



Angel Wings

*A monthly journal for human angels who
make a positive difference in companion
birds' lives.*

August 2011
Volume 6, Issue VIII

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Angel Toys For Angels

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Check out all the
[Angel Toys for Angels](#)
now!

Happy 6th Anniversary Parrot Toy Angels!
Founded August 6, 2005



Our Anniversary Newsletter has always recounted the story of our 'beginning'. This time, we would like to tell you how, after 6 years, we are 'still here'.
There is only one reason, our AMAZING Angels.

First came the idea, then came the Angels. They made the idea possible by volunteering to make toys 'without a budget' to reimburse them for the expense of parts, or labor, or shipping.

With time and fundraisers, there was a little extra to help with the tremendous shipping costs. Our projects are all over the U.S. and Canada, and Angels are as far away as Australia. Still, the behind-the-scenes committees, the hours and hours of planning, searching the web for parts, the cutting, drilling, dyeing the wood, and packing...well, they are just not reimbursable. They come from love and commitment to birds.

Another unsung committee is our Newsletter group of dedicated Angels. They are not separate from the toy-makers, they volunteer their time in addition to that. Anyone who has ever put together a newsletter knows that you need contributors. You must learn to beg for articles, and if need be, be strong enough to threaten with the feather whip.

There are Angels who have come and gone, and we are very grateful for your stay and your invaluable contributions. Some Angels have been here since the beginning, and we thank you for staying and being part of the backbone. To the newer Angels, thank you from our hearts for joining. We hope that knowing the lives of many parrots are made happier, or at least more tolerable, will be enough to keep you with us.
Let us raise our wing tips for another 6 years and 16,000 toys and

Making a difference...one bird at a time.

So, as we celebrate our 6th Anniversary, we would like to publicly thank our Angels:

Bonnie Bruhn
Bridget Wagenbach
Catherine Lemyre
Cindy Merrick
Delta Holder
Donna Dae
Elke Davis
Gail Armstrong
George Goulding
Jan Lewis
Jan Peterson
Jennifer Duerr
Jon Huston

Kim Perez
Kristie Rodgers
Leigh Anne Stewart
Lori Nelsen
Meryl Sheridan
Nancy Goulding
Nikki Slade
Randie Cook
Rich Castano
Savannah Huston
Shelly Wing
Steve Letter
Sue Christie-Cox
Toni Fortin
Verna Brisbon-Lucey
Vicki Hartsfield
Wyspur Kallis

I would personally like to thank Ilona Peterson for always having the right words!



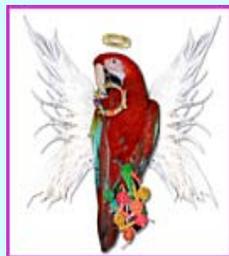
The Angels would like to give a special **THANK YOU** to our wonderful suppliers:

Aussie Bird Toys (Gail) ~~ Avian Antics Bird Toys (Shelly) ~~
Batz USA (Melissa) ~~ Big Beaks Bird Toys (Chris) ~~
Birdsnest Specialty (Candy & Jim) ~~ Birdy Boredom Busters (Tracy) ~~
Bird Toy Creations (Bob) ~~ CA Bird Nerds (Ann) ~~
Chopper's Toys (Claudia) ~~ Diamond Avian Distributors (Dr. B) ~~
For the Love of Birds (Michelle) ~~ Make Your Own Bird Toys (Deb) ~~
Rockport Roost (Elke) ~~ Rothby's (Laurie) ~~ Sproutamo (Gene) ~~
Tri-State Pets Mfg. (Kim) ~~ Twin Leather (Rich) ~~ Wyld's Wingdon (Mary)

We appreciate your support!



