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Happy New Year from Mickaboo to All of Our Volunteers!
By Michelle Yesney, CEO



First, let me start with an expression of gratitude for the universe of wonderful people who make our rescue work:

THANK YOU to everyone who has helped to make 2019 a good year for Mickaboo and our wonderful birds. Thank you to our volunteers, our donors, 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.

Quite literally, we are 100% dependent on the "kindness of others".

It's not a bad way to do business in Northern California because, obviously, we are in the midst of an area of kind, generous, open-hearted people who love birds.

So, once again, THANK YOU, all of you kind, generous, open-hearted people who love birds.

SOOOO, how did we do this year? We'll start with the end-of-year numbers.

Mickaboo took in 170 new birds. That's a substantial number of birds (just one more than last year). In some cases we took in birds who were losing their homes to death, illness, and the family moving away. In far too many cases, we took the birds away from poor physical conditions, inadequate diet, and a life of pain and/or illness. The dominant species in our rescue flock was, once again, budgies (56). Next most popular (again) was cockatiels (25). Third highest number was conures (14)

These are not scary numbers, they're pretty close to previous numbers. The less happy number is the total number of adoptions this year - 121. We adopted out 45 **fewer** birds than we took in 2019. It is likely that the reason for this low number is the number of adoption fairs we did this year — four. That is correct, we had four adoption fairs in 2019 compared to eleven adoption fairs in 2018. (We adopted out 211 birds in 2018.) We know that adoption fairs are the most efficient mechanism we have for finding and processing new adopters. And this reinforces that knowledge and past experience.

Another interesting statistic is that we took in 45 birds this year that were “returns” - birds that were adopted in the past who were given back to us. All of you know that Mickaboo promises to take back our birds - we do not want them dumped back in shelters, abandoned at vets’ offices, sold to breeders, or released into the “wild”. We believe that educating our adopters limits these behaviors, but offering an alternative is the best guarantee.

We are trying to determine why so many birds were returned, because we would like to limit or avoid future years like this one.

I must also ask all of you to examine your own lives and plans for the future - do you foresee a time when you might want to return your bird to Mickaboo? Is there anything you (or we) can do to limit that likelihood? I can tell you that some senior housing allows you to bring a pet. Would you take that into consideration when you are making that decision? Have you talked to your family members and close friends about possible changes in your life and what you hope would happen to your birds? Might a son or granddaughter be persuaded to establish a bond with your bird now that would help you all in the future? If you or your spouse might have to move for your work, would you be prepared to make the effort to find a home at your new location that allows you to keep your bird?

Please keep in mind that you are part of your birds’ flock — their family. Every time they lose their family, it creates trauma, just like it would do for you or your children. Planning ahead for a shared future is what we all need to do in order to avoid a repeat of whatever disruption brought your bird to Mickaboo.

So, this year’s request to all of you is: Please consider Mickaboo in your New Year’s Resolutions! In addition to loving your birds and providing generous donations to help us pay our vet bills, please consider one (or more) of the following:

- Plan for your birds’ future. What events do you foresee in your own life and how can you plan to include your bird(s) in that future?
- Can you help with an adoption fair this year? Even better, can you plan to take the lead in an adoption fair?
- Foster a bird or two, especially a bird (or two) that otherwise cannot come into Mickaboo. Remember we’ll supply the cage; you supply the food, toys, and love.