



JOHNNY

THE ALMOST
TRUE STORY
OF AN
EXTRAORDINARY SEAGULL



TIM HARVEY

Dedicated to all the kind people in the world.

Illustrated by: Shulin Raja, Amirkasra Shakoori, and Renny Song
Images courtesy of Freepik.com

This is the story of a special bird whom we have named "Johnny"

The bird is a real bird, the school is a real school.

In fact it is Fanning School in Brea, California.

The dark haired man is the principal of that school,

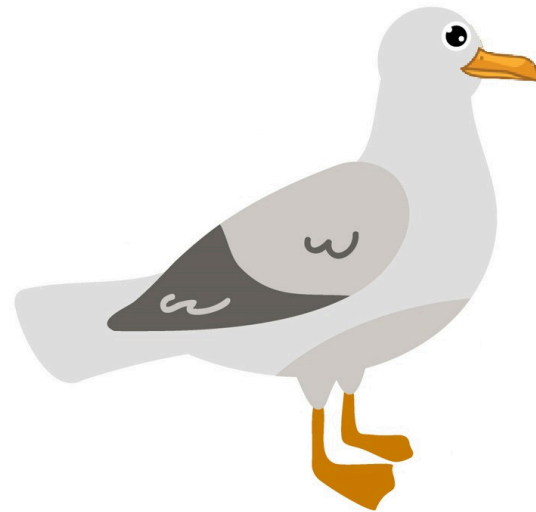
Mr. Tim Harvey

The nice lady at the bird farm is one of the
caretakers at the Magnolia Bird Farm in Anaheim,
California, and the infirmary was once called
Lion Country Safari

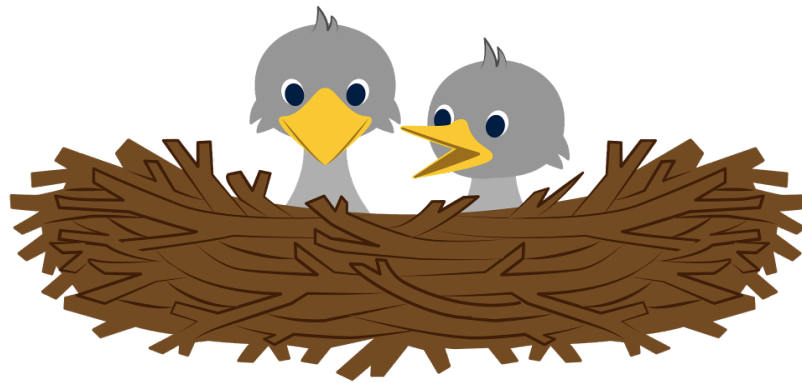
These people are real people. Johnny was moved
by the veterinarian to both real locations.
But the life of the seagull is pure fiction.

Leta Terrell

Fanning School Secretary



Mrs. Seagull prepared a perfect nest
for her chicks. She was so proud when
they hatched.

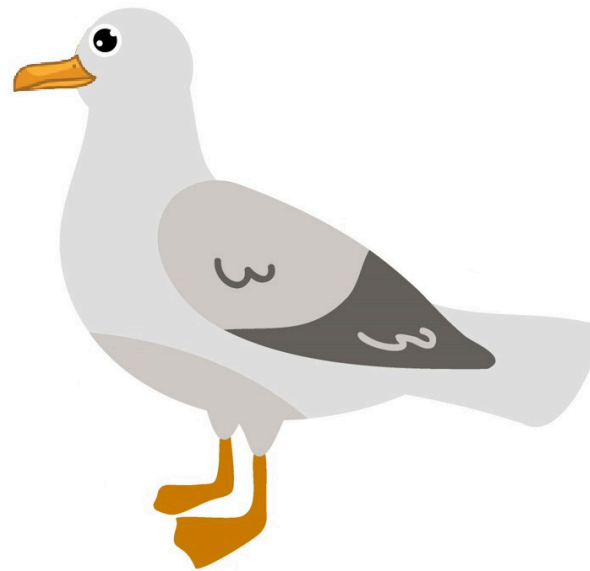


But one little guy was different. He was adventurous.

He waddled his way to the side of the nest and looked the world over.

His mother remembered the famous adventurer, JLS. (Jonathan Livingston Seagull).

"I will call you Johnny," she said.



