

## Gabriel Foundation Called In To Assist In Rescue Of 42 Parrots

**Parrots rescued from condemned home suffering from malnutrition and disease are now in the Gabriel Foundation's care.**

*By Jessica Pineda*

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Courtesy The Gabriel Foundation Approximately 40 parrots, consisting mostly of blue-and-gold macaws, were rescued from a Pueblo, Colorado home and placed in the care of the Gabriel Foundation.

Approximately 40 parrots were rescued from a Pueblo, Colorado home on Wednesday, January 21, 2010. Four birds have died since animal control officers were notified of the birds, and two parrots were removed by the owner's relatives. One bird taken to the Pueblo Zoo for treatment has died.

Neighbors had notified animal control on January 18, concerned about what they believed were only five macaws. Officers went to the home and found 45 large parrots, dogs, cats and more than 100 pigeons at the residence. The Pueblo Community Animal Shelter noted there was no water provided for the parrots, and brought fresh fruit and bird pellets. A warrant was issued and by January 21, officers moved in to remove the birds. Three birds had died by the time officers entered the home.

Director Donna Straub, of the Pueblo Community Animal Shelter, contacted the Gabriel Foundation of Denver, Colorado, on January 21, to ask the organization to provide housing and medical care for the birds. The Gabriel Foundation team, consisting of: Julie Murad, President and founder; Karen Vanderhyde, A.H.T., Staff Veterinarian; Noel Optiz, DVM; and Gaye Thomasson, Volunteer Coordinator, entered the house on January 21 to immediately remove the birds as per the search and seizure warrant.

The Gabriel Foundation released a statement saying, "Emergency medical treatment and evaluations were done to determine their condition. Many of the birds showed severe signs of the herpes virus Papilloma, the majority had blocked nares filled with dried debris, feather stress bars and discoloration. Quite a few of the parrots were missing digits and one blue-and-gold macaw was missing its left foot. Most of the cages were undersized and many of the macaws had no tail feathers due to breakage. The cages had exposed nails and wire, and many had to be cut into in order to free the parrots."

According to Dr. Noel Optiz, the birds suffered from malnutrition, as well.

According to Murad, "Many of the birds had prolapses. The birds are really compromised." She was unsure if the birds would make it. Some birds need surgery, and others need more time to stabilize before any blood work can be done.

The owner is an elderly man in his 80s and suffering from dementia. He had not been seen for several days and neighbors and police were unsure if he lived in the home, built in the 1920s. The health department condemned the home on January 18.

Relatives of the owner have 35 days to post bond for the birds, which have been relinquished to the foundation. The cost is \$10 a day per bird for boarding plus \$250 per bird for medical care. A total of 42 birds are in the Gabriel Foundations care, consisting of 39 macaws — mostly blue & golds and some green wings — and three cockatoos: two Moluccans and a bare eye.

As of Friday, January 22, 2010, the birds are in the Pueblo Community Animal Shelter, waiting for transport. According to Murad, the Gabriel Foundation is currently waiting for a permit to install a separate holding facility at their Denver downtown office to house the birds. The birds will be taken to the Gabriel Foundation's Elizabeth location for temporary holding. The Elizabeth location is 100 miles south of the foundation's Denver location.

"Once we get [the birds] stabilized," said Murad, "We'll go from there."

For more information, contact The Gabriel Foundation at 303-629-5900 or go to [www.thegabrielfoundation.org](http://www.thegabrielfoundation.org)



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