

By Danielle Ray

When Officer Patrick “PJ” Johnson met his wife Lindsay in the summer of 1996, they were just 17 and 14, respectively. Her family moved next door to his, and they started dating on her 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Just one year later, PJ enlisted in the Marine Corps, a time that Lindsay calls “a test to our relationship”.

“We had our ups and downs, but when PJ was honorably discharged in September 2001 after the attacks on our country we were together ever since,” she said. PJ became a member of the Lowell Police Department a few years later.

Ten years after they met, in July of 2006, they were happily married and a year after that welcomed their first child, a son named Riley. In April of 2010 daughter Zoey joined them, and Lindsay said “our family was complete.”

When Riley was 3 years old and Zoey just five months, PJ was riding his motorcycle home after a family party – Lindsay was following in their car behind him, and watched in horror as a drunk driver ran a stop sign and struck PJ, killing him.

Besides dealing with the trauma of witnessing her husband being hit and killed, Lindsay now had a “huge financial burden, as he was the primary breadwinner of our small family”, she said.

“At our young ages we unfortunately had not thought of life insurance, so we had nothing,” Lindsay recalls. “On top of having no money saved, or life insurance, we were over our heads in debt and had a 3-yr old and 5-month old. The baby needed diapers and formula and I needed to pay bills.”

The very next day after PJ’s accident, someone told Lindsay to turn on WAAF. To her surprise, Greg Hill was holding an on air auction to raise money for her family – Greg auctioned off donated Red Sox and Patriots tickets, which generated \$3,300. The Greg Hill Foundation matched the donation, and a check was immediately sent to the family.

“I was completely overwhelmed at the response and just hours after the worst time of my life I had people I don't even know stepping up to help me,” Lindsay said of the Foundation, and Greg’s listeners, jumping in to offer some aid. “The money that was raised lessened my burden.”

Although nothing will ever fully take the pain away from losing her beloved husband PJ, her best friend and the father of her children, Lindsay said she is eternally grateful for what the Greg Hill Foundation did for her family in their worst hour.

“Everyone in the foundation has been absolutely amazing,” she said. “They are like family to me now, [and] I will be eternally grateful for the relationships I've made as a result of the Greg Hill Foundation helping me in my time of need.”

Lindsay was asked to speak at a Foundation fundraiser several months after PJ’s death and as hard as it was for her to talk about him at the time, she said she was grateful for the chance to give a little back after what they had done for her and her family.

“Almost two years after the accident, [they] still check in with me and they invite me to the various events they have for the Foundation,” said Lindsay. “I get to meet other families and beneficiaries and it has been an amazing and healing process for me to be a part of.”

“I never thought something good could come from something so tragic,” she continued, “but being able to speak with other families has been good. So besides helping me in my time of need financially, the Greg Hill Foundation has also been there for me emotionally and as a community support system.”

“PJ was an amazing father, husband, and best friend. Our relationship was like no other and I truly believe we were soul mates, as corny as it may sound,” Lindsay said. “This year would have been our 6<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, and 16 years together - every day without him is a struggle. I miss him more than I could ever describe, but I am so grateful he left a piece of him here in our children.”