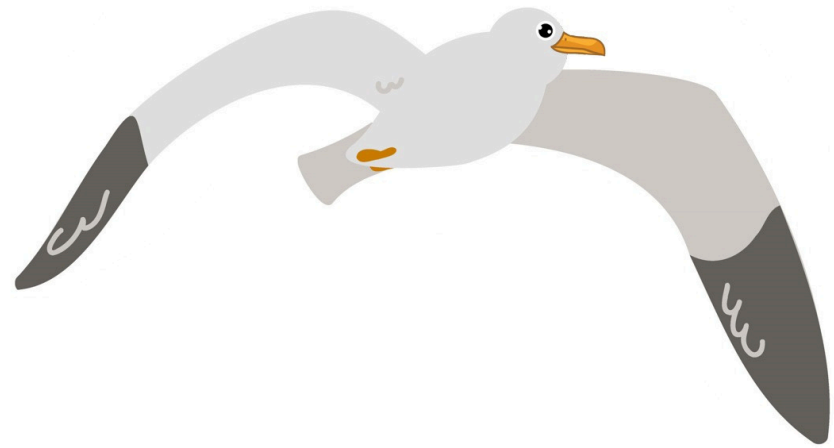
Johnny practiced his flying skills day
and night. He longed to see the world.
He longed to fly.

He practiced and practiced and one
day he flew!
What a wing span he had!
He soared above everything, even the
clouds.



Sometimes he flew with other birds.
It was hard, but fun.

What stories he had to tell when he got home!



One day Johnny followed a flock of
birds a long, long way.
They didn't stop for food. He was tired
and hungry.

He spotted the Fanning School
playground.
He remembered the many good things
children toss in the trash.



Should he wait until the children went
inside or take a chance to fill his
hungry tummy?
His tummy told him what to do.

He dipped down one beautiful wing
and headed for the trash.



What a feast!

Sandwiches, apples, cookies and
cakes.

Johnny snatched a piece of chicken
and boy, was it good!



Then, so fast he hardly knew what happened, someone threw a rock and hit his wing, his beautiful wing.

He tried to lift it, but nothing happened.

"Call the principal!" a little girl cried.
"Call Mr. Harvey!"

Out came a tall, dark haired man. He had a kind voice.

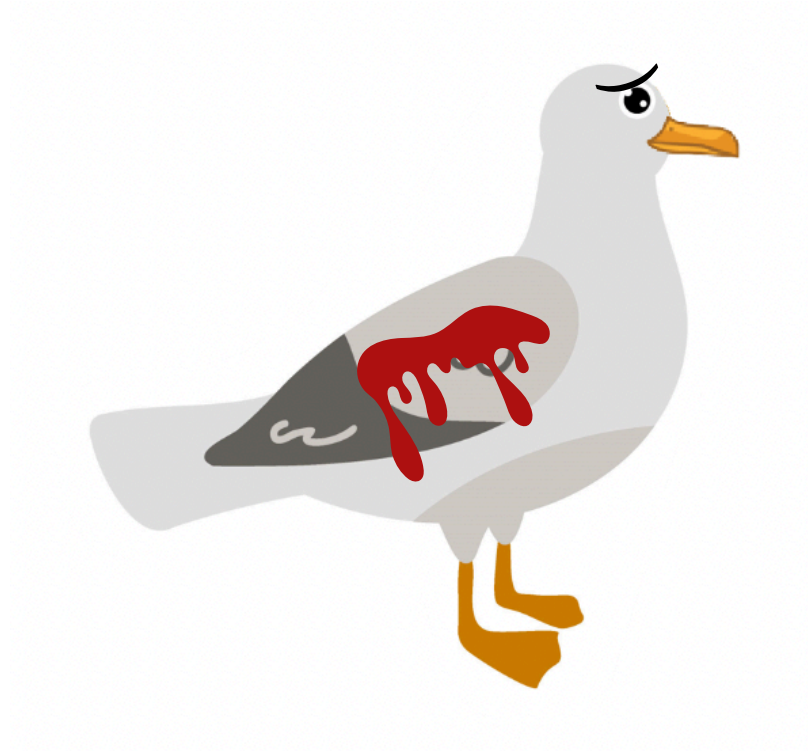
He gently lifted Johnny and wrapped him in a towel to protect his wing.



When they stopped, Johnny heard familiar sounds. Did he hear birds? Was he home?

"This is a special place, a bird hospital, where you can get help," Mr. Harvey told Johnny.

"They will take care of you here."



