



Be Like Water, a film to be released in 2022, documents the story of Nichole Doane's 60-foot fall while canyoneering at Wallace Falls and her life saving rescue by SCVSAR. The film's goal is to raise funds and awareness for Search and Rescue. Learn more at www.belikewaterfilm.com or [@belikewaterfilm](https://twitter.com/belikewaterfilm).

November 2021

Dear Friends of Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue,

Below are the words from Nichole Doane, as she describes her life saving rescue by SCVSAR:

"I'm writing this more than 4 years after my rescue, and I am still humbled by the memory of how safe and cared for I felt during the most tenuous circumstance of my life.

After taking a 60-foot fall at Wallace Falls that should have been unsurvivable, I found myself in an even more challenging situation as I struggled to survive. Being a nurse, my first instinct after hitting the ground was to assess my injuries. I recognized right away that I couldn't feel my legs. For hours, my broken body lay draped over boulders and tree branches unable to move even the slightest bit for fear of worsening a spinal cord injury. In and out of consciousness, I lay fighting for every breath, not knowing if I would survive. The other members of the party were nurses as well and the battle in their mind was just as real. Knowing that help was so far away, they struggled to decide if they should wake me again, causing more pain, or let me peacefully fade into a quiet death. Just when I was beginning to think I may not have much more fight left in me, the most unforgettable sound of helicopter blades was heard in the distance. My friends began to jump up and down, shouting "They're here! We're being rescued!" But the challenging part had just begun.

The 30 plus years of experience the pilot and crew chief had were put to the test as they attempted to float their helicopter within very tight margins strategically avoiding trees and a waterfall to successfully insert the other members of the rescue team 100 feet down onto the ledge I landed on. After this unbelievable feat was a success, there were countless things that needed to be assessed, including the rugged terrain, the safety or risk to the SAR members, the numerous obstacles, and potentialities for achieving a successful rescue, the mind state and skill set of the ambulatory members of the party, and of course me, the patient. The two team members on the ground

expertly ran through all of this quickly while making it all look so easy. The most remarkable aspect to me, as the patient, was that in this tenuous situation where multiple dangerous elements are being assessed simultaneously and every moment counts, they both took the time to look me in the eye, to connect with me and make me feel safe and well cared for. In the scariest moment of my life, these two previous strangers scooped me up and made me feel as if nothing in the world was more important than my physical and emotional well-being. I remember laying stunned by their kindness, looking up into their faces, spelling their last names over and over which were written on their helmets, desperate to remember for later so that I could thank them.

My broken body was gently placed into a basket, and I was hauled 100 feet up and safely secured into the helicopter by the crew chief who was every bit as kind and attentive as the other members of the team. I went on to the local trauma center and became a patient in the hospital I work in, while the other members of the party spent many more terrifying hours climbing out of the canyon in the dark.

My friends tell stories of a sea of headlamps they could see lining the forest as they climbed out. They speak of how held and supported they felt knowing that SAR was staying to ensure that they got out safely as well. SAR ground crews had built hand lines to aid in their final ascent out, and they were waiting right at the point where the party could exit the water to provide escort. There was one SAR volunteer assigned to each of the members of the party so that individual attention could be paid to each member of the party as they walked out, processing the grueling day for the first time. It was after midnight when the party finally reached the parking lot, only to be met by another SAR volunteer in a food truck waiting for them with hot coffee and warm food. My friends say they could taste the love mixed into every cup!

It is now 4 years after my accident, and I can't write this without tears of gratitude streaming down my cheeks. I know I owe a debt that can never be repaid. All I can do now is try every day to earn what was selflessly given to me. 'So that others may live' is not just a motto to these heroes; it's a way of life. There is no more professional outfit out there; there is no more inspiring group of individuals; there is no more deserving organization. Period. My 20 years of experience in healthcare provides deep insight into just how much time, energy, effort and resources are needed to be adequately prepared to perform at this level of expertise. Please help these amazing men and women continue to access the resources they need to stay at the top of their game for every person, every time."

It is your donations that power this 100% volunteer, non-profit organization to save lives like Nichole's. There has been a large increase in the number of rescue missions in 2020 and 2021, but donations have been significantly lower than in previous years. We need your help.

Right now, we humbly ask that you give what you can to help us continue to be there for anyone whose day out in nature goes terribly wrong. In a time where so many need help, please choose to make a difference by joining our SCVSAR supporters. Our supporters and volunteers are a team that makes real our motto "that others may live". **Please contribute today.**

Sincerely,



Heidi McKeon, Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue President

P.S.- Stay tuned for the up-and-coming release of a documentary film on Nichole's rescue called *Be Like Water*, where you can see these amazing SAR volunteers in action. Learn more at www.belikewaterfilm.com or [@belikewaterfilm](https://www.instagram.com/belikewaterfilm).



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