



*Where the Rope Ends* documents the story of Nichole Doane's 2017 fall while canyoneering at Wallace Falls and her life saving rescue by SCVSAR. One of the primary goals of the film is to raise awareness and funds for Search and Rescue. Learn more at [wheretheropeends.com](http://wheretheropeends.com) or [@wheretheropeends](https://twitter.com/wheretheropeends).

November 2023

**Dear Friends of Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue,**

Below are the words of Nichole Doane, as she reflects on her life saving rescue by SCVSAR:

"Imagine what it might be like to find yourself suddenly clinging to a rope, a terrifying distance from the ground, knowing that this potentially fatal fall you're about to experience is unavoidable. The skin tears off your hand as you slip farther down the rope, clinging to every second of your final moments. Eventually, no matter how much you want to, your hands can no longer grip, and your body is now hurling out of control toward the ground. For a moment you're falling and still falling, the ground rushing in, the wind in your hair, your stomach in your throat, and then the impact. The impact and then the pain, the loss of breath, the fear, the shock of surviving this fall and the terrible chore of figuring out how to survive long enough to make it out of this mess. Imagine what it might be like to lay there on that forest floor, hour after hour, fading in and out of consciousness, unaware if this is how and where your life will end...

I was rescued by SCVSAR back in 2017 and in one moment, my life forever changed, but not in the way one might imagine. I was rappelling down a waterfall when the worst thing imaginable happened, leaving me free-falling toward what I could only perceive as my final moment. By some miracle, I survived a 60-foot fall to find myself on a ledge halfway down a 265-foot waterfall. My only hope at that point was to find a highly skilled team with access to advanced equipment and training who were also willing and able to accept the risk themselves to attempt my rescue.

As I lay on that forest floor, draped over boulders, struggling to survive, I had no idea if a team like that even existed. It seemed impossible. The world would need to have not one, but many selfless individuals willing to devote constant commitment to training and excellence. It would also need an army of supporters ensuring these individuals have access to the equipment and resources they need to do their work. If that wasn't enough to ask for, all of this would need to be ready and available for me right now, at this very moment. It seemed ridiculous to think that was even possible. How many miracles could one person hope for and witness in one day?

I'll tell you, that's exactly what it felt like when I saw that search and rescue helicopter hovering over me for the first time: it felt like a miracle. When a volunteer rappelled 100 feet down out of that helicopter, risking his life to save me, I was overwhelmed with awe. Then another volunteer did the same to give me

pain medication after enduring hours of suffering.

Imagine what it might be like to begin to realize that this may not actually be the end of your life, to know that you may, in fact, get to hug your loved ones once again. You can't put a price on that. There is no equivalent, no deed or trade of equal measure... The gift these volunteers gave me is a priceless debt that will never fully be repaid. I thought to myself, if I survive this, I will aspire to be worthy of this gift. The injuries from the fall and the long recovery impacted the next few years of my life, but it was the experience of meeting these incredible search and rescue volunteers that forever changed it.

Search and Rescue provides those of us who cherish our time outdoors with a precious 'safety net' should the unexpected happen. It pains me to say that, before my accident, this resource was unnoticed and underappreciated because, like many other people, I was certain the person needing help would never be me.

Post-accident, SCVSAR is far more than a 'safety net' to me. This organization and every person who contributes represents humanity at its finest, pulling together to achieve the impossible, resulting in nothing short of a miracle. By sharing my accident, in writing and in film, I hope to shine a light on these heroes. Even if you don't believe you will ever need to be rescued, supporting Search and Rescue helps ensure that we will continue to live in a world where miracle-making exists, one that makes our world a much better place."

### **What would be your response if your life were saved, or the life of a loved one?**

Many who love the outdoors can financially support those who will drop everything they are doing to help others in need. Someday, the mission could very well be for you or for someone that you love, as it was for Nichole, and as it was for our own family when our son and his friends were rescued by SCVSAR, back in 2008, off of Three Fingers Mountain.

**It is your donations that power this 100% volunteer, non-profit organization to save lives.** 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 outside goes terribly wrong.** In a time when 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 consider making a tax-deductible donation to SCVSAR ([scvsar.org/donate](http://scvsar.org/donate)), this year, and consider donating every year. Know that your dollars are going to a great cause; know that your funds would be carefully and thoughtfully allocated to where they are most needed; and know that you are making a tremendous difference. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,



Heidi McKeon  
Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue President

PS - On October 7th, we had our first showing in Snohomish County of *Where the Rope Ends*, a full-length documentary about Nichole's accident and recovery, highlighting SCVSAR's life-saving rescue mission. Stay tuned for information regarding a SCVSAR fundraising event and movie screening this coming spring. Learn more about the movie at [wheretheropeends.com](http://wheretheropeends.com) or [@wheretheropeends](https://twitter.com/wheretheropeends).



### **SNOHOMISH COUNTY VOLUNTEER SEARCH AND RESCUE**

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