Dr. Susan, a kind lady, lifted Johnny from his box and checked his wing.

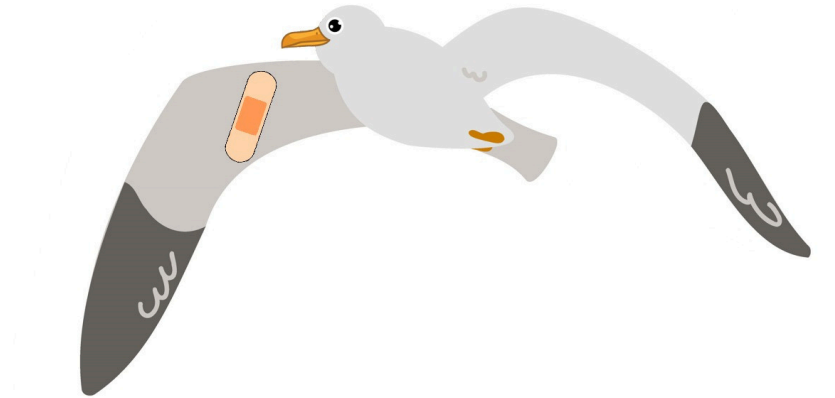
"I can help him," she said.

"We will do our best to help him to fly again."

She gently wrapped Johnny's wing and gave him medication.

Johnny slept.

He had wonderful dreams of flying again and being at home with his family.

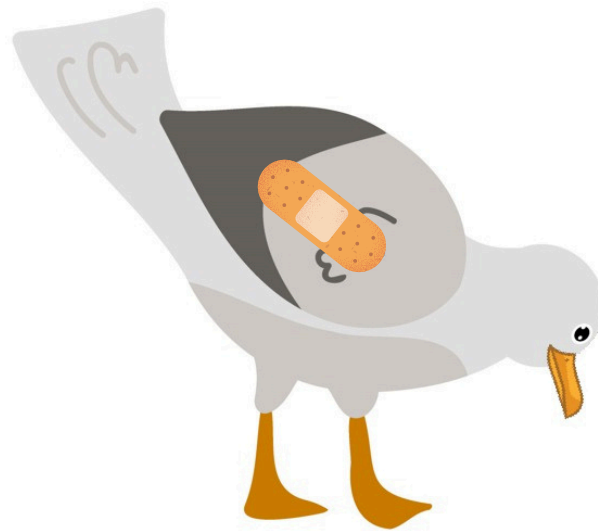


Dr. Susan took great care of Johnny.

Each week she would call Mr. Harvey so he or the secretary, Leta, could let the students at Fanning School know how Johnny was progressing.

The students enjoyed positive updates and he became kind of the school pet.

All the students were happy when they heard the announcement that Johnny was getting better.

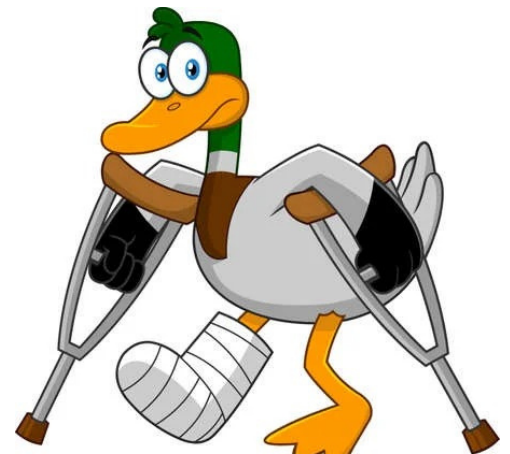
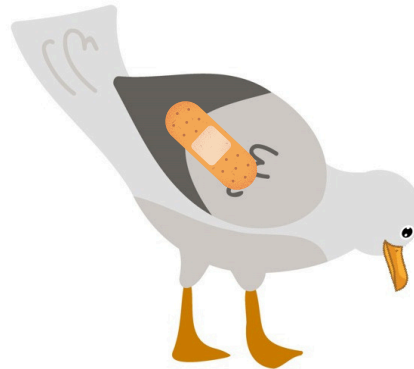


After several weeks, Dr. Susan took Johnny to a special place called a Bird Infirmary.

It was part of this outdoor zoo called Lion Country Safari. It was a place where injured birds could get better.

Some birds could not fly and others couldn't even hop. Johnny began helping others.

