



Colorado Association of Animal Control Officers
P.O. Box 1921
Longmont, Colorado 80502

March 14th, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept the following nomination of The Gabriel Foundation for the 2011 Friends of Animal Control Award.

In January, 2010, Pueblo Animal Services responded to a complaint of numerous parrots and cockatoos in poor condition. Upon arrival, Animal Welfare Officers found over 40 live parrots and cockatoos in varying states of neglect. Officers also found the bodies of several birds that had already died. The birds had no food or water available to them. One bird was immediately seized as it appeared to be dying. No local veterinarian could be found to provide emergency treatment for the bird, so it was transported to the zoo where despite initial treatment, it died within minutes of arriving there.

Immediately we began searching for outside resources to assist us with this situation, as our agency was not equipped to handle this many large birds. We contacted Julie Murad, CEO and President, and explained the situation to her. She immediately offered the assistance of the Gabriel Foundation. Within just a few hours, she was on the way with their staff veterinarian, Noel Opitz, DVM, their Volunteer Coordinator, Gaye Thomasson and their Coordinator, Karen Vanderhyde.

They arrived on scene just as Animal Welfare Officers began executing a search and seizure warrant. There were no lights in the area where the birds were being kept and daylight was disappearing. All birds were removed from the filthy cages

by the Gabriel Foundation team members using flashlights and towels. It was a truly amazing site to see how expertly each bird was captured and handled. Without experienced handlers, parrots and cockatoos can become injured and / or cause injury. Pueblo Officers were very fortunate that expert handlers were there to help.

After removing all of the birds from the property, they were transported to our shelter for initial examination and processing. Each bird was examined by Dr. Opitz, cultures were taken, blood was drawn and the birds were photographed and identified. The processing went late into the night and was not finished until after 1:00am. Through all of it the Gabriel Foundation team not once complained. They displayed great compassion and caring for each and every bird.

The birds remained at the Pueblo shelter for two days until The Gabriel Foundation could arrange transport and housing for the "Pueblo Flock" as they called them. They worked miracles by obtaining a permit to move a temporary building in behind their retail store in the Denver area. The flock had to be housed separately from the rest of the birds housed by the Foundation.

The Gabriel Foundation staff arrived back in Pueblo in a convoy of vehicles. The birds were safely transported to Denver and moved into their own building. The birds were provided with the best of care, fresh fruits and vegetables, daily baths and constant monitoring of their health and well being. This was a far cry from the dark, cold and filthy cages they came from. Many of the macaws tested positive for PHV- Psittacid Herpes Virus, an incurable virus with unknown routes of transmission between Psittacines. This may result in the birds never being able to be fostered or adopted and remaining in the care of the Foundation for the duration of their lives.

The ongoing care and housing of these birds has placed a huge burden on the resources of the Gabriel Foundation. Even today, over a year later, they continue to care for 41 macaws and cockatoos from this situation. They have moved them into a larger facility and continue to provide exemplary care for the "Pueblo Flock". Updates about this flock can be viewed at <http://www.thegabrielfoundation.org/puebloflockhistory.html> . The assistance that the Gabriel Foundation provided in this situation was nothing less than a miracle for these birds. Without their help, the outcome of the Pueblo Flock may not have been so positive.

What is also a miracle is that the Gabriel Foundation had just assisted Aurora Animal Control with the seizure of 111 pet birds in September, 2009. That seizure resulted in over 70 birds being relinquished to the Gabriel Foundation. With such a large seizure just a few months before Pueblo's call for help- they could have easily said no when we asked for help, but they didn't. They came to

our aid without thought to the difficulties, costs or future burden on their organization.

Education is the primary focus of the Gabriel Foundation. “The Foundation improves awareness about the needs of parrots around the world including those in captivity, in retail situations, in the wholesale and retail pet trades, in breeding situations, in rescue, sanctuary and welfare organizations, and awareness of and about the birds in their indigenous locations.” They have developed a series of classes, lectures and materials to assist in educating current parrot owners and potential adopters. They also educate through:

- Informational programs and disbursement of educational materials to the public
- Authorship of articles and booklets
- Presenting at symposiums and conferences
- Coordinating with educational facilities
- Internship programs
- Volunteer Activities
- Networking

The willingness of the Gabriel Foundation to assist when asked, the professional way they provide assistance, the caring and compassion they show for the birds they help and the ongoing care and advocating for responsible pet ownership all show how the Gabriel Foundation meets and exceeds all of the criteria for the award of Friends of Animal Control.

Thank you for considering the Gabriel Foundation for the CAACO Friends of Animal Control Award. They are truly deserving of this award and many others.

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Sincerely,

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Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region