

# Capper Update

SUMMER 2023

UNPARALLELED IN HIS LEGACY OF GENEROSITY & ADVOCACY

## Arthur Capper: A True Kansas Statesman

For many people, Senator Arthur Capper is most notably known as an advocate for children with disabilities and founder of Capper Foundation. However, he also left his mark on several other industries as well, namely agriculture, media and publishing.

Before serving as Governor of Kansas and U.S. Senator, Capper's first public office was as a member and chairman of the Board of Regents of the Kansas State Agricultural College which is now Kansas State University. His interest in agriculture extended into his time in politics serving as chair of the Senate's agriculture and forestry committees. In 1922 he co-sponsored the Capper-Volstead Act exempting farm cooperatives from anti-trust laws, leading to a rush of agricultural co-ops. Capper was also instrumental in the establishment of the 4-H movement by starting clubs in Kansas such as "Pig Club" and "Garden Club" that loaned money to students to begin modest businesses. For his involvement, Capper was later inducted into the National 4-H Hall of Fame.

His business career in the media and publishing sector began after high school in 1884 when he moved from Garnett, KS to Topeka, to work as an editor and political

correspondent for the *Topeka Daily Capital*. After a brief move out-of-state to New York and Washington D.C., Capper returned to Topeka, and by 1911 was owner and publisher of the newspaper that is now *The Topeka Capital-Journal*. At the time, it was considered "one of the best and brightest dailies in the West." In 1927, WIBW (one of the first radio stations in the state) was added to his media empire. Before his death in 1951, Capper Publishing was the largest publishing house west of the Mississippi with weekly, daily, and five state farm newspapers and two national magazines. The *Capper Weekly*, now known as the *Capper's Farmer*, remains in circulation and is owned by Ogden Publications, along with Capper Insurance. Pairing his media influence with causes close to him gave Senator Capper a strong and influential voice for disability rights and farmers' issues on a national level.

Senator Capper's living legacy is Capper Foundation where infants, children, teens, and adults as well as their families from 16 counties and 46 cities across Kansas receive the individualized care and therapies needed to fulfill their hopes and dreams.



THREE BRAIN SURGERIES AND HOURS OF REHABILITATIVE THERAPY HAVE LEFT TEEN AUTHOR EASTON BEIGHTEL...

## Determined TO HELP OTHERS

On November 7, 2022, Andrew and Candice Beightel thought their 13-year-old daughter, Easton just needed a day home from school as she wasn't feeling well. That afternoon, Easton had a stroke and Grand Mal seizure, and at that moment, their lives changed. At the hospital, Easton's seizure continued for several hours before she was transferred to Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City for care.

Tests revealed a massive infection on the right side of Easton's brain leading to emergency surgery to remove half of her skull and start the process of removing the infection. Two subsequent surgeries and IV antibiotics

were needed to ensure that the infection was eradicated. Shortly after Easton's initial surgery, it became evident that she had lost all function on the left side of her body and needed rehabilitative therapy to relearn sitting up, walking, brushing her teeth, and more.

After three weeks she was sent home with a protective helmet to begin therapy with Capper Foundation Physical Therapist (PT) Jennifer Hull. With her therapeutic goals met, she was discharged after four sessions. Easton's hospital experiences inspired her to write *I Heard You Were Feeling Ruff*. "I saw so many kids who were worse off than me and I wanted to use my experience and some fun games to make them feel better. I wanted to let them know that others care about them and that they can do tough things too", shared Easton.

In February, Easton endured a setback causing unexplained loss of function in her left hand requiring a return to services at Capper. In May, she underwent her fourth and final surgery to have a prosthetic skull placed on her right side after which she could say goodbye to the helmet and proudly show her scars. "Easton has made amazing gains and has met nearly all her goals. We often think back to how hard things were when we started and reflect on how far she has



Connor Tanking, Occupational Therapist at Capper, works with Easton to fully restore her fine motor skills.

come! Easton has nearly doubled her left-hand grip strength, is able to isolate her left fingers independently, and is completing daily tasks again. Easton will be discharged from services before returning to school. I am so proud of her hard work and her positive attitude. She is an amazing girl", said Connor Tanking, Occupational Therapist (OT).

