



# Capper Update

SUMMER 2023

Dear Friends,

I want to begin this message with a lot of gratitude for the amazing and inspiring journeys of those recognized in this edition of the Capper Update. One of the tremendous privileges I get to experience is witnessing the glorious unfolding of life changing stories being written each day by people of all ages. The infants, children,

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



*Zach Ahrens*  
Zach Ahrens, President & CEO

teens and adults who are positively impacted by our pediatric therapy or adult services program continually amaze us with their progress and teach us so much while advancing their hopes and dreams. Truly, every day is a good day at Capper Foundation!

You are a crucial friend to Capper Foundation, and I want you to know my door is always open. Since joining the team a little over a year ago, I have had the opportunity to do a lot of listening to better understand where we are as an organization and where we need to be in response to the needs of the individuals and communities we serve. Each of you has a unique perspective and I'm eager to hear your thoughts. Please reach out to me any time at [zahrens@capper.org](mailto:zahrens@capper.org) or 785-272-4060.

**THEN & NOW:** *Jasper Shrake*

## Finding his own path to excel

*"Jasper brightens my day whenever I see him. He helps me see how beautiful the world is through the eyes of a child."*

He notices the sky and clouds, the trees, pets being walked in the neighborhood, children playing basketball, snowmen, Christmas lights and bumps in the road. He delights in exploring and seeing new things. He forces everyone around to look closer at the beauty in the world where we live."

This eloquent excerpt taken from a nomination submitted by Jasper's aunt for Youth of the Day as part of Stormont-Vail Health's Year of the Kansas Child in 2000, gives a glimpse of the adult Jasper Shrake would become. Born with Spina Bifida, he received Physical and Occupational Therapy at Capper Foundation from infancy until he started Kindergarten.

"I remember working with Jasper while he was attending our Kidlink Preschool & Childcare Program. Even though he was ornery and not a fan of therapy, he did the work I asked of him and often had his parents or extended family there to cheer him on," shared Cris Teter, Physical Therapist at Capper Foundation.



Jasper's determination during therapy at Capper paid off. Today, Jasper is a successful adult working in the financial sector for Advisors Excel in Topeka and will soon experience another milestone – being a first-time homeowner. "My fondest memories of Capper are participating in summer camps and the wheelchair soccer team. Those opportunities allowed me to be active and make friends," recalls Jasper.

When you give a gift to Capper Foundation, you are helping children have a bright future, like Jasper!



SCAN TO DONATE

[www.capper.org](http://www.capper.org)



3500 SW Tenth Ave.  
Topeka, Kansas 66604  
785.272.4060

1500 E Eighth Ave., Ste. 201  
Winfield, Kansas 67156  
620.221.9431

622 N Haverhill Road  
El Dorado, Kansas 67042  
316.320.7531



## Capper expands job training and community employment opportunities

In alignment with our Fiscal Year 2023 Strategic Plan initiative for our Adult Services Program, Capper Foundation has acquired Dialogue Coffee House in Topeka, a boutique coffee and bakery destination that employs adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) from the community. Capper and Dialogue's missions closely align with one another focusing on helping individuals build their abilities and have access to opportunities that help them feel valued, and enjoy greater independence while advancing their hopes and dreams.



Caitlyn Halsey, founder of Dialogue Coffee House, has joined Capper's staff as the organization's first Employment Services Director while continuing

to provide leadership and oversight of Dialogue. Her role is to enhance employment opportunities by expanding site locations and building an effective training program for successful employment of individuals.

Stay tuned for exciting announcements and join us in welcoming the Dialogue Team – a place to be a part of the conversation, without the definition of one's abilities.

THEN & NOW: *Elizabeth Mowery*

# Discovering success in DNA

*"Don't let anyone tell you that you are worthless because you have a disability!"*

These words of wisdom have become a motto for Elizabeth Mowery and others that are living with a disability. Diagnosed with Autism at a young age, Elizabeth and her parents sought support for several years from Capper Foundation specifically therapy sessions with Linda Burgen, Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA).

Together, they worked to ensure Elizabeth could complete daily living tasks including self-care, cooking, organization, and more independently as she grew older. In addition, a primary goal was for her to learn and utilize social skills when making friends and in other social situations. "During high school, I participated in the orchestra playing the cello and competed in the Scholars Bowl. I also did some volunteer work for Capper," shared Elizabeth.

Today, Elizabeth is doing very well in college at Washburn University in Topeka. "I'm majoring in Forensic Biology and when I graduate I'd like to be a DNA Analyst for the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI). Most of all, I just hope to get a good job and make enough money to live comfortably," noted Elizabeth. After finishing her sophomore year this May, she accomplished a major milestone—getting hired for her first job at a local Dillons grocery store. As a Utility Clerk, Elizabeth will assist with helping the store maintain a clean and safe environment as well as provide customer service by sacking groceries and helping customers load bags into their vehicle.

In her spare time, Elizabeth enjoys reading books (making her way through Agatha Christie's collection of English crime novels), playing video games, and spending time with family and pets.



With your financial support, Capper Foundation can continue to provide individualized care to children, teens, and adults with disabilities so they can advance their hopes and dreams like Elizabeth.

## CAPPER CALENDAR OF EVENTS



**JULY 10-14**  
iCan Swim  
Capper Foundation & Capitol Federal Natatorium  
Topeka, KS

**JULY 14**  
Arthur Capper's Birthday Celebration  
Capper Foundation  
Topeka, KS

**AUGUST 3**  
Concert for a Child  
Rick Faris and Faris Brothers  
Gilbert Ranch  
Topeka, KS



Please visit [www.capper.org](http://www.capper.org) or call 785.272.4060 for event details