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The Making of Mickaboo’s Virtual Adoption Fair

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Cockatiels adopted from Mickaboo watch the Virtual Adoption Fair

How do you do a bird adoption fair when everyone is sheltering in place?

Adoption fairs are one of the more effective ways Mickaboo has to rehome our rescued birds. Past adoption fairs featured large gatherings of foster parents and other volunteers mingling with potential adopters and others interested in the colorful, unusual feathered creatures.

Our best adoption events had over 100 attendees and generated interest in several of our birds.

How do you create that experience in a COVID19 world?

On April 26, we put out the call for volunteers to create a one-hour presentation. It would be a series of live 10-minute foster parent spots where each spoke about their rescue birds, hosted by a single person to provide continuity.

Foster parents quickly raised their hands – and we found a volunteer talented at public speaking to serve as a host. It was a good start, and we needed more.

We needed videoconferencing technology and someone who knew how to use it at a professional level.

We needed a way to coordinate speakers behind the scenes, ensuring smooth transitions from one to the other.

We needed a way to process and leverage the video assets resulting from the effort.

And we organized and innovated all of it.

Our first and only full rehearsal was held May 16. Fifteen volunteers, broadcasting from ten separate quarantine spaces, came together for the first time with nothing more than a rough script on Google Sheets. The exercise showed that while we had a grasp of the basics, we needed more – a polished way to introduce the event; better attention to lighting and camera angles at each location; and a graceful way to end with credits, in true movie industry fashion.



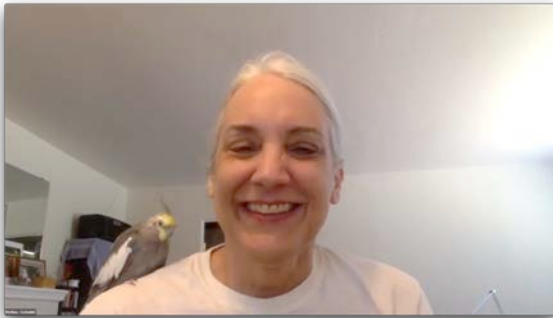
Foster volunteer Knut putting Jolie, an Indian Ringneck Parakeet, through her paces

And we did it.

We spent countless hours to meet with foster parents to review how they and their bird(s) would look online, to create a video to promote the event, to create more video to bookend the event itself, to polish the commentary, and to work around our videoconferencing license's attendee limit – all the way up to the morning of the event.

On June 6, Mickaboo aired its first Virtual Adoption Fair. You can see it [here](#); the pictures below are from the broadcast. The euphoria among the volunteers at the end of the broadcast was palpable – and deserved.

- There were over 120 attendees on the videoconference platform and Facebook who watched the entire event.
- Seventy percent of post-event survey respondents rated the event “excellent”.
- Thirty percent of survey respondents said the hour-long event was “short” or “too short”.



As a result of the Fair, three of the twelve birds involved have been adopted and another has had serious adoption inquiries.

Mickaboo will continue its Virtual Adoption Fairs into the foreseeable future. Join us at our [July Fair](#) to see the next step in the Fair's evolution!

Interested in sponsoring our Virtual Events? Contact us [here](#).

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