



Capper Update

SPRING 2026

Finding Her Voice...

Miley's Journey

When Miley Hernandez was born prematurely at just 1 pound, 10 ounces, her family faced an uncertain road ahead. She spent the first three months of her life in the NICU before finally being able to go home. Even then, Miley continued facing significant medical challenges. She required an NG tube for feeding and was born with a cleft palate and cleft lip. Years later, in 2022, Miley began experiencing seizures and was later diagnosed with epilepsy.

All of those challenges made finding her voice a difficult journey.

When Miley first came to Capper Foundation, everyday tasks were often overwhelming. She struggled with weak and tight muscles, difficulty swallowing, and sensitivity to activities such as brushing her teeth. She relied heavily on others for mobility and daily care and was unable to get herself into her wheelchair without assistance.

At Capper Foundation, Miley began working with speech-language, occupational, and physical therapists who helped her build strength, endurance, and confidence one milestone at a time. Therapy sessions focused on everything from sitting independently on a bench to practicing transitions from the floor to standing. Through exercises



using resistance bands and weights, Miley slowly began building the strength needed for greater mobility and independence.

Today, Miley's progress is remarkable. She no longer relies on a wheelchair

and is able to walk with slight support. She continues gaining independence through daily life skills such as folding laundry,



dressing herself, and brushing her teeth – tasks that once seemed out of reach.

Therapy has also opened new opportunities for communication and eating routines. Miley practices chewing skills to help reduce reliance on her gastrostomy tube during

“It's been a joy to watch her grow so much in such a short time, and I can't wait to continue to see her progress.”

Deborah Schloeman
Speech-Language Pathologist

mealtimes. Using an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) tablet, she is steadily expanding her vocabulary in both English and Spanish, allowing her to communicate more fully with others.

For Miley's family, every new skill represents another step toward confidence and self-reliance. But her progress does not stop when therapy sessions end. With guidance from her therapy team, Miley's family continues exercises and therapeutic activities at

home to help strengthen the skills she is developing during treatment at Capper.

Miley's story is one of resilience, determination, and possibility. Through the support of donors and friends of Capper Foundation, children like Miley have access to individualized therapies and compassionate care that help them discover what is possible. Every milestone achieved is another reminder that with encouragement, opportunity, and support, children can continue building strength, finding their voice, and reaching their fullest potential.

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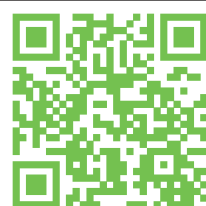
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Friends,

Every day at Capper Foundation, we are inspired by individuals who continue to overcome obstacles, build confidence, and achieve milestones because of the

generous support of people like you.

In this newsletter, we'll introduce you to two incredible individuals whose journeys reflect the power of perseverance, opportunity, and community.

You'll read about Miley Hernandez, whose determination and hard work have led to remarkable progress through Capper's life-changing pediatric therapy program, family support, and individualized care. From greater independence in daily tasks to communicating with confidence using her Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) device in both English and Spanish, Miley's story is a powerful example of resilience and possibility.

You will also meet Haley Tew, who continues to thrive at Dialogue Coffee House. Through inclusive employment opportunities, Haley has gained confidence, expanded her skills, and taken meaningful steps toward greater

independence and future goals.

Because of your generosity, individuals and families served by Capper Foundation are empowered to imagine "what's next" and pursue hopes once thought impossible.

Thank you for believing in the mission of Capper Foundation and for helping create opportunities for individuals of all abilities to live fuller, more independent lives.

With gratitude,

Zach Ahrens, President & CEO

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SPOTLIGHT

Dialogue Helps Haley Build Her Future



“I don’t like being bored, I don’t like sitting at home, I like getting out and doing things.”

Haley Tew
Dialogue Coffee House Barista

how to count back change, so my stepmom helped me at home,” Haley said. “I’ve gotten really good at it.”

Haley says she enjoys making sure customers receive their orders correctly and believes creating a welcoming environment is an important part of her job.

That growing independence has inspired Haley to work toward her next goal: living on her own. While she knows there will be new challenges ahead, Haley is ready to face them with determination.

Since starting at Dialogue in 2019, Haley has grown not only as an employee but

“Haley’s a go-getter. We’re really proud of her as she becomes more motivated, independent, and builds important life skills.”

Kaley Taylor
Director of Dialogue Coffee House
Operations & Workforce Training

Haley Tew is always ready to help wherever she is needed at Dialogue Coffee House. Now in her eighth year with Dialogue, she has become a dependable employee whose willingness to learn and positive attitude continue to help her grow in self-confidence and the development of new skills.

Haley works five days a week and helps throughout the operation. She prepares drinks as a barista, runs the register, and assists with baking in the kitchen. When she first started, Haley was much quieter

and nervous about tasks such as working around hot ovens and using sharp knives. Today, she confidently helps customers with a welcoming smile.

“She’s one of the hardest workers I know,” Dialogue Kitchen Manager Emma Hixson said. “She is always asking what needs to be done. She’s eager to learn new things.”

That willingness to learn has helped Haley build confidence and independence.

“I learned how to be a cashier. I did not know

also as a person. Dialogue Coffee House helps individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities build skills and reach their goals through meaningful community employment.

Haley hopes more workplaces will recognize the value individuals with disabilities can bring to a team.

“I feel like more jobs need to have more people with learning disabilities,” Haley said. “They can do things, just at a different pace or different level. They need to give them a chance.”

Through generous donor support, Capper Foundation continues providing employment opportunities through six Dialogue Coffee House locations, helping individuals like Haley continue building brighter futures.

DIALOGUE COFFEE HOUSE IS A COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM OF CAPPER FOUNDATION.

Planning Today. Impacting Tomorrow.

Legacy gifts strengthen the long-term mission of Capper Foundation, ensuring that the programs you support today remain accessible, innovative, and life-changing for years to come.

A LEGACY GIFT CAN HELP:

- Sustain pediatric therapy and early intervention services
- Provide ongoing support for adult day programs
- Expand workforce development and inclusive employment at Dialogue Coffee House

COMMON LEGACY GIVING OPTIONS INCLUDE:

- Including Capper Foundation in your will or trust
- Naming Capper Foundation as a beneficiary of retirement assets or life insurance
- Establishing an endowment or memorial gift to provide lasting support

We invite you to visit with us to explore how your legacy can empower future generations. Contact Stephanie Gassen, Development Advisor: Phone: 785-272-4060 ext. 1140 Email: sgassen@capper.org



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Oct. 4 - Oct. 8 – I GOT THIS Adaptive Golf Camp
Hosted at Topeka Country Club
4:00 pm to 6:30 pm



Oct. 8 – Capper Open Scramble Golf Tournament
Topeka Country Club
Tournament begins at 12:00 PM



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