

Article from “The Mickaboo Bird Rescue Companion”

<https://mickaboo.org/newsletter/jul19/>

Published July, 2019

Shining Examples

Guest article from Palomacy Pigeon & Dove Adoptions by Alicia Montanez



Rose & Alicia meet

I've always loved birds. There's such a sense of freedom about them. For birds, the sky isn't the limit, the sky is the norm. Every time I pick up a pencil or a pen or a paintbrush, I always draw wings.

Years ago I resigned myself to the fact that I'd never have birds as pets. I didn't feel like I could offer a parrot the kind of enrichment and engagement they needed, and the smaller birds like finches and canaries never quite caught my fancy. Birds, in my mind, were best enjoyed by watching them wing their way between trees.

Around eight months ago, I stumbled across a blogger who kept pigeons and doves as pets. I was floored by what I learned, to say the least. The blogger said that pigeons made tight emotional bonds within a complex social structure that was rich enough to even include humans. She said that pigeons were incredibly smart and could even be used as assistance animals. I dove (pun intended) into research and came out the other side with a massive stack of information from a bird rescue called Palomacy.

Just this last month I was finally able to bring a pair of beautiful pigeons into my home for a short while thanks to Palomacy. I was worried about a lot of factors—would my allergies tolerate pigeons? Would my housemate tolerate pigeons? Palomacy's Elizabeth helped walk me through all of my questions and concerns and specifically tailored my foster experience to be the best possible for the birds and me.

Elizabeth paired me up with two married pigeons named Jake and Rose, who were blinded some time ago when someone dyed them green for a “dove release” event. We put them in pigeon pants (an excellent invention!) and let them roam around my apartment while we talked about how to take care of them. Right from the start the birds were wonderfully patient and tolerant. They were so brave and curious and Rose went right away to inspect my two rabbits in spite of the rabbits' offended (foot thumping) remarks.



Jake, Rose (in flight) & Alicia



Rose investigating the source of the thumping.

During the time that I shared my home with Jake and Rose, they surprised me at every turn. They learned entire phrases and expressed preferences when asked. Saying “I'm going to pick you up now” resulted in resigned acceptance while their responses to “can I pet you?” depended on their mood. They could tell the difference between when I was asking them something versus telling them. Their intelligence and understanding astounded me.

Both Jake and Rose were incredibly flexible, adapting quickly to any new situation. Jake happily perched on my hand when I introduced him to my brother's coworkers, and Rose took any and every opportunity to explore anywhere she could reach. They were both delighted when I filled up the bath with a few inches of water and let them play. Afterwards, they snuggled up on a warm towel and gave me a wonderful show of feather fluffing and preening.

Jake would sing little love songs to his wife, who in turn would snuggle and offer kisses. They would help each other navigate—when Jake kept pecking outside the food bowl Rose put her head underneath his to guide him to where the seeds were. Whenever Rose would go on an adventure in my apartment, the more reluctant Jake would coo gently to tell his wife where he was so she could come back to him. Even though they were blind, they didn't let it stop them from living full and beautiful lives.

Jake and Rose are two of the many pigeons available for adoption from Palomacy. They're shining examples of the capacity pigeons have for love and adaptability. So many of these birds have been injured or abandoned or abused, and yet they're still willing to reach out and engage in new relationships with anyone who will give them love and understanding. If you've ever thought about adding a new animal to your heart and home, I would highly recommend a pigeon. I would also highly recommend adopting from Palomacy—working with Palomacy has genuinely been the best rescue experience I've ever had, and I've worked with countless rescues. Palomacy truly understands the value of these birds and the people who bring them into their lives.



Jake meeting Piebald the rabbit.



Rose contentedly loafing post-bath.



Married couple kisses



Adoptable Jake & Rose would love to build a beautiful nest in your home!

www.PigeonDiplomacy.org



Alicia is a student of Animation and Illustration at San Jose State University. She's an artist, writer, and an avid lover of creatures great and small.