

On the Horizon



Horizon Wings Newsletter – Winter 2017
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.

“The Big Build”

In March of 2017, Mary Beth Kaeser contacted volunteer, Paul McKiernan, with a big request. She needed a new aviary and not just a typical aviary like the existing ones at Horizon Wings. This was to be a BIG aviary - big enough to rehab large birds who needed space to gain strength, spread their wings and fly to prepare them for release. Mary Beth needed a building that was 16ft x 40ft, with a height of 10-12ft!

Paul agreed to take on this project and he and his wife, Laura, did some research on aviaries. First, they needed to know how to meet the specific needs: size (height, length and width), construction materials (wood, cement, mesh) and details for doors, nest box, and predator guards. The McKiernans actually went to the Ireland School of Falconry (on a recent trip to Ireland) and spoke with the owner and falconers to discuss their experiences with building aviaries and got some very good advice.



They then met with Mary Beth and ‘the project team’, Jim Wrobel, Bob Lauritsen, Jeanne Wadsworth, and Sandy Vinton, to discuss the details of construction and came up with a plan. Consideration was given to site preparation, economic use of building materials and meeting the needs of future ‘residents’ of the aviary. Large trees were removed and the site was leveled to prepare the spot for this large structure. (Horizon Wings’ property has some very large rocks!)

Construction finally started in June and over the next few months, the project team grew. Chris Wrobel, Eric Cerecedes, Matt Amico, Emily McKiernan and Bill Thorne lent their skills, time and sweat through the hot summer months and into the cool fall weather. Special thanks to Mike Bourke and his power equipment to make digging and excavation easier. Even Mary Beth used her muscles to help raise a wall! The team followed the rule of “measure twice, cut once” and can proudly boast that everything is ‘PERFECT’!

The aviary is situated to take advantage of sunlight and provides protection from harsh weather. The main area is 40 ft long to allow a large bird to fly a considerable distance to exercise and strengthen injured muscles. The roof is tall enough to accommodate eagles, large owls and hawks. In addition, there is an enclosed nest box, and 6x6 ft atrium with protected entry doors and a storage cabinet. Much consideration was given to the detail required to rehabilitate a large raptor.

In October, Horizon Wings volunteers were able to celebrate the completion of the new flight aviary with a champagne toast! Minor details still need to be taken care of (interior decorating and covering all the mesh with protective slats, for example). Those will be deferred until the new year to allow the volunteers time to focus on fall and winter projects.

It has been an honor to help Horizon Wings to expand its services and to work with such amazing people!

Written by Laura McKiernan



Owl Prowl

It was a clear, warm and windless evening. The aromas of hot cider, freshly baked cookies, cupcakes, and other delights filled the air. Young ones scurried among the lighted owl-o-lanterns and gazed with wonder at the multicolored electric owl eyes peering at them from the trees. People eagerly scanned the owl-themed raffle items, deciding where to place their tickets. It was an evening of joy and wonder: Horizon Wings 7th annual Owl Prowl.

The main attraction of the evening was, of course, the owls. Squeals of delight could be heard as groups meandered through the owl stations, visiting each of 4 different species. Some were “regulars” greeting their old friends by name, familiar with their inspiring stories of perseverance and survival. Others were experiencing the thrill of being up close to these magnificent owls for the first time.

At a special memorial station, people paid their respects to, and shared their memories of, two remarkable owls who have passed on: Herkimer, the feisty Eastern Screech Owl, and Emrys, the gentle Barred Owl, who have graced our lives for so many years and will always remain in our hearts.

At the interactive education station, children dissected regurgitated pellets of owls to discover clues to their latest meal, learned to identify the wings and talons of various owl species, and listened to their distinctive calls. Others were happily engaged in painting adorable owl sun catchers.

A group of individuals and families joined a 45-minute owl watch hike on the Nipmuck Trail behind Horizon Wings. Though it was a somewhat quiet evening, some heard what was likely an Eastern Screech Owl going about its nocturnal pursuits.

Fund raisers like the Owl Prowl are essential to the maintenance of the birds in our care and to the success of Horizon Wings’ rehabilitation and education efforts. We could not do this without the support of the entire Horizon Wings community. Many heartfelt thanks go out to all the volunteers and to all those individuals and families who continue to support us in so many ways.

Written by Patricia Cebrelli



Farewells &

Fall is a season of change, and with it brings changes at Horizon Wings. Sadly, we are saying goodbye to two of our veteran owls. Emrys, our 16-year-old Barred Owl passed peacefully in his sleep during the summer. Emrys was a great education bird but also fantastic as a foster parent. He would raise young rehab barred owlets for us and would even feed them. He helped to raise a young Barred Owl that came in this past summer. Herkimer, our red-phased Eastern Screech Owl, also passed quietly this year. Herkimer helped to train many volunteers on how to handle a raptor and in many cases, was the first bird they held. He also helped to foster many babies for us. Both of these birds were loved by all at Horizon Wings and were crowd favorites at programs.

Greetings



As we mourn these birds we are also welcoming 2 new birds to Horizon Wings. Tansy is a reddish brown Eastern Screech Owl. She came into rehabilitation at Horizon Wings 3 years ago, having been hit by a car in northeastern CT. This resulted in the loss of her right eye. She was then transferred to Wing Over Wings in Maine. After Hope Douglas, the founder/president of Wind Over Wings, retired in August of this year, Tansy was transferred back to Horizon Wings where she spends her time sharing an aviary with our grey Eastern Screech Owl, Jade. Tansy is now coming out on programs.

Greetings (continued)



Horizon Wings is also the new home for Cessna, a 2-year-old Red-shouldered Hawk. She was hit by a car in Florida, where she sustained an injury to her right wing which then resulted in permanent feather damage that made her un-releasable. Also, a resident of Wind Over Wings, she was transferred to Horizon Wings in August after Hope's retirement. Cessna now shares an aviary with Cypress and has started doing educational programs.

We look forward to many years with both of these beautiful birds at Horizon Wings. Watch for them at future programs. *Written by Jeanne Wadsworth*

Thank You

Horizon Wings has much to be thankful for this year, including our new 16x40 aviary. This project was built with donations from our many wonderful sponsors including Vaughn and Sheila Numrych, grantors: the COA, and the Hartford Audubon, along with hours of hard work by our dedicated volunteers. We cannot forget to mention the hard work of all our volunteers that keep Horizon Wings running by assisting with the daily care of aviary cleaning and maintenance, landscaping and gardening, and most importantly the daily care of our birds! We are thankful for everyone's support that not only made this project possible but helped to support the care of our educational birds as well as the injured ones that came through our doors. The dedication of our volunteers and supporters is truly what provides the wind beneath our wings! Thank you, each and every one of you!

We also wish special thanks to:

- Tufts Wildlife Clinic, Dr. Ann Bourke and Bolton Veterinary Hospital for their continuing care of our birds
- The Connecticut Ornithological Association \$500.00
- Vincent J. Coates Foundation \$2000.00
- The Hartford Audubon \$700.00
- The 1772 Foundation \$500.00

*Thank you,
Mary-Beth Kaeser*

Wish List

- 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

Please support your local merchants whenever possible!

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Fill out and mail this form to be added to our mailing list, for information, and our end-of-the-year letter, featuring a photo of a raptor. You can also help Horizon Wings by including a donation.

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