

What comes next for the people and pets who survived  
California's Camp Fire?



**I**MAGINE: A tsunami of fire is bearing down on your home and you have minutes to grab what you love and run. You gather your pets and not much else because the flames are already at your door. Within hours, your home and daily routine, your livelihood and sense of normalcy, are completely erased.

The fast-moving Camp Fire that swept through Butte County on November 8, 2018, was the most destructive wildfire in California history. It displaced 50,000 people and destroyed nearly 20,000 structures. News outlets showed shell-shocked survivors in shelters, tents and cars, many clutching their companion animals for comfort. If ever there was an occasion to witness the glue and the function of the human-animal bond, this was it.

It's been called a humanitarian crisis for good reason. Large relief agencies have been overwhelmed by the size of the need, so to fill in the gaps, small nonprofits,

churches and individuals have been stepping in with critical help. Some have adopted families from Facebook pages built to help evacuees find what they need to survive. Almost every imaginable necessity is being gathered and dispersed. Gas cards, food, work boots, tools. A shoulder to cry on. An advocate to help navigate a thousand details and decisions.

Housing has been the hardest need to meet. Some with resources left the area to start over, but three months later, thousands are still in cars, leaky trailers, hotel rooms or overcrowded houses. Needless to say, those with dogs face additional obstacles.

The families in these photos have been receiving help through BadRap's Keep'em Home program, which was designed to support dog owners during times of crisis. They represent just the tip of the iceberg of need. Whether this community recovers may depend on how much support the outside world is willing and able to extend.



## Leslie Parsons and Buster: Long-Distance Assistance

A North Dakota dog owner offered her trailer as a gift to a survivor. It made the trip in one piece and when it arrived, recipient Les Parsons said it felt like a battleship had pulled up just as he was at his lowest. Buster, who joined Les just a few months before the fire, is an optimistic

co-pilot who seems to think that life is a big camping adventure. Les hopes to rebuild on his property and talks about the flowers he's planted, the art piece he wants to finish and the dome he wants to build. We hope he and Buster can celebrate new growth and happier days there together.





## The Lanes: Rising to the Occasion

Walt and Sheila Lane have been fighting their insurance company almost daily since the fire destroyed their neighborhood. In a strange twist of fate, their house is still standing, but moving back to a fire-damaged property comes with big problems, health risks among them. In light of Walt's recent battle with lung cancer, it's not a

risk they're willing to take. The energetic Loki has had a hard time adjusting to hotel life and grinds out his anxiety in a local park, chasing endless tennis balls. One day, one battle, one tennis ball at a time. Their stamina in the face of this impossible situation is the stuff of triathletes.



## The Englant Family: Better Together

Service dog Addie and Meeko, a medical alert dog for his owner, each suffered high anxiety after the fire scattered their family of six. Tony Englant said that weeks of waiting in a hotel felt “like quicksand.” He worried constantly about how to get everybody under one roof again. Thankfully, compassionate landlords were

moved by their story and welcomed them all. The Englands’ lives have been plagued with profound loss, so finding a comfortable home to start the healing process has been critical. When we stopped by for this photo, the dogs had just begun playing again since before the fire. Their joy was contagious.



#### HOW TO HELP

NeedHub. This Facebook group alerts helpers to Camp Fire evacuees' most pressing needs. [facebook.com/groups/NeedHub](https://facebook.com/groups/NeedHub)

Paradise Fire Adopt a Family. Learn how you can make an impact by adopting a family or an individual and helping them locate resources and game-plan their recovery. [paradisefire-adoptafamily.com](https://paradisefire-adoptafamily.com)

Or, visit BadRap online to find out how you can assist dog owners who've been displaced by the Camp Fire. [badrap.org](https://badrap.org)



## Tammy Mezera: Creating Community

Tammy and her pup Nel had just relocated from Illinois when the Camp Fire hit. A Walmart parking lot became an impromptu campground for her and scores of shell-shocked survivors. “Without Nel, I would have been lost. We face the long haul, the fire, the rebuilding and new friendships together. It’s one step at a time in the rebuilding

process. It’s not for the faint of heart. No individual alone can maneuver through this type of crisis.” She’s built a small community since the fire, people who help buffer the stress of meeting day-to-day challenges. A small leaky trailer provides temporary shelter while she ponders her next step.