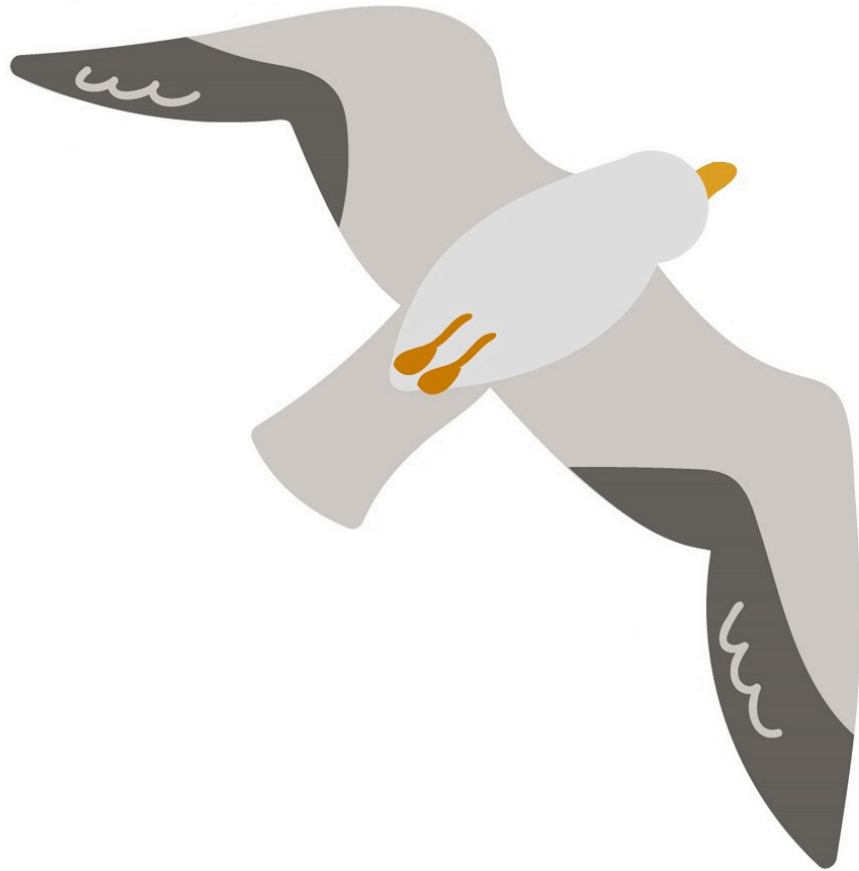
He taught birds to hop and he even helped birds fly again.



One day Johnny's mother decided to visit her friends at the Infirmary.

She learned about a special seagull who was helping other wounded Birds.

She saw him and her heart soared. This was her pride and joy. This was her Johnny!



Johnny and his mother were thrilled to find each other.

From that day on, Johnny's mother and other members of his family and friends visited Johnny often.

Johnny became Dr. Susan's best bird assistant.

Dr. Susan called Fanning School to let the students know of Johnny's success and then all the students celebrated together!



Being struck on his beautiful wing
might have been the end for an
ordinary seagull.

But Johnny was no ordinary seagull!



From that day on, Johnny enjoyed the freedom of flying with his friends and family.

Johnny became famous for his kindness and skills, helping other birds recover from their injuries and fly again.



Now retired, after forty rewarding years in education, I recently rediscovered a delightful story of an incident that took place while I was an elementary principal. The story was written in 1985 by Leta Terrell, our beloved school secretary, to remind me, the year she retired, of one of many memorable experiences we had over the years we worked together. The story is based on a real incident that took place on our elementary school campus. The story was written from the seagull's perspective.

The real-life story started on the playground. I was supervising during lunch recess when a large group of students brought me a seagull that had been hit on the wing by a rock thrown by a student. We wrapped the bird in a towel and took him to the Magnolia Bird Sanctuary located at a neighboring town. The attendant promised me she would keep us updated on the bird's progress. During our morning announcements, I would give the students a progress report.

The bird was checked by a new veterinarian and he was told by the Magnolia Bird Sanctuary staff that all the students at Fanning School were following the seagull's progress. It turns out that our seagull's new doctor was also a veterinarian for an outdoor zoo called Lion Country Safari. The new doctor took the seagull to a location at the zoo designed for wounded animals. The whole school celebrated at this unique happy ending to our seagull adventure.

We hope you enjoyed our story.

Tim Harvey