

Amy Rice, wife of fallen Peabody firefighter, makes history at nonprofit

By Caroline Enos
Staff Writer

PEABODY — Amy Rice and her children received significant support from the 100 Club of Massachusetts after her husband, Peabody firefighter James Rice, died while fighting a blaze on Hancock Street two days before

Christmas in 2011.

Fifteen years later, she is the first family member of a fallen first responder who's been assisted by the 100 Club to join the organization's board of directors.

"I know what that knock on that door sounded like," she said. "I feel that connection. The tragedy is public, but the

aftermath really is private. With the support of the 100 Club, it's a lifetime of caring for these families. Families like ours."

The 100 Club provides financial support to families of actively working firefighters and police officers in Massachusetts who die suddenly, either in the line of duty

or not.

The organization helps pay for grief counseling and hosts remembrance events throughout the year. It pays bills, provides money for school and summer camps, and keeps food on the table while families navigate their grief — just

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like what it did for Rice in the days immediately following her husband's death.

"I went to bed that first night thinking, 'OK, now what?'" Rice said, recalling that she was only in her 30s when her husband died. At the time, their children were ages 12, 9 and 7. "Thankfully, someone came in and said, 'Don't worry, this is what's going to happen. You

can grieve. You can focus on your kids. You can focus on making sure they get dinner tonight, that you can do all those things, because there's enough help."

The 100 Club paid for a sports camp for her young son. When the time came years later, it provided college scholarships for the Rices' children. She began looking forward to a holiday party put on by the organization each year for the families it supported, and has found a support system in the other spouses who attend.

"In that room, that day, everyone is just a human being, and everyone has a good sense of belonging and community," she said. "So that's why I am strongly in awe of this organization, because the money goes right back to these families."

Rice previously served on the charity's advisory committee. She was accepted to the Board of Directors in December and will officially take part in her first meeting with the board in March.

"Amy has managed to survive to the other side

of tragedy, and she wants to give back," Executive Director Tracie Hines said. "It'll be great to have her perspective."

The 100 Club of Massachusetts has raised more than \$23 million to support around 1,800 families over its nearly 70 years as a charity.

As of 2026, it is actively supporting 105 families.

To learn more about the 100 Club or to donate, visit <https://100clubmass.org/>.

Contact Caroline Enos at CEnos@northofboston.com.



COURTESY PHOTO

Amy Rice (center), the wife of late Peabody firefighter James Rice, poses with her three children (from left) Ryan, Alyssa and Katelyn.

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