

Article from "The Mickaboo Bird Rescue Companion"
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Featured Volunteer: Fred Cox
By Shauna Hill



Fred with Lulu and Woodstock in 2005

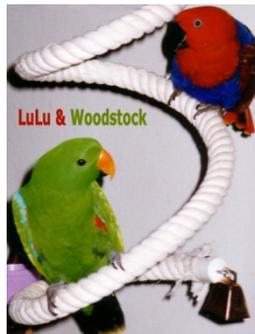
One of the wonderful things about Mickaboo's organization is its volunteers' ability to step up and help out when the need arises. "Stuff happens" every day and we don't always stop to appreciate how vital all of our hard working volunteers are. We heard about Sherry Helms in our last article about how one volunteer came to her assistance when she needed help with the Eclectus Coordinator duties. It's time to get to know that awesome volunteer a little better. He's Fred Cox, our Interim Eclectus Coordinator and Lovebird Coordinator for Mickaboo. Let's take some time and learn more about Fred.

SH: Tell us about yourself. Where did you grow up? Did you always have pets? What do you do for a living?

FC: I grew up in Richland, Washington and my parents allowed us to have all sorts of pets - among them a turtle, rabbit, rat, dog, cat and a wonderful Budgie named Binky. I attended Washington State University and graduated in 1978. My passion has always been the airlines and that same year I joined Western Airlines, which later merged with Delta Air Lines, and worked for both until 1994 when I had to leave due to sickness with HIV/AIDS. Even though I couldn't work I've always wanted to give back in some way so I began volunteering for Healing Alternatives in 1995 and then AIDS Benefits Counselors/Positive Resource Center from 1996 on and off through 2008. I joined Mickaboo in 2010.

SH: Tell us how you heard about Mickaboo and what made you decide to volunteer?

FC: I first heard about Mickaboo in the late 1990s from a local veterinarian. Back in 1994/95 I had bought a female and then a male Eclectus parrot - LuLu and Woodstock.



I did not then seek out Mickaboo and join because I thought of LuLu and Woody as my children and the thought of trying to help birds that came in neglected and/or abused terrified me. I didn't think I had the fortitude to deal with this. That all changed on February 10, 2010 when LuLu, the love of my life, died from egg yolk peritonitis. This devastated me and thank God I still had Woody because he really helped me get through it. I knew then I had to do something in LuLu's honor to give back. I contacted Mickaboo about both adopting another female Eclectus for Woody and myself and to find out how I could help. I found out that Mickaboo needed a Lovebird Coordinator so even though I had never even seen a Lovebird I decided I had to help. It has been a wonderful experience and I often "kick myself" for not joining when LuLu was still alive. I often think that if I had then, perhaps LuLu would still be with us because of what I now know.

SH: What roles are you currently volunteering for with the organization and how long?

FC: Presently I am the Interim Eclectus Coordinator covering for Sherry Helms until she returns. I'm also on the adoption approval board. I recently gave up the Lovebird Coordinator role due to a decline in my health but I still want to help Mickaboo in whatever way I can.

[Note from SH: Fred passed the Lovebird Coordinator role to me. Fred is an awesome mentor and I can only hope to do as great a job as he has been doing for the Lovebirds. I can't thank Fred enough for all his hard work and for helping me learn the ropes!!!!]

SH: What memorable experiences have you had since joining Mickaboo?

FC: Being the Lovebird Coordinator has been an amazing, wonderful experience! As with all of the coordinator positions it is demanding but it is so gratifying to help these wonderful little birds! When I first started, the first few Lovebirds that I fostered were aggressive and hard to handle and I thought, OMG are all of these Lovebirds like this? Then I got some in that changed my mind forever. It is very true that Lovebirds are big birds in little bodies and boy do they have "spunk"! But considering their past and the situations they have come from, it is no wonder that they are aggressive many times. I am a complete convert to them now and hope to always have them in my life. My present flock includes Eclectus's Woodstock and Mickaboo adoptee Ebony, a Senegal that I rescued back in '96 named Kia, Nelson the Canary that I just adopted and eleven wonderful foster Lovebirds. I've had so many awesome experiences at Mickaboo but I would say the best one overall is the wonderful Mickaboo people. I'm just in awe of how hard everyone works to help all of our birds and most everyone is doing this while working at a full time "regular" job!



SH: Why would you recommend volunteering with Mickaboo?

FC: I was so wrong when I feared joining Mickaboo because of the heartbreak of seeing neglected and abused birds but it has turned out to be quite the opposite. Yes, it is hard to see birds like that come in - but it is so gratifying to help these birds, see them get better, and then get them adopted to good homes who will give them love and care for the rest of their lives. In fact, one of my favorite things to do is to go and pick up birds when they come into the shelter and then get them to a vet for help and/or nurse them back to health myself. To me that is truly where the "rubber meets the road" in this job and I just love it. I can't recommend Mickaboo enough to anyone who wants to help as long as they are in it for the birds, and not themselves, like all of our Mickaboo folks are. I just wish I had met someone at Mickaboo long before 2010 and had the "guts" to join back then!

In Honor of LuLu 1994-2010

