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*Following is another open letter to all friends, supporters and volunteers of
The Gabriel Foundation from Gaye Thomasson, TGF Volunteer Coordinator
January 23, 2010*

THE FORGOTTEN FLOCK OF PUEBLO, COLORADO -THEIR CONTINUING STORY OF SURVIVAL-

Sometimes miracles do happen. Yesterday may just have been one of those days for the forty-two parrots and everyone involved in their rescue in Pueblo, Colorado on Wednesday, January 20th.

Friday, January 22nd, started extremely early. We all knew we were picking up the birds from the Pueblo Community Animal Shelter. We just weren't exactly sure where we would take them at the end of the day! There was a plan...we just didn't know if everything would fall into place by the time we needed to have the housing ready for these 42 birds. Caravanning with three large vehicles loaded with more fresh food, nuts, seed, and fresh towels, we headed to Pueblo, over 100 miles away from the Aviary & Adoption Center, truly on a wing and a prayer.

Those involved in the transport were Julie Murad, TGF CEO & Founder, volunteers Robert Thomasson, Kevin Ray, and me. When we arrived at the shelter, it was obvious that the entire flock had been treated overnight with gentle care by the staff. These birds had been terribly stressed, so newspaper was placed over the room windows to minimize disturbance by people passing by or peering in. The birds had already received fresh food and the water was changed in their carriers. Everyone had survived since we had left the birds at the Pueblo shelter at 1AM Thursday morning to make the long drive home.

At the shelter on Friday morning, one by one, each of the birds was given more fresh food, seed, pellets and nuts for the trip. Water was removed from the carriers to minimize mess for the birds, and every bird was carefully loaded up for the next phase of the relocation.



Pueblo Rescue - At the Pueblo Animal Shelter
The GabrielFoundation © 2010



Pueblo Rescue - Volunteer Kevin Ray moves
carriers for transport
The GabrielFoundation © 2010

Pueblo Rescue - At the Pueblo Animal Shelter
Volunteers Gaye Thomasson & Kevin Ray prepare
carriers for transport
The GabrielFoundation © 2010



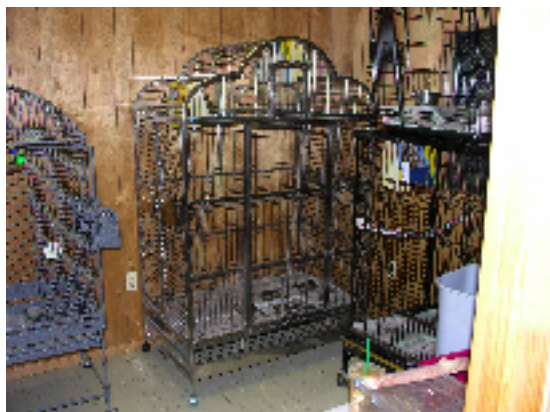
Pueblo Rescue - Ralph Martinez, Pueblo Chieftain employee,
shares Chieftain TGF cover story which matches the carrier
with pair of Blue and Gold Macaws!
The GabrielFoundation © 2010

With all birds safely aboard the three Suburbans, we headed back toward Denver, making one quick stop at the Pueblo Chieftain, which had generously offered stacks and stacks of newspapers for the birds. Ironically, the headline on the front of the papers was about the story of these birds! Chieftain employees helped us bag the newspapers (to avoid contact with the birds) and promised more papers whenever we had the need.

The trip to Denver was relatively quiet. The vehicle that Julie and I were in held many carriers of Blue and Gold Macaws, and we also had the Bare-eyed Cockatoo. He was the “lucky duck” who had the spot closest to the front seats. He entertained both of us with sweet birdie babble the entire way. (This bird had been flying loose in the filthy and rodent infested attached and unheated building that housed most of the birds.)

In the meantime, many things were transpiring as we drove north. The staff of The Birdbrain (the retail “Wing” of The Gabriel Foundation located at 1025 Acoma Street, Denver, CO), was on a mission: to insure that there was a place ready and waiting for these birds to land, just hours away. Rick Ellison, TGF’s Director of Operations, armed with documentation, pictures, and newspaper articles about the bird rescue, was at the Denver City and County Building and Zoning Departments at 7:30 AM. Our Plan A – install a modular building at Acoma to safely house and care for these 42 birds, Plan B – to short-term lease a heated warehouse space with light, water and bath, whether near the aviary or The Birdbrain, Plan C – take the birds to the two modular buildings just installed at the Aviary & Adoption Center. With intense determination, Rick secured the necessary permits to set a temporary modular building in the parking lot behind The Birdbrain. In less than a day! In less than a few hours!

And then, everything started falling into place. Volunteers appeared at The Birdbrain to assemble donated cages, make toys, hang telephone books to be torn to bits. The modular arrived and was seated behind TBB. The electrician arrived and the modular had power, heat, AC and ventilation. Metal steps were set at the doorway for entry. And our caravan of cars arrived.



