

A New Hampshire horse farm to welcome families of fallen police and firefighters from Massachusetts

By **Adam Sennott** Globe Correspondent, Updated August 14, 2026, 9:10 p.m.



Elysian Acres in Chester, N.H. has seven horses, including a retired police horse from Dover. COURTESY PHOTO

A New Hampshire sanctuary for rescued and retired horses, including those used by police, on Sunday will welcome the families of 100 fallen first responders from Massachusetts.

Elysium Acres in Chester has teamed up with The Hundred Club of Massachusetts to host “Family Funday,” to give people a chance to mingle and relax in a in a bucolic setting.

“The two parties have a common interest, and that is supporting our law enforcement and supporting the firefighters who put their lives in harm’s way every day for us,” said Patti Lessard, founder and executive director of Elysium Acres. “It’s the least we can do to give back.”

The sanctuary will host the families from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will be pony rides and a bounce house for kids; a barbecue and Ben & Jerry’s ice cream; and a chance to have pictures taken with mounted State Police horses.

The Hundred Club of Massachusetts is a statewide nonprofit devoted to serving the families of fallen police and firefighters.

The group brings its members together several times a year to connect to “let them know they are not alone and meet other families,” executive director Tracie Hines said.

On “Family Funday,” guests can also just soak in the scenery and the grounds of the sanctuary that cares for abused and neglected horses, and is home to at least one retired police horse.

“We hope this is the first of many,” events planned with the sanctuary, Hines said.

The club has served about 2,000 family members of police and firefighters who have died while serving, whether it be in the line of duty, natural or intentionally, since its founding in 1959, Hines said.

Currently, the club is supporting the families of 107 police or firefighters who died in the line of duty, Hines said.

There have been three line of duty deaths in Massachusetts this year, Uxbridge Officer Stephen A. [LaPorta](#), State Police Trooper Kevin T. [Trainor](#), and Boston Firefighter Robert [Kilduff Jr.](#), Hines said.

There were 15 total deaths last year, Hines said.

It's unlikely that loved ones from all 15 families who lost first responders will be at the farm on Sunday, Hines said.

"It's probably too fresh," Hines said. "There will be from this year for sure, but what tends to happen is the first year's tough for families, they're still grieving, so we're just kind of in the background for them."

Elysium, which sprawls over 26 acres of conservation land, opened in 2024 as "a slice of heaven" for retired mounted police and rescue equines, according to its website.

The farm has seven horses, including one retired from the Dover, N.H. police department. Lessard said she hopes to add a few more retired police horses.

The farm welcomes volunteers from active duty military members, veterans and first responders who want to de-stress by spending time in nature. They can learn to feed or groom a horse, help out with maintenance or special events, the website said.

For some volunteers, the sanctuary has become their "environmental church," Lessard said.

"It's not that they have to come here to volunteer their time and be a part of any specific program, Lessard said.

She said that she hopes those who attend the event on Sunday know they are welcome back anytime.

"I just want them to know that they're cared about, we respect all they do, we want to do all that we can to support them in their everyday efforts and we're here for them in their losses as well," Lessard said. "I can't even imagine the difficulties that these families go through."

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