



THEN & NOW

Lacey Kinder

From Capper Kid to Communications Professional

Writing Her Next Chapter

For Lacey Kinder, it's hard to imagine a life without Capper Foundation.

While she now serves as a content specialist at Washburn University, the road included many stops at Capper.

That journey started in the late 1980s, when Lacey came to Capper as a one-year-old with left hemiparesis, a condition similar to mild cerebral palsy. It affects motor skills on the left side of her body, making it harder to dress, bathe and get around. She began receiving physical and occupational therapy and soon made incredible progress.

Her connection to Capper didn't stop in childhood. In 2008, Lacey earned a mass media degree from Washburn University. When a recession made finding a job challenging, she turned to a familiar place.

She took a volunteer marketing position at Capper and, a year later, was hired as an administrative assistant.



“Capper made what doctors said was going to be impossible, possible.”

—Lacey Kinder

B.A., Mass Communications
Washburn University, 2008

Working at the place that helped shape her meant the world to Lacey.

“I can never remember a time that I wasn't happy to be around there. To know what I was doing, even though it was behind the scenes, was making a difference for the children and adults that we were serving.”

Lacey was determined to keep growing professionally and find work in her field. In 2015, she got that opportunity — a part-time marketing position on Capper's development team, which led to a full-time position she held until 2025.

It was a full-circle moment for Lacey. She saw herself in the children receiving therapy and knew that even if their disabilities were different, each had the potential to grow.

That perspective made telling Capper's stories especially important to her — showing how children reach their goals, the passion therapists bring to their work and the opportunities Capper provides.

She says the opportunities she received at Capper helped prepare her for the role she has today.

“Capper made it possible for me to make this leap,” Lacey said. “They supported me through a lot of big moments in my life. Without their belief in me, I wouldn't be here.”

Last year, she made the difficult decision to leave what she called her “second home” and head to Washburn. She wanted to see if she could succeed outside Capper. In her new position, she oversees the weekly email newsletter for faculty, staff and students, writes press releases and more.

Lacey's life was dramatically changed by Capper, from learning to walk to working at the organization for nearly 16 years. But it wasn't just Lacey who changed. During her time there, she saw Capper grow to new heights — building its Adult Day Services program, expanding into South Central Kansas and opening new Dialogue Coffee House locations.

“Even though I'm not there physically every day, I think about Capper and the families, the adults, my former co-workers who are still friends, every day. I'm nothing without what Capper has brought to my life.”

Today, Lacey makes a point to stay connected. She volunteers at events, supports Dialogue and is a donor.

It's that support from Lacey, and donors like you, that gives those we currently serve the opportunity to write their own stories and pursue their dreams — even those once thought impossible. 🍁

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Friends,

As summer gives way to fall, the changing season offers a natural reminder that growth often happens one step at a time. At Capper Foundation, we see that progress

every day—in the lives of the individuals we serve and in the people who choose to walk alongside them.

In this issue, you'll meet two people whose stories reflect the many ways that growth and connection can take shape.

In our “Then & Now” feature, you'll meet Lacey Kinder, who received pediatric services at Capper and is now building an exciting future of her own. Today, Lacey works as a Content Specialist at Washburn University while pursuing a master's degree in Communication & Leadership—a remarkable example of how early support can build abilities and help open doors to what comes next in life and in a career.

You'll also meet Joe Bye, a local sculptor who found a meaningful connection through volunteering in Capper's Adult Day Services Art Studio. His experience is a reminder that when people share their time, talents and interests with others, the impact can go both ways.