ANGEL ANNOUNCEMENTS
Watch for upcoming events, news, website updates, etc. here



NEW NEW

ON THE SITE:

♥ [New Items](#) ♥

**Recycling, Angel Style
Snack Sack**
By Wyspur Kallis



Shiloh enjoying her Snack Sack

Supplies you will need:
Lunch size brown paper bag
Bowl of treats

♥ [Happy Flappers](#) ♥

♥ [Updated Project Pictures](#) ♥

♥ ♥ ♥



♥ ♥ ♥

Cassie Update 2011
By her new mum, Michelle

Cassie is in her primo annual nakedness! She's a part-time plucker. Last year, she refeathered beautifully the week after we filmed her video for PTA's anniversary. She loves the guys - hubby and sons. They indulge her with play and her song and dance. She says, "pretty bird" and bounces. That's our cue to clap and she sings the "pretty bird" part while dancing. "I am a pretty bird, a pretty bird! I am a very pretty bird!" This always ends with her spreading her wings and standing tall, yelling, "Hooray!" We say, "hip, hip", and she finishes. Cassie recently surprised us with "Happy Birthday!" We sang her the song and she danced joyously. She loves to greet you with a "Hi," sits very still, "whatcha doin'?" Then she's off to play with her toys. Her favorites are making toothpicks from wood blocks, jangling a hanging collection of plastic rings and tossing a mini whiffle ball.

PTA is thrilled Cassie is thriving under Michelle's loving care.

[Click here to see Cassie thru the years](#)
[Click here to see a video of Cassie](#)

To learn more about Cassie, please read ["How PTA Was Hatched"](#),
[August 2010 Angel Wings](#)

♥ ♥ ♥

Scissors



Cut approximately 2 inches off the top of the paper bag.



Trim the 2 inch piece you cut off to approximately 1 inch wide, making one long strip.



Add your treats, gather top of bag together and tie the 1 inch strip of paper around the top. Let the fun begin!!

♥ ♥ ♥



♥ ♥ ♥

PTA COUPON

10% off anything
on the site!

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pta811

Expires 8/31/11

♥ ♥ ♥

Spotlight on Phoenix Landing

By George Goulding

Parrot Toy Angels was formed in 2005 by a small group of dedicated folks who love parrots and love to make toys to help companion birds in difficult circumstances. Our very first "project" involved one angel making and shipping 5 toys to help a Goffin's cockatoo named Cassie. Since then, there have been nearly 100 projects involving over 16,000 toys shipped to 99 facilities and individuals throughout the United States and Canada.

Since our very first newsletter, published in June of 2006, we have shared with our readers articles about the rescue organizations we have helped, as well as informative articles on nutritious food recipes for birds, tips on caring for birds, how to make bird safe toys and numerous other newsworthy articles. We have had featured articles about many species of wild and companion parrots and recently, about conservation efforts to protect wild parrots. As we have evolved over the years, we hope that our newsletter has been both entertaining and informative.

Each August, we have published a special "anniversary edition" looking back on our history and giving new readers a better picture of who we are and the work that we do. This year, we decided to turn the spotlight away from PTA for a bit and onto one of the many outstanding organizations we have helped over the years. We want to share with our readers, who may not be familiar, how some of the folks who keep the rescues and sanctuaries going make it possible for rescued parrots to find pathways to safe havens and adoptive homes. It is with great pleasure that we have chosen [Phoenix Landing](#) in Asheville, North Carolina to be our initial spotlight recipient. We chose Phoenix Landing because we feel that this organization reflects so well what every person and every organization involved in helping companion birds strives for.

The Phoenix Landing Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit all-volunteer organization. It was established to "promote and protect the welfare of parrots, especially those with an extensive lifespan." Phoenix Landing's objectives, as shown on its [web site](#), reflect its dedication to helping parrots and to conservation and education. Phoenix Landing is unique, in our opinion, because the folks at [Phoenix Landing](#) go beyond rescuing parrots and holding large numbers in aviaries. Phoenix Landing actually holds a comparatively small number of birds at its main facility just north of Asheville, North Carolina. It does have a much larger number in foster care throughout the Southeast and Mid Atlantic. As of June, Phoenix Landing had adopted out over 1,500 birds and had 251 in foster care throughout the Southeast. Those numbers reflect their hard work and continuing dedication to the objectives shown on their web site. When we visited the Phoenix Landing facility in Asheville to deliver toys in December, 2010, there were about 15 birds at that location and over 100 birds waiting to come into the program. Generally, they will not take a bird until there is room in a foster home.



Their facility near Asheville is located in the Blue Ridge Mountains on an extremely beautiful tract of land with gorgeous views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. The main facility consists of a separate residence and a well-built 2 story barn-like indoor aviary with an attached outdoor aviary. The photo on the left shows the aviary building before the outdoor aviary was added this past spring and the outdoor

aviary (right) which was built onto the front of the building. The main floor of the aviary has several cages, a small food prep area, and a huge shower room for the birds. The second floor is used for educational events and meetings. Phoenix Landing sponsors several educational events each year in Asheville and throughout the areas of North Carolina, Virginia, and other areas they serve.





