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## MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY BIRDIE NEW YEAR!!!

By Michelle Yesney, CEO



THANK YOU to everyone who has helped to make 2018 a good year for Mickaboo and our wonderful birds. Thank you to our donors, our volunteers, and all of the well-wishers who support and encourage our efforts. Thank you to our veterinarians and their staffs, to the people who provide us with space for our classes, those who help with outreach, and those of you who donate materials that help us feed and care for our birds, and fabulous gifts that we can sell to pay our bills.

This is my annual report to all of you. I get to share the good news about the birds we've rescued - and how we did it. It is also my responsibility to identify where we need to focus our attention and efforts for the coming year. My home is always filled with bird sounds - singing and calling and (sometimes) yelling. I need no other reminder of the incredible importance of what Mickaboo does, and I suspect that many of you live in a similar environment.

First the numbers that we use to measure our effectiveness: Mickaboo took in 169 birds this year and we adopted out 211. That means we are succeeding in our efforts to find homes for more of the birds we rescue. This margin means that we adopted out 42 birds that have been with Mickaboo for more than a year. Some of them had been with us for more than two years. This is very good news, and it is very much the result of the hard work done by a lot of our volunteers. A clear difference and the biggest factor in our increased adoptions is the number of adoption fairs we are doing each year (SEVEN IN 2018!!!). Both in the Bay Area and in the Sacramento Valley, regular and well-attended adoption fairs are bringing in people who are immediately eager to adopt. Our birds are the best advertising we have - meeting live birds makes people fall in love. The "terrible hassle" of going through our adoption process becomes much less of an impediment when you look into the eyes of a beautiful, living, feathered creature.

While our numbers are very positive, they are not the complete story. There were birds that we wanted to take in that we had to turn away this last year, because there was no place for them. Mickaboo cannot take in a bird when there is no foster home for him or her to go to. This is not an arbitrary rule, and it is not subject to interpretation.

### IF WE DON'T HAVE A FOSTER HOME THERE IS NO PLACE TO PUT A NEW BIRD.

We cannot put a lovebird or an Amazon in a box and store her in a warehouse temporarily until a place opens up in a home. As it is, we sometimes have birds staying in a vet's office for too long because there is no foster home for a bird that has recovered from injury or illness.

I'm not sure why this situation exists. Our intake numbers this year were substantially smaller than they were last year, and part of that is because we had a shortage of foster homes.

Two years ago we had to acknowledge that the organization could not continue on the path we were then on, of taking in more birds than we adopted out. We are a rescue, not a sanctuary, and if we don't find homes for our birds, we will fail in our purpose. We reversed course last year, and we have further



Adoption fair at For Other Living Things, Sunnyvale

improved this year. The total number of birds now in foster care is down to 431. Over 200 of those birds, however, have been with us for over two years. So maybe part of the “shortage” of foster homes is that so many are full and have been for quite a while. [I know, we’ve always had “foster failures”, in which many of us keep adopting our foster birds - that’s an inevitable outcome for sending adorable birds into people’s homes!!!]

So, I’m asking everyone in the Mickaboo community to think about what we can each do to improve this situation. For example:

- Do you have a little time and patience to spare? Perhaps you could take in a cockatiel that currently has no social skills, and work to socialize him. This will make him more adoptable and increase the likelihood of finding his forever home.
- Do you know someone who used to have birds, or perhaps they just lost a pet and are thinking about a new companion? Talk to them about birds as companion animals, show them our website. We have an abundance of “starter” birds.
- If you have a foster bird, could you do more to help find him or her a forever home? Perhaps you could update the story on our website, adding cute or endearing details. Can you bring her to an adoption fair? If you cannot come to the fair yourself, you can ask for someone else to give her a ride.
- Host an adoption fair!!! If there are ten foster birds in or near your community, have an adoption fair at a Pet Food Express or community center. It doesn’t have to last all day - just a few hours of exposure will help. We’ll try to schedule a Mickaboo class for the same day nearby.

Please remember, Mickaboo is 100% volunteers. Everything wonderful that we do is because our volunteers make it happen! Thank you all for your active support.

### **FUN FACTS**

*Interesting tidbits from our statistics this year:*

Month with the most adoptions: May - 38

Most species adoptions: Budgies - 101

Most species intake: Budgies - 30

Biggest increase in birds rehomed: Telegraph Hill Conures

Most unusual species rescued: Neophema/grass parakeets - 28

Most inexplicable statistic: Pionus - No adoptions or intakes for two years! *Where have all the Pionuses gone?*



Two of the budgies adopted in 2018, with their new family

**Best wishes to you and your flock from all of Mickaboo’s birds!**