

On the Horizon



Horizon Wings Newsletter – Summer 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.

Earth Day 2017

On April 22, Horizon Wings hosted its 7th annual Earth Day celebration. Despite the inclement weather, over 300 people joined in the fun and festivities. The grounds were alive with activity and the sounds of children's squeals of delight. There was something for everyone during this day-long extravaganza.

In addition to experiencing two educational programs featuring our magnificent eagles, Atka, Skywalker, and Chrysos, participants were also treated to a variety of other wildlife species. Gerri Griswold provided entertainment along with education with her porcupine and big Brown Bat, Grumpy. Annie and Mike Bourke showed their Soay Sheep, and Christine's Critters presented reptiles and a falconry demonstration.



This year Pat Morris, a local artist and Horizon Wings volunteer, created two unique photography props. Children enjoyed taking turns having their photos taken, sticking their heads through the cut outs of painted wooden likenesses of our very own Sprite, a Northern Saw-Whet, and Herkimer, an Eastern Screech. Kasha Breau led the children's craft in which they created hummingbird "nests" with jelly bean eggs.



We would like to thank all those who have helped make this Earth Day celebration a success. This is an important fundraiser for Horizon Wings. Proceeds from this event help us carry out our mission of education, rehabilitation, and the daily needs of the raptors in our care.

Written by Patricia Cebrelli



Walk With Me: A Morning Feeding at Horizon Wings

I would like to give you a glimpse into a very important part of the day at Horizon Wings; the morning feeding. Saying “Good morning” to all of the birds is a delightful chore! It starts in the basement where the food is carefully weighed and portioned out for each bird into marked containers. The corvids (crows and raven) have a wide variety of foods each day, so they get a new food dish prepared each morning. When everyone’s containers have been filled, they go into the feeding bucket and out we go!

I am greeted immediately with the kestrel, Finn, trilling his song, and Cypress, the Red-shouldered Hawk, calling me. This morning even Dakota, the Red-tailed Hawk, is vocalizing and Sky, the Golden Eagle adds his song to the orchestra. There are ravens and crows that come to visit and Julian, Corbin, and Madison are busy calling them. What a wonderful symphony!

The first aviaries I come to are the Kestrels. Finn is all fluffed out on his perch trilling away and watches me put his food on his platform. Fianna is waiting in the aviary next to his and I put a glove on to feed her, as she likes to come to the glove and take her food out of my hand. As I leave the kestrel aviaries I notice that Finn is now trilling with a mouse in his mouth! They make me smile....

Next is Sprite, the Northern Saw-whet owl. She has some pine boughs in her aviary fastened so that they are like a pine tree. She is always sitting up in the top branch and has earned my nickname for her, “Pinecone”. She makes herself as tall as possible for camouflage and does not move as I come in and place her food near her nestbox.

Stevie-Ray, the Black Vulture is next in line, and although I give him bigger food, I always try to have some tiny mice to put in his Kong to give him the challenge of retrieving them. He is always anxious for my arrival and meets me at the door.



The next aviary is Athena’s, the Peregrine Falcon. She is always waiting for me, looking in the direction from which she knows I will come, flapping her wings anxiously. After I put her food on her platform she flies right to it---a hungry bird! It is so satisfying to feed a bird who wants it immediately. Although she is hungry, she is very polite and waits until I have placed it there. Now it is time to feed Oscar, the Great Horned Owl. He watches every move I make and I imagine what he may be thinking. He does not move as I bring his food. After all, he is nocturnal!

The Red-tailed Hawks, Patrick and Dakota, are next in line; their aviary always needs a little cleaning so I do that. They watch me, and many times one of them is eating not long after it is placed there. They don’t vocalize while I am in their aviary, but sing quite a bit after I leave. Next is Julian, the Raven. He likes to come out of his aviary and hop about before he is fed. He stays in the area in which he is comfortable, that which is close to his aviary, and spends that time gathering sticks and other things. He also loves to hop over to see the crows. He looks up at Madison and says, “What’s up?” and Madison answers, “Hello”. Their conversation uses human words but is also appropriate for the situation; their intelligence amazes me. After some time out and about, Julian goes back into his aviary where I bring his food. He then takes a bath in his fresh water and preens himself, then goes back up on his perch to call for the lady raven that visits him.

