

# The Next Generation.....

## Making Money With Cockatiels

by Samantha D. Gillis (age nine)  
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**I**t all started with a Cockatiel named Stella Luna. My mom had lots of birds, but none of them were really mine. So I begged my mom to buy me a bird. She said okay, if I could prove to her that I was responsible. She said I would have to prove it by helping handfeed some baby Kakarikis.

Well I did it and when our bird club had its Bird Mart in June 1996, my mom bought me an unweaned baby Cockatiel. I named her after my favorite book *Stella Luna*.

I fed her and she grew up a pretty bird. I took her to school when I was in the first grade and showed my class and told them how to take care of a Cockatiel. Stella was a star!!!

When Stella was grown up my mom told me she was a girl and we then went out to buy her a husband. We found a really good looking bird and moved Stella and him out into an outdoor flight. It wasn't very long before my mom told me Stella had laid her first egg. She laid six eggs and hatched out and raised five beautiful babies. Well, I didn't sell any of her babies.

Mom bought some other unrelated birds to go with Stella's babies and before we knew it we had a bunch of Cockatiels. I have also gone back to the building after our club's Bird Mart is over to catch up loose birds that escaped from cages. One time we went back for five days in a row to catch up all the birds left in the building. I got two Cockatiels that way.

We never handfeed our Cockatiels unless the parents don't feed them.

I have many colors now and my mom said I would have to start selling some of them because the flight was

getting too crowded. She took me to the local Pet Shop and she made me ask the owner if he would like to buy my Cockatiels. He said yes. So three days later I went out to the flight with a net and carrier to catch up the babies. My mom said "They are your birds and you need to learn to catch them up and handle this."

I can tell the babies from the parents. The babies have shorter tails. I caught up five birds and we took them to Newberry's Pet Shop. Steve, the owner, paid me. I made \$65.00 that first time and \$48.00 the next time. I have made a deal with him to bring him all my baby Cockatiels for him to buy. Sometimes the store manager, Dan Richard, buys my birds and he teases me a lot. I tease him back.

I will spend the money on more seed for them. They eat a lot! I have to feed them fresh seed and wheat bread everyday. Some days they get corn or peas and apples and egg food my mom makes for the birds. I also give my birds fresh cool water every day, sometimes twice if it is hot.

Stella Luna is still tame, but she does-

n't want me to hold her anymore. She use to do homework with me everyday after school. A couple of times she put chew marks on my homework, but I didn't get in trouble. She has had many more babies and I will be taking hers and the other birds' babies to the pet shop soon. I think everyone should try to breed Cockatiels. They are pretty, fun, and good parents and you can sell them pretty fast.

I have a lot of fun with birds and hope you have fun too. A Cockatiel is the best bird for beginners. I wish more kids would breed birds. I'd like to talk to any kids who read this article. Send me an email letter at:

< secretgarden@thegrid.net > 

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*Samantha Gillis is nine years old and has been involved in birds all of her life—first with her grandfather watching and feeding wild birds, then with her mother caring for aviary birds. Gillis has done handfed birds (from a very early age), helped build aviaries, cleaned cages, and now breeds Cockatiels. Young Gillis attends the local bird club regularly and is the youngest active member. She has met avicultural notables including Rosemary Low, Gene Hall, and Dale Thompson.*



Sam transacting business with Dan Richard, manager of Newberry's Pet Store.

Photo by Leslie J. Gillis.