Our toy delivery in December, 2010, was a special Christmas project and we were fortunate to have 2 of our members located just a 2 hour drive from Asheville in the Charlotte area. All of the toys were shipped to our Charlotte area volunteers who assembled and packed the toys in festive Christmas wrapping.

Pictures of the toys made by PTA volunteers can be viewed on the PTA web site at [Holiday 2010 Delivery](#).

Ann Brooks is co-founder and president of Phoenix Landing Foundation. We contacted Ann recently and she was gracious enough to contribute the following to this article:

"Phoenix Landing was founded in April 2000, with the intent of becoming a sanctuary organization. However, we quickly discovered that most parrots thrive best when placed with families, and we can help many more parrots through adoption and education programs. It's very hard to sustain a sanctuary, and many are not sustainable or even the best place for those parrots who enjoy or need more individualized attention. Phoenix Landing now serves parts of seven states, and our first adoption center is located in the Asheville, NC area. We have taken in well over 1900 birds, and we assume lifetime responsibility for them -- since almost all parrots will need at least one (if not many!) homes in their lifetime. Using the words "forever home" is not fair when it comes to a long-lived parrot, and each successive home should be a good one. Someday your parrot may need a new home too. Please consider adoption first!

Parrot Toy Angels, you are truly heaven-sent. Many birds, even the well loved ones, usually come to Phoenix Landing for their new homes without many resources. When possible, we like for them to have ample opportunities for enrichment and joy, to include a wide variety of toys. This includes play things of different colors, shapes, textures, lengths and complexity. For those birds that come thru the Phoenix Landing adoption center in Asheville, or to families that foster numerous birds, we are very grateful for the help of groups like the Parrot Toy Angels. Your angels are creative and generous of heart, and we could not be more appreciative for all that you do for parrots everywhere!"



Gracie's Mash
By Toni Fortin

"I like it, I like it, it's good." That's what my guys say when they start eating.

2 cups cooked brown rice
1/2 cup cooked millet

Rikki Sez

Rikki will try and answer frequently asked questions here.



Rikki, My feet hurt all the time. Please tell Mommy what to do so my feet stop hurting. Ouch!
Signed, Painful in Ohio

Dear Painful in Ohio, I know what you mean.

1/2 cup cooked wheat berries
1/2 cup cooked barley
1 cup fresh spinach
4 cups fresh turnip greens
4 cups frozen vegetables (corn,
green beans, peas, carrots)
1-1/2 cups cooked split peas
3 Tbsp. ground flax seed
1 cup raw, shelled sunflower seeds
1 heaping cup raw, shelled almonds
12 oz. bag cranberries
3 stalks celery
1 large yellow squash
1 medium zucchini

Chop all ingredients in a food processor and toss in a huge bowl. Mix well. Freezes well.

NOTE: Hardboiled eggs can be added for a slight variation.

You'll make this again and again when you see that your birdy's head is not coming out of the bowl!



♥ ♥ ♥

An avian veterinarian told my mom several years ago, to have several different sizes of perches in my cage and play stands. She can use bottle brush, sisal, cotton rope, sterilized tree branches and dowels. These perches need to be wide enough so our two talons in the front don't meet up with the ones in the back. It lets our tootsies get stretched and we can relax. After all, we stand 24/7 on our feet. Hoping your feet feel better.

♥ ♥

Rikki, I was sleeping in my cage and I saw this flash of light and then heard this big boom. I was so scared I fell off my perch and was flapping around trying to get the heck out of there. My parronts yelled at me to be quiet. Now I'm afraid to go to bed and I start to scream. What's a parrot to do?

Signed, Startled

Dear Startled, Thunderstorms are common in the summer months. They can be loud and scary, especially when you see a flash of light and hear that boom. You will always see the flash first because light travels faster than sound. The flash of light is called lightning and that big boom is thunder. It's bright, loud and scary sometimes. You should be safe inside your cage, in your room in the house. Your parronts need to understand that you can't help being frightened and they need to help comfort you until it is over. They can also move you to another place where you can't see the light or hear the thunder that scares you. I'm sure they wouldn't want you to break a feather or crack your beak from falling off your perch. Many humans are afraid of those thunderstorms also. I hope your parronts will be more understanding and helpful with the next thunderstorm.