Pueblo Rescue: Cages readied to receive birds in the modular
The Gabriel Foundation © 2010



Pueblo Rescue: Julie Murad preparing food for cages as birds are unloaded in the modular
The Gabriel Foundation © 2010

Quickly, each carrier was brought into the building. Decisions were made regarding the very best location/cage for each individual bird or pair for this interim housing. Karen VanderHyde was once again on site to assist in the smoothest transition possible from carrier to cage for every bird. With towels gently enclosing them, the birds were placed in their new temporary homes, a vast improvement over their previous environment. Each cage was meticulously labeled with the birds' identification numbers provided them during our original evaluation and physical exam at the shelter.

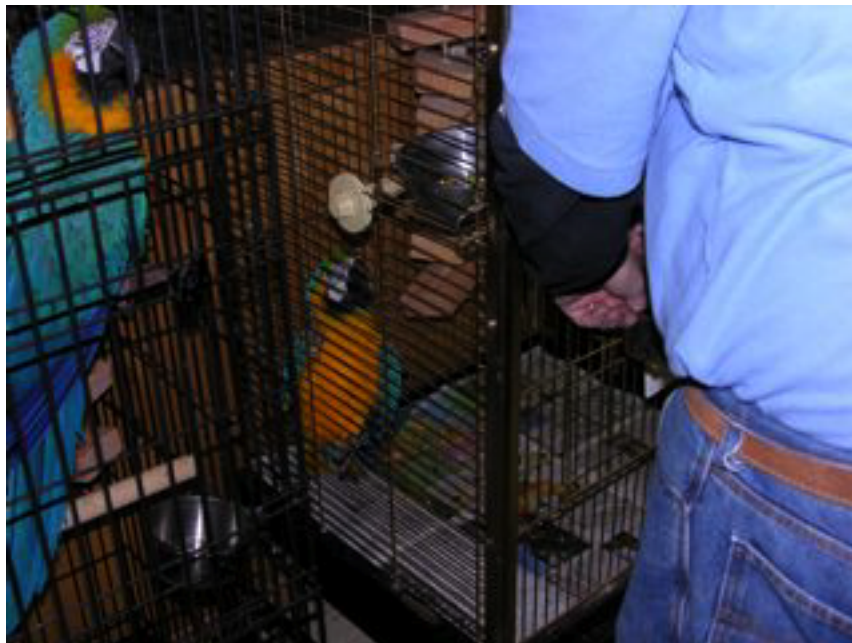


Pueblo Rescue - Julie Murad and Karen VanderHyde examining the condition of a Military Macaw as it is transferred to a cage
The Gabriel Foundation © 2010

It would have been an excellent time to know how to read lips! There was no way for us to vocally communicate with each other. The noise of these birds was deafening inside of the modular, but not sounds of fear this time. The staff and the volunteers worked as an efficient team to finish setting up. Absolutely everything fell into place. Though not all ideally sized due to the modular's space limitations, there were cages for all birds. Everyone was fed, labeled, watered, "toyed"! It was an amazing sight to witness.



Pueblo Rescue - Rick Ellison and volunteer Kevin Ray attaching ID's to cages
The Gabriel Foundation © 2010



Pueblo Rescue - adjusting bowls & getting set up!
The Gabriel Foundation © 2010

The physical condition of these birds remains critical. Julie Murad said, "We have seen heinous conditions before in rescue situations, but never anything like this. I've never seen so many birds with bleeding wounds from brittle, broken and overgrown nails, foot wounds from rusted nails and broken cage wire. Missing digits and limbs. Ratty, dull, broken or missing feathers, and reeking with the stench of ammonia and filth that surrounded them." For now, these parrots have a safe environment, good nutrition, and clean cages until their conditions stabilize to the point that Dr. Noel Opitz can do the necessary laboratory testing, treatments and procedures they will require.

We hope that all of this flock of birds will survive, but there are no guarantees. They have gone through a horrific experience and have suffered for years. Some things you can change, some you can never undo. With the excellent medical attention and care of The Gabriel Foundation's professional staff and volunteers this Pueblo flock is no longer "forgotten." They will receive the best care, nutrition, clean air and life that they deserve.

Thanks to each and every one of you for your outpouring of support.



Pueblo Rescue - Green-winged Macaw and
Blue and Gold Macaw friend
The Gabriel Foundation © 2010

Again, here is how you can help today:

1) Go to www.thegabrielfoundation.org, scroll to: "CLICK HERE TO MAKE YOUR 100% TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION."

2) Donate by mail, directing your contribution to

Pueblo Rescue 2010
c/o The Gabriel Foundation
1025 Acoma Street
Denver, Colorado 80204

3) Download copies of this message and pass it to friends who care about the welfare of all living creatures and who may be willing to financially assist these birds; and/or

4) Forward this message to friends and family who also might be able to make a valued contribution.

And once more, with my deepest thanks,

Gaye Thomasson
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Many have forgotten this truth, but you must not forget it. You remain responsible forever, for what you have tamed.
--- Antoine de Saint Exupery

The Gabriel Foundation is a 501(c)(3) avicultural and veterinary affiliated non-profit parrot welfare organization providing for the needs of parrots everywhere through each of its seven programs: Education outreach, adoption, rehabilitation, long term foster care, sanctuary, rescue and conservation.
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