

# The BEAR FACTS

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## Southpaw Rescue Fighting for the Underdogs of Our Mountain Community

by Veronica Hampton, Founder of Southpaw Rescue

When I founded Southpaw Rescue in 2019, I never imagined how many lives this little mountain rescue would touch. What started with one dog—a boxer from our local community adopted by my parents, Chris and Bob—has grown into nearly 100 dogs saved in just 6 years.



Chris, Bob, and Southpaw's first dog, Dixie.  
Photo by Veronica Hampton

Before Southpaw, I spent over a decade in animal rescue and nonprofit work. I served on the board of an Orange County rescue beginning in 2008 and later as Director of Operations for the Ian Somerhalder Foundation, where I created and managed a medical emergency grant program, which helped more than 2,300 wild and domestic animals nationwide. That experience built the foundation for what Southpaw Rescue is today.

People often ask about our name, Southpaw, it comes from my love of Rocky Balboa—the left-handed Philadelphia fighter. It's a reminder that even the underdog can win. Our motto, Because every dog deserves a fighting chance, says it all.

Two Southpaw rescues stand out as proof of that fight. Last year, Southpaw spent 6 days on Morton

Peak Trail earning the trust of two pregnant Labs who had been abandoned at the top of the mountain. Scott Graham-Howard and I took shifts monitoring a single trap, and we waited patiently day and night, when finally it all paid off. Both dogs were safely rescued, and with the help of partner rescues, each puppy found a home. You can even spot one of the mamas and two of the pups walking around Forest Falls or Angelus Oaks.

More recently, four dogs were dumped in our picnic area. Before we could step in, animal control was called, but we made sure none were euthanized. Thanks to the help of locals Christine Ranney Wellman and Suzanne Serdahely, all four dogs were safely transported and cared for.



Founder Veronica after rescuing Kaiya.  
Photo by Dave Druck

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## From the Editor

by Pat Daniels

### Brief Recap of 2025 Bitter/Sweet Memories



Annually, the events and festivities each season throughout our mountain communities are filled with enjoyment and awe due to the hard work and participation from community members, local neighbors, and visitors or out-of-towners. This is all of which makes each event and community activity successful. There are sweet memories of this past Spring's annual Chili Cook-off; the Summer Emergency Preparedness Festival in Angelus Oaks—choked full of fun activities; and the Forest Falls Firefighter's grreat Labor Day Dinner with unforgettably delicious food!!! There was a terrific celebration of Gillmore Real Estate's 100 years; the annual Haunt on the Hill was super fun; and our annual Fire Station 99 holiday parade is amazing and luminous! This parade always brings back delightful childhood memories. But then, there are the bitter memories with the sweet. My heart goes out to our neighbors who lost their homes, lives, belongings, and pets in the horrific mudslides. Kudos to the mountain community teams Fire Stations 98 and 99, the Search and Rescue teams, CALTRANS, Angelus Oaks Rescue teams, and San Bernardino County, et al., who helped to clear the alarming mud-filled homes and roads. They rescued folks and animals who were trapped, and they cleared the paths along Valley of the Falls Dr. and CA 38. I look forward to more of the sweet memories than the bitter ones in our mountain communities during 2026. I pray that you all will take care of yourselves and each other. Please continue to spread the love by staying connected with our mountain communities—and reach out by continuing to share your wonderful stories. I'd like to read more of VFCCI member, Nick Shades' humor... So, don't be shy, I know there is an interesting tale or some fun and useful information you want to share—go ahead and send it to me via email at: [bfeditor2025@gmail.com](mailto:bfeditor2025@gmail.com) Keep warm, Pat

## Southpaw Rescue: continued

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Two have already been adopted, and two are still looking for their forever homes, which is a reminder that Southpaw Rescue still needs the support of our community.

Southpaw Rescue is 100% foster-based and volunteer-run. We depend on this community—on the people who open their homes to foster and help cover veterinary bills to keep saving dogs.

We're also incredibly fortunate to have the support of corporate sponsors such as Fallsdale Gift Shop, who donates 10% of all sales to help cover veterinary costs, and Inabu Churro and Spoofdawg, who generously provide food and supplies. Their support allows us to focus our resources on fostering and veterinary care, and we are deeply grateful for their commitment to our mission.



### SOUTHPAW RESCUE

*Because every dog deserves a fighting chance*



Reserve Deputy Michael Guirgus with Southpaw's Hemsworth.  
Photo by Dogma Pet Portraits

This year, Southpaw Rescue was selected as the only San Bernardino County rescue featured in the upcoming 2026 First Responder/Rescue Dog Calendar, earning second place for the cover. It's a small recognition which means a lot for a small rescue fighting hard for local dogs.

At Southpaw Rescue, we'll always fight for the underdogs—because every dog deserves a fighting chance.

For more information on fostering, adopting, or donating, visit [www.southpawrescue.com](http://www.southpawrescue.com).

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