♥ ♥

Do you have a question for Rikki?
Please send it to The Editor at
editor@parrottoyangels.org

♥ ♥ ♥

Featured Fid ~ Black Palm Cockatoo
By Kim Perez



The Black Palm Cockatoo (*Probosciger aterrimus*) is the largest member of the cockatoo family, which explains why they are also known as the Goliath Cockatoo. They measure in at 22 - 24" in length, with some reportedly measuring 28" long, and weigh between 900 - 1200 grams. They are a stunning all smoky black bird with the exception of the bare skin patches on each side of their face which are a beautiful pink to red in color. This color changes with the bird's emotions. They have a high, beautiful crest which is almost always on display as opposed to only being raised when excited or frightened, like other cockatoos. Their beak is unique in design in that the upper and lower mandibles do not completely meet and line up. This design allows them to hold large nuts in the space of the upper mandible and use the lower mandible to open the shell and scoop the nut out.

The Black Palm Cockatoo is native to New Guinea and the northernmost tip of Australia. They are estimated to live in the wild from 40 - 60 years. In captivity, however, they are given a longer life span estimate at 90 years. The benefit of their long life span is that they have one of the lowest reproductive rates, regardless of in the wild or in captivity. The female lays only one egg which is incubated for 30 - 35 days. The baby fledges around 80 days.

Like other cockatoos, the Black Palm requires a lot of attention and stimulation. The owner of one of these magnificent birds must devote themselves to appropriate training and care in order to prevent the destructive behaviors commonly seen in cockatoos. Toys and wood branches are the basic requirement for their constant chewing needs. Training to disallow the bird establishing dominance over family members is necessary. And, as with almost all cockatoos, the owners must learn what vocalizations are appropriate and how to discourage inappropriate screaming.

A cockatoo owner is a special kind of person, one who can provide adequate training, adequate stimulation, affection and tolerance.

Editor's Note:

The (wild) Palm Cocokatoos (*P.a. aterrimus*, *P.a. goliath*, *P.a. stenolophus*, *P.a. macgillivrayi*) are listed as "least concern" by IUCN with a population estimated at 30,000.



Constrictive Toe Syndrome

By Angel Savannah

I learned of this condition years before I had seen it in person. This is when a portion of a parrot's toe swells up and must be removed. It looks like there must be threads wrapped around the toe, creating tight bands around the toe and then the end of the toe swells up because the blood cannot flow out of it. The swollen end goes through a phase where it turns colors and looks as though it is filled with infection. This seems to be just the look, not really what is going on. The inside of this area is just dried blood.

This is more prevalent in baby birds than adults. Have you seen what this does to a baby parrot? I have seen it in person when job shadowing my favorite avian vet. A pet store employee brought in a 6 week old Congo African Grey with a grotesquely swollen toe. Because the bird was so young, it could not be anesthetized and the vet just clipped off that swollen portion of the baby's toe. The baby appeared to not have felt a thing. He didn't even flinch. Before the vet could cauterize the toe, it had already stopped bleeding. The constriction actually pinches off the blood supply, so there isn't much bleeding.

Most avian specialists believe that this is caused by insufficient humidity in the nest box, the brooder, or both. I have read a lot on the subject and every source says exactly that. There is no proof or evidence that this is the cause - it is merely the belief. If there is no cure, can it be prevented? Or are these birds predisposed to have this condition? I have posed those questions to avian veterinarians and they had no answers. However, they all advised to maintain reasonable humidity levels when raising babies to try to ward this off.

There is also nothing you can do once your bird has it. It does not correct itself or go away. The toe will constrict tighter and continue to swell and the swollen area will need to be removed or it will eventually just fall off. Once this swollen portion of the toe is removed or falls off by itself, it is all behind you. This condition will not affect the bird again. It simply looks as though the end of a toe had been nipped off in the nest box. Now, when you think about the birds you have seen who are missing a toenail, you will wonder if they had constrictive toe syndrome - as will I.

Photos are in order from youngest to oldest - same African Grey baby.



