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Featured Volunteer: Martha Kudlacik By Lucy Macmillan



Some of Martha's foster cockatiels

Martha Kudlacik is one of Mickaboo's volunteer Cockatiel Coordinators and our featured volunteer for Spring 2015. She exudes great joy about volunteering with Mickaboo and the Mickaboo family is delighted and honored to have her!

Martha joined Mickaboo in 2007 after having volunteered for years at a wildlife rehabilitation center, working mostly with birds. She wanted to foster companion birds in need and naturally gravitated towards Mickaboo. Martha says, "In wildlife work you can't cuddle or do anything that would cause a bird to become tame because they can't be released if they aren't wild. If the birds can't be released, they are euthanized. I really wanted to have non-wild birds around as pets, and I had heard of Mickaboo during my years of volunteering at the rehab center".

I asked Martha some questions regarding her tenure at Mickaboo:

LM: What are your favorite ways to volunteer for Mickaboo and why?

MK: I like to do home visits because it is the biggest roadblock to getting potential adopters approved, and I like being able to establish a relationship with people that I will see again down the road. I also like doing transport of fostered or adopted birds, especially now that I have a pickup truck."

LM: How many birds do you have at home and what species are they?

MK: Currently I have 9 foster cockatiels, none of who will step up unless they're already on the floor! That's why I have 9 foster cockatiels. [LM's note: People generally want "step-up ready" birds as pets and so her flock continues to grow.]

LM: What do you hope to see Mickaboo achieve this coming year?

MK: Expanding our education outreach. I want to aim for getting our name into every shelter, pet store, and newspaper in the greater Bay Area so people are aware of our birds' needs and our services. I also want to see us work with other animal groups to reduce the number of animals being purchased from breeders. And for cockatiel adoption, better manage the birds that are surrendered so that they can go to foster homes where they can become adoptable. I want to figure out how to be more strategic so that the birds' foster homes have enough time to work with them and get them adopted.

LM: What are one or two of your most favorite/rewarding volunteer efforts for Mickaboo?

MK: I love springing birds from animal shelters - the bird gets a better place to live, and the shelter staff is always so grateful. Also, Mickaboo has toy-making parties that are so much fun - I'm not so creative, but it's lots of fun to hang out with the other volunteers and make things!

After getting involved with Mickaboo, one thing that struck me was how it made me feel like a new person - there was so much for me to do and I felt a lot of accomplishment in anything I did because of that. And even though I didn't know too many people in the organization at first, I kept going to events and meeting other Mickabooers - now I feel like I have a huge pile of friends to go along with my big pile of cockatiels!

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Martha also helps send donation tax receipts and recently started teaching Mickaboo's basic bird care class. Martha is a fantastic volunteer with a great sense of humor and is described by others in the organization as a reliable, compassionate and patient person. Mickaboo and all its companion birds look forward to Martha's accomplishments in 2015 and encourage those who are considering volunteering to do so.

Editor's Note: To apply to become part of the Cockatiel Coordinator team, or any other role within Mickaboo, email volunteer@mickaboo.org and tell us how you're interested in helping. We can give community service credit to those who may want such for academic or other purposes.