

## Everyone Has a Story: Police officer champions lab rescue

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**Leslie Houston, of Brant Beach in Long Beach Township, bought her black Labrador retriever, Remington, from a breeder but found her yellow lab, Ranger, through a rescue group.**

Most people on Long Beach Island know **Leslie Houston** as the deputy police chief for Long Beach Township. While the 51-year-old Brant Beach resident can certainly be tough when it comes to enforcing the law, she admittedly has a soft spot: Labrador retrievers.

About five years ago, Houston's two black labs died, leaving a major void in her life. She bought another black lab puppy, Remington, from a breeder and began to look for another when retired Long Beach Township Borough Clerk **Judy Howard**, of Beach Haven, suggested that Houston rescue a dog.

After looking up **Labs4Rescue**, Houston became attached to a yellow lab from Texas. She named him Ranger before she even met him, and the dog was transferred to New Jersey. After their introduction, she realized she would never buy a dog again and wants others to share the same experience.

Houston is now just about the best volunteer **Labs4Rescue** could ever ask for. Whether performing home visits or raising money for the group, Houston is constantly paying it forward. For her 50th birthday party, she insisted on donations instead of gifts, raising \$3,000. And her recreational vehicle is a moving billboard for **Labs4Rescue**, featuring decals and banners advertising the group. She even purchased a tent and hands out literature about the rescue at events such as Barnegat Pet Day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. this Saturday at Meadowedge Park.

"I don't do anything halfway," said Houston, who brings her two dogs with her wherever she can. "But I am just a small part of the big picture. These dogs give me companionship and unconditional love. They are part of my life that makes me well-rounded."