

# Goose family leaves Metrotown

BY JANAYA FULLER-EVANS, BURNABY NOW JUNE 3, 2011



Fly away home: A family of geese took up temporary residence near the parking area at Metropolis at Metrotown, but they've moved on.

**Photograph by:** Contributed by Carrie McLaren, SPECIAL TO THE BURNABY NOW

A gaggle of geese had shoppers gawking as the parents taught three goslings how to fly in the parking lot of Metropolis at Metrotown.

The Burnaby NOW was alerted about the family by Carrie McLaren, Burnaby-New Westminster Green Party candidate in the recent federal election.

"We were worried about this goose family, as they were only a few feet away from being hit by cars at the Metrotown/Zellers parkade," McLaren wrote in an email.

The group of three or four people tried to keep the geese from running into traffic on May 10, and also stopped traffic to let the family cross the street to the fountain in front of Metrotower 2, she said.

"According to one security person, this family had three babies yesterday," McLaren added. "Now only one - (and) it was limping - is left."

At one point the parents decided on a quick jump into the fountain and the poor little one couldn't get out until one lady was able to fish him out from under the waterfall," she added.

The group tried to contact the Burnaby branch of the B.C. SPCA and the Wildlife Rescue Association of B.C., but both were closed for the evening, she said.

However, Brenda Longland, community and public relations manager for Metropolis at Metrotown, said staff was told by the wildlife association to watch out for the geese but not to move or touch them.

"We had a nest of geese in our parking area," she confirmed in a phone interview, saying the geese came to staff's attention when the parents tried to teach the goslings to fly, and one fell.

After calling the association, security was told not to interfere, as it is the season for geese to train their offspring, and touching or moving the animals can have repercussions, she said.

So instead, security would watch over the geese whenever they were spotted.

"The geese would toddle up, showing up in strange locations, and security would guard them," Longland said, adding a call would go out to the guards when the geese were spotted on the property.

However, so far as she knows, the geese left when the nesting period was over, she said.

They have not been spotted on the property recently, according to Longland, and no bodies have been found.

The wildlife association confirmed it had received calls from the public about the geese, but the family was not brought in.

"It's not always easy to tell the difference between a bird learning to fly and a bird struggling for survival," Crystal Simmons, care centre liaison for the association, recently told the NOW.

Simmons provided tips on identifying baby birds in distress in a NOW article last week.

Nestlings are young birds, either naked or partially feathered, and are unable to stand or stay warm and extremely vulnerable outside the nest.

If the bird has no apparent injuries, and the nest is easily accessible, pick the bird up gently and return it to the nest.

If you can find no sign of the nest or parents, call Wildlife Rescue.

Fledglings - slightly older, and fully covered in feathers - should be left alone if a parent is nearby.

If a bird is limping or dragging a wing, or if you see blood, open wounds or any other obvious injury, call the Wildlife Rescue helpline at 604-526-7275.