The crows, Corbin and Madison, like to put their food and toys into their water, so feeding them also involves changing their water. They are always anxious for their food and are not shy about going for it! They are so social that they are always fun to be with.

Apollo and Rocket, the Broad-winged Hawks, are next and they vocalize their excitement. I place their food in two separate places and they wait for me to leave the aviary before they tackle it; they too are hungry and have a system where they each get what they need.

Dante, the Turkey Vulture is patiently awaiting his food, and like the Broad-wings, waits for me to leave his aviary before he eats. Sky and Chrysos, the Golden Eagles, are next to Dante, and they are watching me through the slats as I feed Dante. Then I come into their

aviary and Chrysos flies over to the perch where she likes to eat, so her food I put on that perch. Sky's food goes on a platform that has a ramp so that he can walk up to get to it. He doesn't go to it right away, but watches Chrysos eat and sings to her. Across from them, Atka, the Bald Eagle is watching. As I walk over to his aviary he talks to me and I do my best to talk back to him. He has some toys in his aviary and I spend a little time playing with them as he watches. Then I show him the fish I have for him and the look in his eyes tells me that is exactly what he wants!

Cypress, the Red-shouldered Hawk, is next. He likes to talk, as well, even as I place his food. He's just such a very vocal guy! Next to Cypress' aviary is Nomad, the Peregrine Falcon. Her nickname is "Nomi" and she meets me at the door! I carefully walk to her feeding platform and hold her food in my gloved hand; she comes up and takes it from me. The peregrines want their food immediately! I always take an extra moment or two with Nomi; the artist in me admires her beauty. Next is Jade, the Screech Owl. She stays in her nestbox during the day, as she is the most nocturnal of the owls at Horizon Wings. I place her food in her aviary, but I also always check on her in her nestbox to know she is okay. She responds to this gesture with a clacking that means, "Go away!"; and so I do....

Emrys and Forrest, the Barred Owls, are last-but-not-least in my feeding order today. They are sitting together on their perch watching me as I enter their aviary. Emrys thinks about moving, but I assure him with very slow, steady movement that I am no threat and he can stay right where he is and he does just that. They watch me leave their food which they will eat later and I shower them with praise as I leave the aviary. Time to wash dishes for tomorrow's feeding.....I'm so glad I could share this with you!

Written by Pat Morris

Skywalker Makes Official Debut

Nearly 100 people joined us at the Audubon Center of Pomfret in March to see Skywalker make his official debut as an educational ambassador with Horizon Wings. As you may remember, Skywalker is not new to education, having done over 3000 programs with Hope Douglas, of Wind Over Wings in Maine. Since returning to Connecticut in October, he has been sharing his aviary again with Chrysos after a two-year separation.

Sky's debut began with a wonderful presentation from DEEP wildlife biologist, Brian Hess, about eagles in Connecticut. The audience had a chance to learn many facts about the eagles and see many photos. They were also able to ask Brian many questions in this interesting presentation.

Next, the audience was able to see our Bald Eagle, Atka. We shared his story and took questions. Then, Chrysos, our female Golden Eagle, came out and was discussed. Finally, the star of the day made his much-anticipated appearance and the audience was able to hear the story of this amazing 25-year-old eagle. Everyone was treated to the unique and rare experience of being able to see both a female and male Golden Eagle out on glove!

Thank you to everyone who came out to support this wonderful event. Special thanks to the Aududon Center of Pomfret for hosting our event, Brian Hess for his great presentation, Hope Douglas for trusting us to be Sky and Chrysos' forever homes and all of our wonderful volunteers. This event was a huge success. We look forward to Sky traveling the surrounding area again, teaching young and old his remarkable story.

Written by Jeanne Wadsworth



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

Thank you to Dave Stevens for his generous donation of a PA system!

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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