

Copyright 2006 Cable News Network
All Rights Reserved.

CNN

SHOW: LIVE FROM... 2:00 PM EST

March 10, 2006 Friday

TRANSCRIPT: 031003CN.V85

SECTION: NEWS; International

LENGTH: 7480 words

HEADLINE: Club Provides Support for Kids Who Lose Parents

BYLINE: Kyra Phillips, Carol Lin, Adaora Udoji, Arwa Damon, David Mattingly

GUESTS: Kate Atwood, Adam Stein

HIGHLIGHT:

A club for children who have lost parents helps them cope

BODY:

LIN: Champion cyclist Lance Armstrong visited the son of Dana Reeve on Wednesday to comfort him. Thirteen-year-old Will Reeve lost his mom to lung cancer earlier this week. And Lance Armstrong says Will is in good spirits, considering all that's happened. Now Armstrong said he and Will became close during his mother's illness.

Will's father, actor Christopher Reeve, died in 2004.

Losing two parents in less than two years, for most people, it is hard to comprehend what Will Reeve might be going through right now. And it's painful to imagine any child going through life without Mom or Dad. Now, there will be awkward moments no one else feels and grief no one else understands and tears no one else sees. Two people who know how that feels join me now: 13-year-old Adam Stein, who lost his father nearly three years ago, and Kate Atwood, who lost her mother when she was 12. She is the founder of **Kate's Club**, a place for kids facing the death of a parent or a sibling.

I want to tell the audience that this is not a downer segment. It's not. Because my little girl is -- is growing up without her dad. And I just want to share with the audience that your experience is different than most people think, you know. There is a real uplifting side to it because of your strength and the specialness that you find within yourself.

Kate, you were so young when your mother passed away and you dealt with her cancer for five years, six years?

KATE ATWOOD, FOUNDER OF **KATE'S CLUB**: She was diagnosed when I was 6 years old. So I lived most of my childhood with her being treated for cancer. But that --

those were years of inner strength that were developed in me that I think are long lasting even today.

LIN: Yes. Because, Adam, kids deal with grief differently, right? They deal with the death differently than adults do. How so?

ADAM STEIN, **KATE'S CLUB** MEMBER: Kids, it is slower. They really -- you're younger so you don't have that much experience in having this happen. And it feels like -- it's so much harder than I would think for an adult, because you don't know really how to feel.

LIN: Right. And when your friends come up to you, people don't know what to say and they think maybe don't even say anything. Let's not bring it up, which I think is a big mistake.

STEIN: Well, it's that you -- nobody really knows how you feel. Even if your parent has -- if their parent -- if they felt this, they really wouldn't know what you feel. Every experience is different.

LIN: Showing some of your family pictures here. And it's so wonderful to see you guys together. And your dad just looks like such a loving father, wonderful memories.

Kate, why do you think it's so important, then, to get the kids who have lost a parent together? What happens there that doesn't happen anywhere else?

ATWOOD: I think the great thing about an organization like **Kate's Club** is these kids share a bonded experience. But the focus is on the future and all the opportunity and the excitement that life still has to offer.

For me, personally, losing my mother at 12 years old, I was very active. I was, you know, sports. I was able to channel a lot of my grief immediately after the death through sports and activity. But it was later in life that I realized that that support and that understanding from a relationship that had shared that experience was missing. LIN: Right.

ATWOOD: And that was really the puzzle of pieces coming together. And it's so powerful for these kids to be able to not just help themselves but help each other. They help each other heal.

Adam has been with our program for two years. And he's at a different place in his grief journey than some kids, like Will Reeve, who may have just recently lost somebody. And Adam's power is, he's helping them see, again, that the hope and the opportunity that lies ahead.

LIN: Adam, what would you tell Will Reeve?

STEIN: Well, that you -- all the feelings that you feel are not usually -- you should be sad. You should let it out. And if you feel that you need to keep it in, you should keep it in. All these feelings are natural.

And it just -- it's -- you really don't get what's happening to you until after you're really going to be in a state of, what am I supposed to do?

LIN: Right. And how do you think -- what did you need right after your dad passed away, from your friends and even family who just didn't know what to say?

STEIN: I must say that I was more of the one saying than -- I mean, because there were so many people in our family, so many people grieving. And I was more of the help than most of the people.

LIN: Wow, that's a lot of responsibility for a young man.

STEIN: Of course, people came up to me with, I mean, just trying to help out.

LIN: Right. And it's good that people ask about your dad. Like, you know, I meet you, God, what was your dad like? What were some of the favorite things you guys used to do? Because I think, you know, that, for me, is a confirmation of that life, you know. Ask, ask the question. You know, don't be afraid to talk about it. Or say what happened?

Do you agree with that, Kate? I just think people are so awkward about death.

ATWOOD: I really do. And I think that, you know, Adam makes a good point in that he suddenly became this adult. He was surrounded by attention to this event and, you know, he suddenly became a caretaker in his household.

And I think what is so important for Adam and Will and other kids out there that are -- that are going through this process is to realize that they're -- they're still a kid and this is a puncture to their innocence. And that's hard. But they're still...

LIN: But some people try to then protect the child by not talking about the event.

ATWOOD: Exactly. Exactly.

LIN: And I think that's wrong, too.

ATWOOD: And one of the best pieces of advice that Adam gave to me two years ago was that you have to continue living, you know, and to talk about it is to live. And to laugh about it is to live. And you -- he still holds so much of his father in him, and he still holds so much of his learnings with him. And to honor him by, you know, pointing out to Adam what, you know, what traditions his father did or stories about his father. I think that even I, as a young adult, still grasp those memories of my mother.

LIN: Yes. Absolutely. Don't be afraid and don't be afraid to move forward. And you know what? I don't think we get over things. I think we get through things.

ATWOOD: Right. Right.

LIN: All right. So people want more information about **Kate's Club**?

ATWOOD: **Kate's Club**, our web site is KatesClub.org. And we are -- we have a facility here in Atlanta, but we are, of course, available for resources and calls to help kids and teens around the country that are dealing with -- are facing life with the death of a parent or sibling. So we do. We really focus on all that opportunity and

the hope that still lies ahead in our lives. So...

LIN: Adam, thank you very much.

STEIN: Thank you.

LIN: Thank you. Kate, terrific work. Thank you so much for sharing your story, too.

ATWOOD: Thanks for having us.

LIN: A pleasure.

We'll be right back.

TO ORDER A VIDEO OF THIS TRANSCRIPT, PLEASE CALL 800-CNN-NEWS OR USE OUR SECURE ONLINE ORDER FORM LOCATED AT www.fdch.com

LOAD-DATE: March 11, 2006