Toy Safety in the Dollar Store

By Kim Perez

One of the least expensive ways to buy toy parts for our birds is in the dollar stores. Most people start in the toy section to see what they can find. Whiffle balls are a great starter, along with plastic boomerangs and traffic cones. You may also find plastic dice and wood or plastic dominoes. Many

Bird Keeping Tip

By Kim Perez

If you happen to have one of the very few feathered neat freaks, you may not know this, but birds can be a little on the messy side. To avoid having to scrub the walls, I hang either plastic drop

use puzzle pieces and playing cards on their toys.

If you go to the craft section, you will find varying sizes of grapevine wreaths and maybe some bamboo poles. They also usually stock craft popsicle sticks, wood and plastic beads, paper raffia and some great wicker baskets.

The other section I frequent is the housewares section. Wooden spoons, plastic cookie cutters, baby spoons and cups and a vast array of plastic containers find their way into my cart.

The plastic containers can be play area bases, or you can attach chain to them and have hanging baskets that birds can play in or keep toys in.

The main issue I have dealt with in using products from the dollar stores is how to know what is safe. Over the years, I have sent in parts to have tested. I have also bought my own lead test kits to use at home. The only things that have come up positive in the lead tests are things with painted parts - not all of them, but a few. Rubber ducks were an issue with their painted eyes. Some painted beads were also an issue. So when I look for parts at the dollar stores, I simply refrain from purchasing anything painted.

You also should not purchase any ropes from the dollar stores for use in bird toys. I have not found any that would be safe for use in toys. Although plastic ropes would not be toxic, the ones I have found fray so easily that they would cause long lengths of rope that a bird could easily wrap around his toes or neck. Any of the cotton ropes I have seen there are bleached and/or have an unsafe weave to them. These will definitely cause toe strangulation problems.

If there are any parts that you are unsure of, the best thing to do is ask someone who might know or you can contact the manufacturer of the product directly. I have personally called many of them. Tell them that you intend for your parrot to chew on the product and ask them if there would be any safety or toxicity hazard in that. They are happy to tell you.

With all of the parts you can find at the dollar stores, simply add in some Paulie Rope or leather lace and some hardware and you will be able to make quite an assortment of safe toys for your birds.



cloths or shower curtains on the walls. The drop cloths are inexpensive and found in the paint section of any department or hardware store. Shower curtains can be a little pricier, but you can find a variety of scenes to brighten up any room.



Paulie & Joey with drop cloth on walls

Imagine how cute this would look behind your cages:



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Conservation News
By George Goulding

Orange-Fronted Conures Seized

Television station KGUN in Nogales, Arizona reported on June 18, 2011 that U.S. Customs and border agents seized a shipment of Orange-Fronted Conures being smuggled across the border from Mexico. Although only 2 Conures were involved, the seizure is notable because it does illustrate the ongoing efforts of U.S. border agents to prevent illegally traded birds from Mexico from entering the United States. These birds were taken by the USDA Veterinary Services for quarantine and ultimate return to the wild.

Krafty Keas

According to an article appearing on the 3 News (New Zealand) web site on June 4, 2011, Austrian (yes, Austrian) researchers have now discovered that the playful, pesty, wild Kea, one of New Zealand's rarest parrots, can use tools to accomplish various tasks. The researchers found that the Kea can use a piece of wood to dig out a peanut hidden in a cube. Keas do not use tools in the wild and what made this more remarkable was that during the experiment, the subject Keas were shown which of several cubes contained the peanut and skillfully chose only the correct cube. It should be noted that the Kea is not one of the bird species that are genetic tool users, meaning it is a learned behavior.

Editor's note: The Kea is found in generally mountainous areas of New Zealand (only) and is listed as Vulnerable by IUCN. At one time, it was the target of extermination efforts in some areas because of damage to farm crops and property. The world population is around 5,000 according to World Parrot Trust.

