

Article from "The Mickaboo Bird Rescue Companion"
Published October, 2015

Featured Volunteer: Petr Kosina
By Shauna Hill



Did you know Mickaboo is on social media???? Well we are keeping up with the times and have several social media accounts. It takes a lot to keep up with posting in those accounts and responding. So our featured volunteer this time is our Social Media Coordinator, Petr Kosina. Petr took some time out of his busy schedule to sit down and tell us a little about himself. When you check us out on social media, think of our volunteer's efforts to keep those pages interesting and if you have not yet...go check out Mickaboo at your favorite social media source!

SH: Petr, tell us about yourself.

PK: I am originally from the Czech Republic. Since childhood I was fascinated by animals, especially birds. I got my first parrot (a cockatiel) when I was six. My parents didn't know much about parrots and how to tame them. The bird was in cage too big and impractical for meaningful interaction. I soon convinced my parents 'to get my bird a wife'. That's how my breeding 'period' started. After cockatiels it was rosellas, lovebirds and ringnecks. Their breeding efforts weren't always successful, but I was fascinated by finding the right conditions for my birds that would stimulate nesting and raising their chicks. Exotic bird husbandry was a very common hobby at that time (socialist period) in Czechoslovakia. I had the opportunity to learn from skilled breeders of many diverse bird species. My parents were quite tolerant and we had a big house, so apart from parrots we also provided temporary refuge to many injured birds including owls, crows, ravens, and magpies. When college came I had to give my precious birds away because I was out of town most of the week. I had started to think about their lives and feelings from a different perspective as I was finding them new homes.

Then for more than fifteen years I was almost always on the move from place to place and I couldn't have any companion birds. But parrots were always around wherever I went for study or work: monk parakeets in Valencia's (Spain) city parks, lovebirds occasionally accompanied by Ruppell's parrots who visited my northern Namibia garden daily, and various species of ringnecks when I worked on projects in the rural areas of India, Nepal and Bangladesh. Before I came to California, I spent years in Mexico. I have seen different parrot species (local and exotic) in many people's houses and being sold in streets and markets. Unfortunately, people do not know how intelligent these birds are or what their needs are. We have enough problems with abandoned and maltreated companion birds here in the US, but a lot needs to be done in Mexico and other Latin American countries where hundreds of thousands of parrots, usually captured illegally, live in miserable conditions. Consciousness is spreading very slowly ...

See some of the wonderful photos Petr has taken during his travels [here](#).

SH: Wow, what a wonderful opportunity you have had to travel to so many countries. Thank you for those beautiful pictures and bringing attention to the illegal wild parrot trade! Tell us about your current feathered or non-feathered companions that live with you.

PK: My first Mickaboo foster bird was Mac, a beautiful and clever Meyers' parrot that found a new, permanent home relatively quickly. My second foster bird, a sulfur-crested cockatoo named Koko, and a third foster bird, a Congo African Grey called Bart, came soon after and never left my home. We know very little about them, but I often think about their pre-Mickaboo lives. Koko came from nice people who clearly didn't know about the needs of birds like Koko. She was half plucked, mutilating her wing, wearing a big uncomfortable collar, very skinny and nervous. That was three years ago. She has healed well and although she still occasionally barbers, she is

a beautiful self-confident bird now. Bart was apparently found at a BART station. Her previous owners liked her, but for some reason, Bart didn't like them very much. Sometimes out of nothing Bart shouts 'Roooooger!' and laughs loudly. Who knows whether Roger was a person or dog or cat? That will forever remain Bart's secret. Both my birds are trained on a harness with leash and they love to be outside with me on calm Berkeley streets. And of course they attract a lot of attention, which they enjoy.



Whether it's a day at the beach or the a walk around the neighborhood, Petr likes to include his feathered friends!



Beautiful photos of Koko!

SH: How did you hear about Mickaboo and why did you decide to volunteer?

PK: I came across Mickaboo's website when searching the Internet for information about parrots in California. I had never imagined that there might be such a big need for an organization like Mickaboo. I had never heard about companion bird rescue organizations in Europe or elsewhere. Not that birds wouldn't be kept in unsuitable conditions, but possibly not so many birds. What makes Mickaboo special are the people who care about parrots – be it a small budgie or a greenwing macaw - all lives matter. I continue to be amazed at how so many diverse people can work together for the better welfare of parrots and other companion birds. In large part it is thanks to the great leadership team Mickaboo is blessed with.

I started with Mickaboo as a foster parent, but I soon 'failed' (meaning I adopted my two foster birds). As I had no space for other foster birds, I felt that I needed to do something more. Taking in consideration my experience with social media in nonprofit organizations, Pamela Lee [Mickaboo's Development Director] asked me to help with Mickaboo's presence on social media, which turned out to be a good match.

SH: Where does Mickaboo have these social media pages? What's involved in keeping those up and what kind of information goes on them?

PK: Social media are an important outreach tool for Mickaboo – to present profiles of birds that are in our care and waiting for their new homes, to attract more volunteers for fostering or other types of work, and indeed also to keep in touch with our many supporters and donors to inform them about upcoming events and classes. **Facebook** is also a good platform to disseminate information about appropriate companion bird care – from diet tips, through healthcare to welfare, sharing experience about behavioral issues and keeping 'the beaks busy'. Our busiest platform is Facebook. Recently we crossed a milestone of 7,000 followers and hope to have another 500 followers by Christmas. It might be of interest that posts about the San Francisco Telegraph Hill flock are usually the most visited and reposted ones. Our **Twitter** account is working up momentum – we are close to 500 followers and getting more traffic recently. We also have a profile with regularly posted bird profiles on **Google+**, but it is building up very slowly. Photos of our birds were catching a lot of attention on Instagram; however Instagram doesn't enable us to post links to our website with more information, therefore it is less helpful for our purposes.

I must say I am not alone in posting on our social media accounts. Nicol S, John G, Priya T, and Kelly S (our Mickaboo Lost & Found Coordinator) and occasionally others contribute stories, photos and responses to the many queries we get. We are also in touch with other parrot rescues across the U.S. via Facebook. We help each other with promoting posts during photo competitions and fundraising campaigns. Such campaigns are usually scheduled 3 or 4 times in a year and it is the busiest time for social media curators. But also the most rewarding time when we see how many cool people from all around hit that small button and DONATE.

* * *

Here are some links to Mickaboo's various social media pages:

Main Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/mickaboorecue>
Lost & Found Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/mickaboolostandfound>
Twitter handle: [@MickabooRescue](https://twitter.com/MickabooRescue)
Google+ <https://plus.google.com/+mickaboorecue>

Less active:

Instagram <https://instagram.com/mickaboorecue>

LinkedIn (organization) <https://www.linkedin.com/company/mickaboo-companion-bird-rescue>

