

healthy living

DAVID

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"He was so healthy and physically fit," she said, "but he was a novice kayaker and unfortunately had a false sense of security that day."

The David P. Civile Foundation

To channel their grief in a positive direction and to prevent this type of tragedy from striking another family, the Civile family launched the David P. Civile Foundation for Boating Safety Awareness in 2011.

"The mandatory use of life vests and other safety measures are critical, but there aren't enough restrictions on kayaks and canoes at the retail level — or enforcement at their point of use," Civile contended.

To help increase awareness of the need for water and boating safety, "we've established a website, have met with officials from the Monmouth County Park System, and put up water safety signs discussing currents and tides in Little Silver and other launch points," she said.

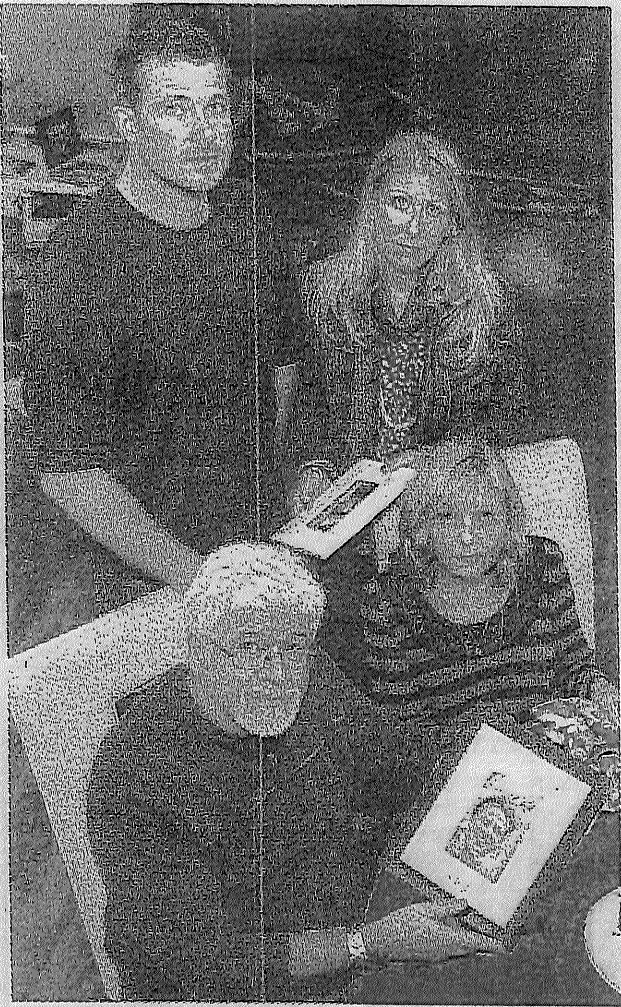
"We're also are hoping to produce a two- to three-minute video highlighting boating safety tips, which would ideally be shown at kayak/canoe rental or purchase points," she said.

"Up to this point, kayak and canoe owners have largely been left to their own devices and, sadly, there have been countless stories of injuries and fatalities. We feel people shouldn't be allowed to buy these boats without the proper tools and training. It's all about education and awareness," she said.

"The water is God's amazing creation, but at the same time, there's often no way to combat the force of nature," Civile continued. "The fact is, the water can be very unpredictable and unforgiving and people really need to know what they're doing."

THE DAVID P. CIVILE FOUNDATION:

Visit www.thedavidpcivilefoundation.org or email DavidCivileFoundation@gmail.com.



Rich Civile and his wife, Joan, of Cranford, with their daughter Laura Davies and her husband, Jon, of Tinton Falls (standing), look over pictures of son and brother David P. Civile. The David P. Civile Foundation they established works for greater awareness of boating safety.

ROBERT WARD/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

TROUBLED WATERS

Dr. Catherine Hanlon, chair emerita of the Emergency Department at Monmouth Medical Center in Long Branch and a seasoned scuba diver and water sports enthusiast herself, sympathized with the Civile family's loss of son and brother David Civile.

She confirmed how deceptive these seemingly "simple" boats and bodies of water can be.

"Nonmotorized vessels like canoes and kayaks are like taking bicycles out on the highway — they can be hard to maneuver in waterways trafficked by motorized boats," she explained.

"The first and most basic thing when operating a kayak or canoe is to wear a life vest, even in calm water. You can be an expert swimmer, but if you're knocked unconscious and are unable to swim, at least you can float," she said.

"Hypothermia — a condition where your core body temperature drops to a point where you can no longer sustain body functions — can set in quickly, especially in the water, impairing your judgment and cognition and the ability of your muscles to function properly," she said.

For that reason, Hanlon said, "it's important that you never kayak alone, particularly in the off-season, and that you let someone know where you are and when you're going to be back, so that if you go missing, people know where to begin looking for you."

In addition, Hanlon said, "it's critical to get trained in operating the specific type of kayak you own, as some can tip more easily than others and are harder to get upright. If you're alone, water temperatures are cold, you have problems with wind or currents, and you don't have the right gear, it could be a recipe for disaster."

"Both the Monmouth and Ocean County park systems offer boating and water safety training and clinics, as do outlets like Dosi's Scuba, Swim & Surf in Middletown, Jersey Paddler in Brick, and Eastern Mountain Sports in Eatontown," Hanlon said.

Susan Bloom for the Asbury Park Press