

On the Horizon



Horizon Wings Newsletter – Fall 2013

www.horizonwings.org

Welcome to Horizon Wings' semi-annual newsletter – On the Horizon. We would like to keep you informed of happenings, events, and news going on at Horizon Wings.

Our mission at Horizon Wings is to rehabilitate birds of prey for release into the wild, in order to maintain their population and to educate the community to enhance awareness of the environment. It is our hope by doing this that we reach people of all ages and create the desire in them to help preserve our natural world.

In Memory of Kisra



Kisra came to me late in the winter of 2000 after a brief stay with Kasha Breau from the Glastonbury Audubon.

She was found huddling under a bush after striking a window. Kisra had hit the window so hard her wing had to be amputated from the wrist down, leaving her unable to fly, and in need of a permanent home. With Kisra came the idea of Horizon Wings, a place where injured birds of prey would be cared for with the hope of one day being released back to the wild. It would also be a place un-releasable birds would find a permanent home, where they would become educational ambassadors in order to educate people to respect, and preserve our environment for future generations. Thus, Horizon Wings was formed in 2001.

She was our teacher- in more ways than one.

With her patience she taught us how to safely handle, and care for raptors. Kisra taught many audiences the importance of adding decals to their windows to alert birds to their presence.

Despite her injury she never lost her spirit, and delighted many people during her thirteen and a half years with us. Many birds were to follow Kisra, but as she was our first she will always hold a special place in our hearts.

Kisra passed peacefully in her sleep sometime during the night of October 26, 2013.

Written by Mary-Beth Kaeser

Wish List

Materials:

- Lumber (Plywood, 2x4s, 2x6s)
- Roofing material
- Hardware (deck screws, rafter hangers, hinges, hasps)
- Pea stone for aviary flooring
- Zip-Loc freezer bags
- Cleaning supplies (paper towels, bleach, Simple Green)
- Office supplies (Postage stamps, paper, envelopes, card stock)
- Gift cards for building supplies
- Hardware cloth
- Disposable vinyl cleaning gloves
- Small P.A. system.

Please support your local merchants whenever possible!

Welcome Sprite & Finn!

The 2013-year brought both losses and gains, and this year we gained two very special owls. Our first addition was a Saw-Whet Owl now named Sprite. Last winter on December 6th, 2012, the small owl flew into a car window in South Windsor and fell to the ground. The driver tried to act quickly to rescue her, but before he could another car drove over her and sent her tumbling down the road. Unfortunately, the little owl suffered severe neurological injuries. For almost six months her head was turned upside down and her eyes had been scraped from the dirt and salt on the road. She has permanently impaired eyesight and hearing; sadly, she is not releasable. The second addition was another little Saw-Whet Owl now named Finn. On March 30th, 2013, he was brought in from Pomfret, CT with permanent nerve damage to his right wing. Both little owls are now educational ambassadors for Horizon Wings.

Saw-Whet Owls are one of the smallest (close in size to an American Robin) and most common owls in northern North America (across the entire U.S. in winter). While common they are highly nocturnal and are seldom seen. The tiny owls have catlike faces, bright yellow eyes, and a slightly oversized heads. Their heads are round with a white face, they have dark beaks, and their feathers are brown and crème streaks. These little owls may be small, but they have plenty of attitude, and are really quite fierce. These cavity dwellers can be heard in evergreen mountain forests pretty often from January to May with a high-pitched too-too-too call.

While it is tragic that these Saw-Whet Owls can't be released, we are very happy to give them their new forever homes. They acclimated quickly and are becoming fast favorites. Keep an eye out for them at some of our educational programs and our events Earth Day and Owl Prowl!

Written by Colleen Backman



2013 Improvements



As Horizon Wings continues to grow and receive more visitors, 2013 was another year for some major improvements. First on the list was the replacement of barriers around our aviaries. The old rope barriers were starting to show their wear so it was decided to replace them this year with a more permanent and longer lasting pressure treated fence. 272 feet of fencing was installed just in time for this year's Earth Day Fair.

We would like to thank Bill Johnson, owner of Atlantic Fabricating, for donating the steel and shop time for the fabrication of the fence post holders, Matt Lefcheck for his help welding them and John and Matt from Selective Insurance for their help with the installation.