"Throughout her recovery, the PT and OT have been the highlights of her days. In the hospital she was able to work with some wonderful people while relearning basic functions and motor skills. This continued when we began work with Jennifer and Connor at Capper.

Everyone at Capper was invested in Easton's recovery as much as we were. These moments still bring tears to my eyes to see how hard she has worked and to see how far she has come", shared Easton's mom, Candice.

With recovery nearly complete, Easton is looking forward to resuming normal life, including playing her favorite sports and envisioning her future which includes college, and medical school with the goal of being a Pediatric Neurologist or Radiologist.

With your continuing support, Capper Foundation is committed to providing pediatric therapy services to children of all ages and circumstances facing challenges from illness, injury, or disability.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Zach Ahrens, President & CEO

Dear Friends,

I am thrilled to share remarkable stories that embody the positive impact your support is making in the lives of those touched through our mission.

Meet Easton, a resilient 13-year-old who faced immense challenges after a massive brain infection led to multiple surgeries and the loss of function on her left side. Easton received crucial one-on-one physical and occupational therapies from our caring therapists at our pediatric outpatient clinic in Topeka and made astounding progress as she prepared to start the new school year. The dedication of our therapists, family support, your generosity, and Easton's indomitable spirit significantly accelerated her recovery.

In our adult day program, John is cultivating his passion for gardening through Capper Foundation's partnership with Master Gardeners. Other individuals are enjoying cooking, art, exercise, field trips, learning job skills, or working in our communities.

It is heartwarming to witness the transformative power of our programs and services. Your support fuels our determination to make a lasting impact in the lives of individuals like Easton, John and the nearly 2,200 people we will serve and support this year.

Together, let's continue creating success stories and empowering those who are building abilities and enjoying access, independence and opportunities to advance their hopes and dreams!

Easton shares pages from the children's book she authored titled "I Heard You Were Feeling Ruff"





KEEPING OUR GARDENS BEAUTIFUL & BOUNTIFUL

## Meet Capper's Greenest Thumb



Everyone knows what makes plants grow – air, water, sunlight, and nutrient-rich soil. Add John, our unofficial “Master Gardener” into the mix and the Capper gardens are in full bloom in no time. Since 2014, John has honed the skills needed to care for and nurture flowers and produce.

His passion for gardening started at a young age during a transition

period in his life when a newfound hobby was much needed. “Being outdoors and taking care of plants is very calming for me and something I enjoy doing just for myself,” said John. He loves all varieties of flowers if they are beautiful, however, there’s one vegetable (which is also considered to be fruit) that is his favorite—tomatoes.

Continuing to learn is an important part of gardening and John’s knowledge and skills continue to grow through Capper Foundation’s partnership with the Shawnee County K-State Research and Extension Master Gardeners to help maintain our gardens. “John is a natural gardener. He can find the smallest little seedling in the cracks of the cement, dig it up, plant it in the soil, and have a flower growing that is prettier than one bought at a nursery. His vegetables are thriving in weather that gives experienced gardeners fits. He is reliable and fun to work with,” shared Maureen Hillis, Master Gardener volunteer.

Your support is vital in helping the adults we serve like John discover and foster their passions so they can advance their hopes and dreams.



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— Maureen Hillis, Master Gardener, Topeka



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DIALOGUE COFFEE HOUSE TO OPEN TWO NEW TOPEKA AREA LOCATIONS THIS FALL

## Serving More Smiles

We are excited to announce that Dialogue Coffee House is opening two new Shawnee County locations this fall. Expansion of the popular Topeka coffee house will provide 50 additional opportunities for individuals with disabilities to have meaningful employment in the community. The new storefronts will be located at Fellowship Bible Church in Topeka and at the former First Baptist Church in Silver Lake.

“Dialogue was founded out of the heart cry for our friends with disabilities to become contributing members of our society,” Caitlyn Halsey, founder of Dialogue Coffee House said. “They desire to have relationships, connections, and jobs just like you and I.”

Dialogue’s new location at Fellowship Bible Church will open in early September. The Silver Lake location will open in October. Capper Foundation acquired Dialogue Coffee House in April 2023 with the goal of expanding site locations and increasing community employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Learn more about Dialogue at [www.dialoguecoffeehouse.com/about](http://www.dialoguecoffeehouse.com/about).

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



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