



Scout Leader Sick

February 16, 2008
Saddle Junction, San Jacinto Mountains
2008-008

by Glenn Henderson

After rolling on a search in Thermal Saturday morning, then spending the rest of the day doing technical training with the team at Big Rocks we all finally got home about 5:30 p.m. At 8 p.m. we received another call for a scoutmaster at the Saddle above Idyllwild that was having difficulty with diabetes. He had only recently been diagnosed with the disease and had started on new medications the same day. There was a group of scout leaders that were preparing themselves for snow and ice camping and were headed out when scout leader, Wally, became disoriented and could not continue. They did the right thing by setting up tents and sent two down the Devils Slide trail to get help. When we got the call our helicopters were not available but they were trying to track down a pilot that was cleared to fly in the mountains at night. In the meantime the team was activated and preparing for a long night of hiking up the trail and assessing whether to carry Wally out or keep him in the tent until morning. While we were enroute we got a call from Gwenda Yates that Tony Bowen and Kevin Boss were at the heliport and ready to fly. They requested two RMRU members to assist. Kevin Walker and I were the closest and responded within 20 minutes. After discussing how we were going to try to get this mission done we took off to find our scout leaders. We found them almost immediately at the saddle but could not find a place to land so Tony flew us to Skunk Cabbage Meadow and dropped us off there. We were expecting soft snow but when we got out it was hard packed enough that we could walk on top of it with out any problems. Kevin and I hiked the half-mile to the saddle where we found Wally and friends waiting for us. Wally was feeling much better but we were afraid to leave him there so we put him into a "screamer suit" where Tony and Kevin hoisted him up into the helicopter. They flew Wally to Keenwild Fire base where an ambulance was waiting. They then flew back to Skunk Cabbage Meadow and picked up Kevin and myself and flew the 11-minute flight back to Hemet/Ryan air base thus ending another long RMRU day at midnight. Our great THANK YOU to Tony and Kevin. Without their skill flying in the mountains we might still be carrying Wally out instead of me sitting down writing this report on Sunday morning.

RMRU is a volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other teams with search and rescue efforts in other counties. Each member purchases their own equipment and takes time off work, without compensation, to participate in search and rescue missions. Team equipment is purchased from contributions from the community. We are a non-profit organization and are funded by [donations](#) from people like you.

