

the Landmark



Pumpkin Display
Photo credit: Pat Wilkinson

Volunteering in Your Community - Staff Member Goes to the Birds

Submitted by Peter Verschoor,
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"I've gone to the birds!" exclaims Peter Verschoor, the newly appointed Director of Administration for the Greyhaven Exotic Bird Sanctuary. Greyhaven is a registered non-profit society based in Surrey, B.C. specializing in parrot rescue, refuge and care with the primary purpose of enhancing the quality of life for companion birds through rehabilitation, compassion and the education of the general public in the care of exotic birds.

This is a volunteer position that combines Peter's experience in financial management and his love of parrots. "Being responsible for the administration of a non-profit society is both challenging and exciting" says Peter. Birds are not your typical pets, they are very intelligent and the only animals that can learn to communicate with humans through speech, although not all parrots can talk. "Parrots don't just mimic speech, they can

actually understand the context of the words they learn", says Peter. "Monty, our Indian Ringneck says 'Nite, Nite' when it's time for bed, 'Yum, Yum, is That Good' when he sees us eating and he wants some, 'Hi, How Are Ya' when Grandma is on the phone and 'Go Poo' when he's sitting on our shoulder and has the urge to go." Peter and his wife have three parrots of their own, one of which they adopted through the Greyhaven program.

Every year, hundreds of pet birds are bred in captivity in British Columbia and many end up at Greyhaven due to their owner's ill health, passing away, change in lifestyle, growing families, neglect and, in some cases, abuse.

Greyhaven seeks to offer these unfortunate birds a temporary refuge while seeking permanent loving homes for them through their adoption program. Because parrots are long-lived species, with the larger species living over 80 years, there is the added challenge

of trying to place birds in stable, long-term environments. While a suitable match is being identified, Greyhaven assumes full responsibility for the care of the parrots entering the program no matter what their condition. To enable Greyhaven to accomplish this, they need monetary support to provide the funds for veterinary check-ups, medicine, daily vitamins, pellets, fruits and vegetables, cages and toys.

Greyhaven relies exclusively on its membership base and its dedicated volunteers and donors to carry out its mandate. Greyhaven is a registered charity that provincial employees can contribute to through the PECSF Fund.

To learn more about parrots or how you can volunteer and/or make a donation to Greyhaven,

visit Greyhaven's website at <http://www.greyhaven.bc.ca/>



Peter Verschoor and his two cockatoos.