Next on the list was building an aviary to house our Barred Owl, Emrys, and our Barn Owl Silo. A 24'x24' aviary split into two sections was designed. Emrys's old aviary was moved to become a small cage for rehabilitating birds, a few trees were removed to make room

and a foundation was laid. Everything seemed to be going smoothly until injury, illness, work schedules and weather slowed things down. We are hoping this project will be completed by the time this newsletter goes to print. We would like to thank the Connecticut Ornithological Association for providing us with a grant to help fund this project.

Written by Alan Nordell

A Tribute to Jasper

We are profoundly saddened to report that this past September we had to say goodbye to Jasper, the beloved grey Eastern Screech Owl in our care. During the late summer, concern over his worsening head tilt and eye changes prompted several veterinary consultations. Sadly, his cornea ruptured as the result of the severity of his initial injury, and Jasper had to be humanely euthanized.

Jasper came to us as a young fledgling in May of 2011 from Coventry, Ct., where he was found on the ground under a pine tree, apparently the victim of a cat attack. Because of head trauma and severe eye injuries, he spent many weeks in rehabilitation, throughout which he impressed us with his feisty spirit. Although his injuries healed, he was determined to be unable to survive in the wild; but it wasn't long before this little owl was hopping up on a glove and charming everyone with his engaging personality.

He received the name “Jasper” from a fifth grade student at Griswold Elementary School, which was chosen from approximately two hundred entries. We thought “Jasper”, a gemstone, fit nicely with “Herkimer”, also a gemstone and the name of the red Eastern Screech Owl with whom he shared an aviary. While at home in his outdoor aviary, Jasper also served as an example and calming presence to several young rehabilitating screech owls before they could be released.

Since his debut in our educational programs, Jasper has touched the lives of young and old alike. We are grateful for the lessons he has taught us about overcoming adversity, and we join in honoring this courageous little owl, who has been a such a gift to us all. May your spirit soar, Jasper!

Written by Patricia Cebrelli

Thank you!

On October 12th we met a very special young man by the name of Alex Di Renza. Alex arrived at the Ellington Farmers Market to see our raptors and brought with him a project he had been working on. Alex’s mom Karolee introduced Alex to us and encouraged him to share his project with us.

Alex produced an envelope with cash along with key chains that he and his family had made and were selling to raise money for Horizon Wings. Alex received a special thank you from us during our program, joining us on stage with his favorite bird Athena the Peregrine falcon.

Abby Page is another special young person. In October on her 8th birthday Amy decided instead of gifts she wanted her guests to bring donations for the birds of Horizon Wings.

Abby and her mom Amy delivered cleaning supplies along with peanuts (Julian the raven and Corbin the crow love their peanuts!). They also collected a generous cash donation. Horizon Wings thanks these two wonderful young people and their parents for their generosity.

Written by Mary-Beth Kaeser

Horizon Wings wishes to thank the following people, organizations, and businesses for their continued support:

Selective Insurance
UConn Wildlife Society
UConn Honor Council
UConn Alpha Phi Omega
Atlantic Fabricating
Tufts Wildlife Clinic
Bolton Veterinary Hospital
Dr. Ann Bourke of Northeast Bird Clinic
Vern Ellis and Konica
Jimi Kaeser and Custom Printing
Paul Watson CPA
Connecticut Ornithological Association
Pfizer
Charles River
Phillips Fish Farm
Vaughn and Sheila Numrych, who always come through when we need them most.

And of course our wonderful friends, families, and dedicated volunteers!

Owl Prowl 2013 - A Fantastic Fall Event!

With much excitement we can say that our 3rd annual Owl Prowl fundraiser was another success! Surpassing our expectations yet again, visitors and volunteers alike have made 2013’s Owl Prowl celebration unforgettable. Between fun fall treats from our donated baked goods, to our spectacular and varied raffle items, and our fun take-away crafts for the kids, there were more than just owls to see! Visitors got to learn about owls, perhaps dissect an owl pellet or two, and meet our very own owls and hear their stories! With the addition of our Saw-Whet owl, Sprite, visitors got a chance to see 5 species of owls – 6 owls in total. It was a night to remember, and we are already looking forward to next year’s event. We hope to see everyone again!

Thank you to all the volunteers that gave their time and resources to make the night a success! Also, thank you to everyone that attended our event – your generosity and support makes our mission possible!

Written By Colleen Backman

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