ernie. He is pretty much plucked, and I feel he is in need of a low energy type household. They have already attended the Birdie Basics class, and have met all of the other requirements, so Ernie gets to go home on Wednesday! I am so excited, because not only are we getting more birds in, but we are able to adopt quite a few out. My day might not have been that exciting, but it was busy. Tomorrow is going to be much busier, and it will be very intense.

8-3-08

Well it was quite a day! It was wild and exciting, and of course busy. I couldn't believe everything that I accomplished. We had a cockatoo who was badly injured yesterday. He has some bad puncture wounds in his leg, and they have to be attended to daily, as well as daily bandage changes. I also took care of the food, and sprouts. I also did a ton of other little things. We went out for dinner tonight, and it was AMAZING!! We had Chinese food, at this little hole in the wall of a place. I swear it was the most amazing Chinese food I have ever eaten! Luckily for us we had left-overs. . . . . guess what I'm going to have for lunch tomorrow. Tomorrow is probably going to just as busy, we'll see.

8-4-08

I actually impressed myself today. I know what ya'll are thinking, wow he's got a big enough head any way, but really I think most of you would be impressed as well. I actually managed to drive from Elizabeth all the way through Denver (and yes this includes downtown) and back! I made it to downtown with [Mapquest](#), where The Birdbrain is, and from there I had to go to the vet's office on the other side of Denver. Then I managed to navigate (without getting lost mind you) back to TGF! It was one of the neatest experiences ever. It also took up a big chunk of my day, about four hours to be exact. My day wasn't done until about 6! Then from there I helped Tom and Patti unpack their stuff off a truck, into their new house! It was just a long day, and I look forward to getting some sleep! I also did the food stuff for the birds, so we will see how tomorrow is (hopefully it will go a little slower).

8-5-08

Today, was a very sad day. We had to put my new dog friend, Julie's dog Dottie, to sleep. She had developed spleen cancer unexpectedly, it was a very hard on all of us. She is going to be severely missed by everyone. I still can't believe it happened. The vet said that it was the best thing for her, instead of a slow painful death. It had also spread to her mesentery, so they knew it was inoperable. Before all of the bad news, I basically stayed in Karen's office all day working on sponsorship pages for the birds. They needed them to hopefully get sponsors for some of the birds here at TGF. If anyone wants to sponsor a specific type of bird, or specific bird, ya'll can just write me and let me know and I'll get ya'll the info that ya'll need.

8-6-08

Well I did it again, except this time my route was a little different. I dropped Julie, Allen, Shauna, and Karen off at the airport, and then I found my way back! It is nice to know where I'm going. Once I got back I had to go to the grocery store. I bought food for the next week, and I can tell you it is going to be different without Julie here to cook for me. . . Then I went and helped down at the aviary, and afterwards I had a chance to get to hang out with Zoe. She really is a fun bird, and I'm looking forward to bringing her home. Then I went and had dinner with Colleen the machine, Bowe, and Travis. We had some kind of Canadian soup, and it was really good. Colleen attempted to make cornbread, and it didn't work out very well. So we didn't have any cornbread. We did get to have some cookies though, and they were great.

8-7-8-08

Sorry I didn't write yesterday, but I will try and catch ya'll up. Basically yesterday was normal, except I went hiking with Pam instead of Travis, Colleen or Bowe. While we were hiking, we saw a rattlesnake. It was huge, probably around three and a half feet. I got a few good shots on my phone, but Pam wouldn't let me get that close. It was beautiful, and I can't believe that people can justify killing them. Today was the start of the Olympics, and I can't believe that it is in China! What a place that must be. Today I also had an opportunity that I haven't had in a while. I took Java, a med. Sulphur crested who got his butt kicked and is now in the clinic, Flea a boarder who is a Lilac Crowned Amazon, Jake the Yellow Nape who is also boarding, and Zoe the bird I think that I am going to adopt outside in to the flights, and just sat and watched them. I haven't been able to enjoy the birds like that in a long time. I really did enjoy it. Then Tom, Colleen the Machine, Bowe, and Travis came over for chili dogs. They had a good time, and it was Colleen and Bowe's first time experiencing chili dogs.

8-9-08

I went and got the newspapers today. It was an adventure today dumpster diving, and if you haven't done it, you should give it a try. Tomorrow I'm going to a baseball game with Tom. It will be fun, I haven't been to one in a long while. Also today I helped in

building C, I did a ton of nail cutting and we also got some weights. Then I went around and helped get some beaks done. It felt really good to get some of that taken care of. My new goal for the rest of my time is to get all of the nails done on all of the birds here. Believe me it won't be easy. Wish me luck; it is going to be difficult.

8-10-08

The baseball game was LONG! It was four and a half hours of slow, losing, baseball. If you haven't guessed the Rockies lost, about twenty to seven. They played the San Diego Padres. Afterwards they had Stephen Curtis Chapman do a concert, and it was pretty good. Tom and I had to leave early because it was going to rain, and we didn't feel like running through the crowd to our car in the rain. We barely made it to the car when the rain really hit. This morning I helped Dr. Kris do physicals on some of the birds, and it wasn't easy. I had to leave early, but Pam filled in for me. It was a long and busy day, and I also had Pam and Sarah watch No Country for Old Men (my favorite movie) and they seemed to enjoy it.

8-12-08

Today was a typical day, I helped mostly in building A today. I had a very enjoyable day with the birds, and I was able to hang out with Zoe for a long while this afternoon, along with many other birds. I read a book, and we all just hung out. It was also a great day for training, and I'm not talking about the birds. My dog Jaci and I had an interesting session, I actually taught her how to open the gate to get from the downstairs to the upstairs. It was a ton of fun and Pam and Sarah had fun helping me too. I am excited about Julie's birthday party this Saturday, and then on Sunday I am finally going to get to go to a Sheep Herding Trial. Oh, I almost forgot, tomorrow Travis and I are going to hike a Fourteener. That means that I am going to be hiking up higher than a mile! Jaci and I are very excited to get to do that. We are going to start real early (6:00AM) and probably won't be back until later tomorrow evening. This week is going to be great.