

THE HUMMINGBIRD RESCUE

By William Hoggan

In rescuing a hummingbird, we learned how to help the spiritually weak.

At Young Women camp in the mountains of California, girls and leaders waited for dinner in an A-frame lodge. As we waited, some girls noticed something under a table. A hummingbird had somehow flown into the lodge, couldn't find its way out, and finally collapsed on the floor. They asked me to help.

The bird looked near death, its beak wrapped with cobwebs and its feathers askew. I gently put it into a cup and carried it outside. I hoped it would recover on its own but realistically expected it to go the way of all nature. However, as I tipped the cup to gently deposit the hummingbird onto the ground, in mid-slide the hummingbird grasped the rim of the cup with its tiny talons. I held the cup upright, the bird perched on the rim, its eyes closed. Now what?

One leader, seeing the bird, mixed a solution of sugar and water and brought it to me. First I gently brushed the cobwebs from the needle-sharp beak. The bird didn't flinch. Then I dipped a finger in the sugar water and held a drop to the tip of the beak. The drop disappeared, even though the bird didn't move. Perhaps

the liquid seeped into the beak? I dipped my finger again and held it to the bird's beak. This time a tiny tongue, thinner than a hair, licked my fingertip.

For 10 or 15 minutes, the hummingbird drank one drop after another. By then, several other leaders had gathered around me, and I offered them a try at feeding it.

Suddenly the bird opened its eyes, and its ruffled feathers fell instantly into place.

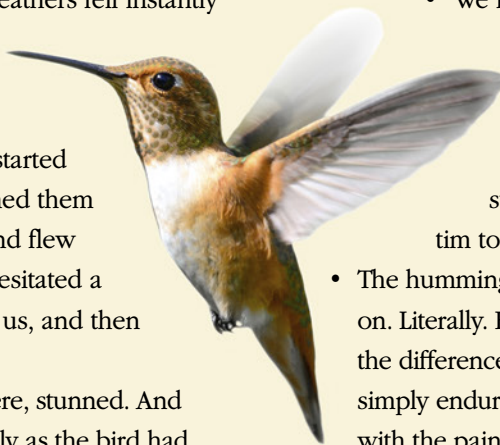
After drinking a couple more drops, it started its wings, warmed them for a second, and flew straight up. It hesitated a moment above us, and then shot away.

We stood there, stunned. And then, as suddenly as the bird had flown away, the spiritual lessons came:

- Often, as we reach out to the less active, our efforts don't seem to make a difference. But the love we offer does slip into the cracks—like the nectar into the unmoving beak of the

hummingbird—providing spiritual nutrition that one day may produce results.

- At times we can't go further on our own; we need a kind, caring hand up.
- Sometimes people get tangled in the cobwebs of sin or addiction and need the help of a friend or priesthood leader and the Savior's assistance to get free.
 - We need regular spiritual nutrition in order to endure, else we run out of spiritual strength and fall victim to evil influences.
- The hummingbird kept hanging on. Literally. Hanging on made all the difference. At times, we must simply endure in faith as we deal with the painful and sometimes horrible challenges of life.



The New Testament says that the Master is aware of even the sparrow's fall (see Matthew 10:29–31). I now know He is also aware of a hummingbird's fall. And He is aware of you. ■

The author lives in California, USA.