

I first encountered Apollo in February 2015 at a fundraiser for Soarin' Hawk. When he was brought out by Pam, I knew right then and there that I had to become involved with this organization for two reasons: First, I believed in their mission and, second, I had to be near this owl and perhaps hold him someday! Well, I started just a couple of weeks after that event, and when I walked into Apollo's mew for the first time, my heart just melted. He had such a presence, and what a personality! As time went on, I loved to just spend time in his pen talking with him and getting to know him. I soon found out that he was "all talk" and was really a timid owl. He would always puff himself up and clack as if to say, "Hey, here I am! Do not ignore me." When you started to talk with him those puffed up feathers would immediately lie down and he would just listen and look at you. Sometimes, if you were lucky, he would hoot for you!

Later that fall I held him on my arm for the first time, and what a feeling that was! The power of those talons was just incredible! He was heavier than I expected and, I have to say, I was a little intimidated at first. But we soon became the best of friends, and I held him whenever I could. There are a few of us handlers that always wanted to hold Apollo so sharing him was always challenging but that is because we all loved him so!! When I heard the news of his passing I was devastated and immediately went to hold him one last time. The pain in my heart is still very raw and going into his mew is quite difficult. I feel so badly for Zeus. I am sure he is missing his buddy so very much.

You will be forever in my heart, Apollo. Until we meet again at that rainbow bridge, fly high! – Mary Koher