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Bailey's New Home

by Cindy Goral

This is the story of our adoption of Bailey, a 16-year-old Goffin's Cockatoo. We've been a bird family for decades. I grew up with a canary and a budgie, and later in graduate school had zebra finches and a budgie. When my husband and I moved to California, we ended up adopting a one-year-old African Grey, Max, from a co-worker who was a "cat" person and really didn't know what to do with a bird. We had a cockatiel for a while, and also an Amazon parrot but had to find another home for the Amazon when we had a human baby.

Fast forward to 2013. My son is now 16 years old and we thought it would be a good idea for him to do some volunteer work. He has some social issues and isn't that comfortable with lots of people, but he connects with animals and grew up with Max. So we found a non-profit, B2L House, that takes care of special needs birds and needed a volunteer weekly to clean bird cages. My son started cleaning cages. After a few months, he came home and mentioned that Jackie, one of the cockatoos, needed a



permanent home. We weren't sure about Jackie as our first cockatoo, but Alex said how about Bailey? We could consider Jackie later. While Alex was waiting for us to pick him up after his volunteer work day was done, Bailey would hang out on Alex and they seemed to bond with each other.

Little is known about Bailey's first 13 years of life, other than he was fed seeds and was "at the brink of death" when rescued with blood and scabs and infections all over his body. His rescuer helped him get better, but went to college and had to give him up. So Bailey ended up being loved and taken care of in his foster home at B2L House for about 3 years.

We weren't sure how Bailey and Max would get along. If they could get along, then Bailey would have a new permanent home. I talked to my son and I said, ok, he's the same age as you so just think and prepare – when you are 80, Bailey will be 80 too!

Bailey and Max aren't buddies yet, but they tolerate each other and will hang out on the same person together. They have explored each other by touching beaks and a few times one has chased the other, but generally they seem to ignore each other.

Bailey is a screecher – cockatoos are definitely louder than Greys. But we were forewarned and are getting used to it. He doesn't screech that often and it's usually for attention. Bailey loves to sit on my son's window sill and jump back and forth across the sill. He's still pulling his feathers out (his chest, back, under-wing areas and legs are bare, and he barbers his upper wing feathers), and we are working with our vet on what we can do. Bailey now has a dark room and we move his cage to his own bedroom in the evening so he gets 10-12 hours of darkness. When we started putting Bailey to bed, Max started saying "Goodnight" and he has started to go to bed at the same time too.

Bailey was scared of a lot of things when he first arrived, but he's been with us now 3 months and is getting more bold and less scared. My son calls him "Bailey-polar" because sometimes he's really sweet - and then he'll bite you on the arm or ear. Bailey loves to get his head scratched and listen to music on my son's iPhone. I think this special-needs bird found a home with us and my special needs son.



Mickaboo is a wonderful all-volunteer organization that works hard to rescue birds that aren't being taken care of and find them loving homes. They phone-screened us and came to our house. They make sure that families can give the birds the attention, space, safety, and care the birds deserve. We can always learn more, and we replaced our remaining two teflon frying pans with green, safe frying pans. We are hoping over time to create

an outdoor aviary and perhaps be able to foster more parrots as the need arises once Bailey settles in more fully.

Oh, and great news; we heard Jackie got a permanent home too!