



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
National Operations Center for Water Safety

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Army Corps of Engineers releases testimonial water safety video

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) National Operations Center for Water Safety announces the release of a seven-minute testimonial water safety video that recounts the loss of a father and his son who were not wearing life jackets while boating. The video targets mature audiences and is available for viewing on the USACE Water Safety YouTube channel www.youtube.com/user/USACEwatersafety. The video can also be downloaded free from the Defense Video Imagery Distribution Site (DVIDS) <http://www.dvidshub.net/video/287905/lost-lake-water-safety-video#.UXhPHYKMD6Q>.

The video features the testimonial of Craig Keese of Greenville, S.C., who lost his 36-year-old son Brian and 8-year-old grandson Nathan to drowning following a boating accident on March 27, 2010. The two were fishing in a small jon boat on Stockton Lake, a USACE lake in Stockton, Mo, and unfortunately were not wearing life jackets.

This tragedy could have brought Keese to his knees, but instead it made he and his wife stand up and take action to prevent the loss of other lives.

“We decided to take that energy, that sadness, and try to put it into some form that, one, honored them, and, for goodness sake, may be getting the message out to the public,” said Keese of how he and his wife have responded in the aftermath of the deaths.

Keese founded the *Brian & Nathan Keese Water Safety Organization*, which is dedicated to getting people to wear a life jacket around the water, a mission that aligns closely with the USACE commitment to reduce public recreation accidents and fatalities at USACE lake and river projects. USACE approached Keese and asked if he would share the story of his loss as part of an educational testimonial video, and he readily agreed.

Traveling to the lake where his son and grandson drowned, Keese sat for taping of the video. He painfully recounted the events with the hope it will help people understand the importance of wearing a life jacket.

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The result is “Lost on the Lake,” a USACE-produced video featuring a testimonial from Keese about the impact of losing his son and grandson, and re-creations of that day and the subsequent search for Brian and Nathan. The video also includes testimonial statements and key water safety messages from Travis Inman, Missouri State Highway Patrol Marine Operations Trooper, and Bradly Wright, USACE Stockton Lake Park Ranger. The testimonial video is one part of USACE’s constant recreational safety outreach effort to find innovative ways to promote water safety.

“The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is very appreciative to the Keese family for their willingness to share their story of losing two people they love so it might help save others,” said Pam Doty, USACE National Water Safety Program Manager. “It is a story that might have had a different ending if they would have worn their life jackets. I commend the Keese family for having the courage to share their story.

“When people watch “Lost on the Lake”, I hope that they take the time to stop and think that what happened to the Keese family could happen to their family. Regardless of the excuses given by loved ones as to why they do not wear a life jacket, please insist that they wear a life jacket every time they go on, in, or near the water. Their lives could depend on it.”

USACE will use the video in kiosks in various locations such as visitor centers and as part of water safety presentations USACE park rangers provide to various groups and organizations as part of the effort to reduce the number of fatalities at the more than 420 USACE-managed lake and river projects nationwide.

Last year, 157 people lost their lives while recreating at USACE lakes or river projects. Historically, 89 percent of the people who die in water-related accidents are male. The primary causes of fatalities at USACE projects are people exceeding their swimming abilities while swimming outside designated swimming areas and unexpected falls into the water from boats, docks and other places without wearing a life jacket.

Everyone who has lost their life left behind someone who loves them and misses them, just as the Keese family misses Brian and Nathan. Craig Keese took Brian out boating and fishing as a child just as Brian took Nathan on such trips, something Keese describes as a normal father and son activity. They always wore life jackets, but for some reason Brian and Nathan did not wear them on the day they drowned. The family has agonized about why they did not wear them that day.

The Keese family has turned their loss into something positive to help others by establishing life jacket loaner stations at USACE lakes and by working in cooperation with the USACE to create the “Lost on the Lake” testimonial video. The Keese family and USACE hope that you will take seven minutes of your time to view the video because it could help save your life or the life of someone you love.