Western Ground Parrot Update

We featured an article on the Western Ground Parrot earlier this year noting its diminishing population and threatened status in the wild. This parrot is listed by IUCN as critically endangered and there are only approximately 140 individuals remaining in the wild at last count. All are found only in Australia near Esperance in Fitzgerald River and in the Cape Arid National Park. One of the threats to this rare parrot is feral cats and efforts have now been under way to eliminate the feral cat populations in areas where the Western Ground Parrot is found. Australia's Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) began eliminating feral cats using poison baits that are toxic to the cats, but not to the birds. Unfortunately, although this program is having the desired effect on the feral cat population, another more potent threat emerged. Bush fires destroyed about 1,000 acres of the Cape Arid N.P. habitat earlier this year and officials have yet to determine how those fires affected the Western Ground Parrot population. According to DEC, a recent survey indicated that the bush fires may have further reduced the population.

Sources: Perthnow.com; Esperanceexpress.com

Bonaire Seizure

On July 1, 2011 officials on the island of Bonaire seized 112 parrots from an illegal trader. The Yellow Shouldered Amazons and Brown Throated Conures, both native to Bonaire, were believed to be bound for Curacao to be sold as pets. Most of the birds were chicks and are now being cared for by the conservation group Echo Bonaire. When seized, the birds were in very bad condition and most required one on one care from the Echo staff. Echo's immediate goal is to save as many birds as possible and ultimately release all back to the wild. Echo is a World Parrot Trust *Flyfree* partner working to protect the Yellow Shouldered Amazon. There are only 800 of these birds left on Bonaire, but the total wild population is estimated to be as high as 10,000 over its range which includes the Caribbean and part of Venezuela. It is listed as Vulnerable by IUCN.

Editor's note: *FlyFree* is a new initiative from the World Parrot Trust to create awareness and support for its decade-long effort to end the trade in wild caught birds.

Sources: World Parrot Trust; Echo Bonaire

The Royal Spix's Fix's?

The Spix's Macaw (*Cyanopsitta spixii*) is one of the rarest parrots in the world. There are only between 76 and 120 remaining (depending on source) and all of those are in captivity. They are presumed extinct in the wild, and listed as critically endangered according to IUCN. Originally found only in parts of Brazil, it may surprise one to learn that 55 of these remaining birds are in one location - the Middle Eastern kingdom of Qatar, which is one of the Arab Emirates located on the Arabian Peninsula. According to a July 11, 2011 press release from UPI.com, the birds are located in a fenced 1.6 square mile private wildlife compound (Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation Center) in Qatar, about 20 miles west of Doha. This facility is owned by Sheik Saoud bin Mohammed bin Ali al-Thani, a member of the royal family and a devoted conservationist. The facility is breeding the Spix's Macaw in an attempt to eventually reintroduce it to the wild in Brazil.

World Parrot Trust has stated that the future of the species rests primarily with the owners of the Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation Center in Qatar and has indicated their willingness to lend their resources to support the Sheik's effort. WPT has also expressed some concern about the close relationships of many of the remaining birds (many are siblings).

You can read more about the Al Wabra Wildlife Center and their efforts to save the Spix's Macaw along with photos of the Sheik and these beautiful birds at <http://awwp.alwabra.com>

Sources: UPI.com, World Parrot Trust



We All Need Angels in our Lives

Become a Volunteer!

Have you ever had a time in your life when you needed an angel riding on your shoulder? Have you ever thought that a bird might need the same? How about the generous, big-hearted humans who help birds in need, many times going into debt to save one helpless bird. These are the real Angels:

Won't you open your heart and become a Parrot Toy Angel?

As a Parrot Toy Angel, you will be asked to contribute on a monthly basis to help support our ongoing work. Contributions include making toys, donating parts or supplies or sending a small monetary donation to help with the costs of toymaking materials and shipping.



Have these stories got your toymaking talons twitching?
Do you want to help make a difference in somebirdie's life?
Come join our ranks! We have angels from all different backgrounds
and walks of life, and there's always room for another generous heart.

Apply for membership:

[Angel Application](#)



Help Us Help the Birds...

Our Angels generously donate their time making toys for our needy feathered friends. Quality toy-making supplies are expensive and shipping charges are outrageous. That's why we need your support to help keep us going. Every dollar amount, large or small, is gratefully accepted. Donations are tax deductible.

We also welcome donations of toymaking parts and supplies. A receipt will be issued for every donation. Contact us at [Parrot Toy Info](#) for further information on donating.



All donations tax deductible.



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Do you have a question or comment? Perhaps you have an idea for our newsletter, or simply want to share a story on how an Angel has touched your life. Drop us a line at: editor@parrottoyangels.org



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