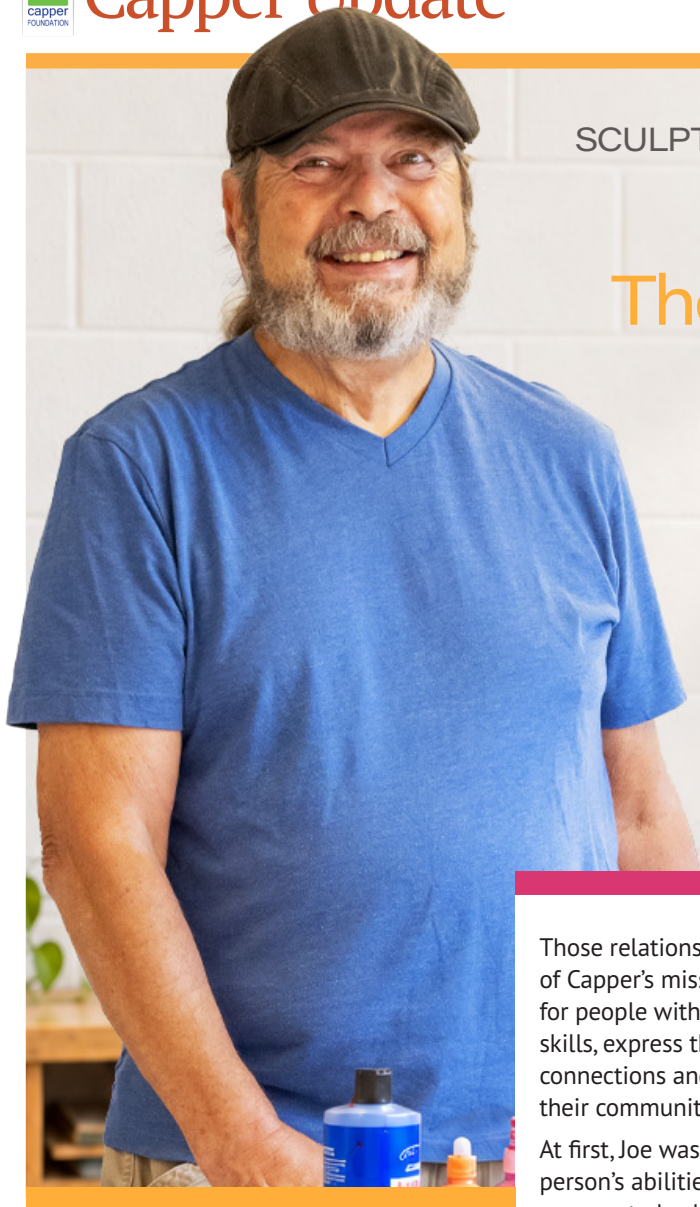
As we look toward Capper's own next steps, stories like Lacey's and Joe's remind us why this work matters and how deeply it can shape lives. With your continued support, we can create even more opportunities for individuals of all abilities to learn, grow, connect and pursue what's next.

Thank you for being part of that journey with us every step of the way.

With gratitude,



Zach Ahrens, President & CEO



SCULPTOR FINDS CONNECTION THROUGH SERVICE

The Fine Art of Volunteering

Those relationships reflect an important part of Capper's mission: creating opportunities for people with disabilities to develop skills, express themselves, build meaningful connections and participate more fully in their community.

At first, Joe wasn't sure how to gauge each person's abilities in the studio. He found an unexpected solution in tic-tac-toe, using the game to observe coordination and how each person approached a challenge.

Joe has also discovered that creativity is about much more than the finished piece.

"Creativity or self-expression is not just the end result," he said. "It's about getting lost in the moment—becoming so absorbed that time seems to stand still."

One project that especially captured that feeling was a collaborative American flag created for the nation's 250th anniversary celebration. Capper Art instructor Josh Pattie divided the flag into sections, with different

individuals carefully painting each piece before the work was assembled.

Joe remembers watching the participation and coordination unfold as everyone contributed to the finished piece.

"It was obvious they were lost in the moment," he said.

His time at Capper has also deepened his appreciation for the Direct Support Professionals who work each day with individuals with significant disabilities.

"I am in awe of the staff," Joe said. "They reaffirm that angels are among us."



Joe's Fridays in the Art Studio are a reminder that meaningful opportunities for creativity, connection and personal growth happen because people choose to invest their time, talents and resources in Capper's mission. That support helps ensure individuals with disabilities have opportunities to build skills, form relationships and take part in experiences that enrich their lives.

For anyone unsure about volunteering with adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, Joe's advice is simple: expect to meet kindhearted people who may just need a little more time. 🧩

To explore individual or group volunteer opportunities at Capper, email Terri Steinman, Capper Volunteer Coordinator, at tsteinman@capper.org

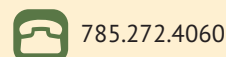
Be A Part of What's Next At Capper

Every day at Capper Foundation, children, teens and adults are working toward greater independence, building confidence, and reaching milestones that matter, not only to them, but also to the people who love them.

This fall is no exception. From the therapies and services provided every day to opportunities like our adaptive recreation programs, including our recent I GOT THIS Golf Camp, we continue to create experiences where individuals of all abilities can learn, grow, connect and discover what's possible.

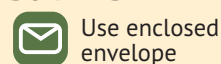
Every gift, every connection, and every volunteer who chooses to get involved helps us continue creating opportunities for the individuals and families we are honored to serve.

DONATE BY PHONE



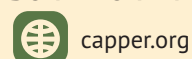
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capper.org



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dialogue coffee house

4009 Southwest 29th Street
Topeka, KS 66614
6800 Southwest 10th Ave.
Topeka, KS 66615
1101 Southwest Tyler Street
Topeka, KS 66612

DIALOGUE COFFEE HOUSE TOPEKA AREA LOCATIONS

1700 Southwest College Ave.
Topeka, KS 66621
301 East Railroad Street
Silver Lake, KS 66539

NEW TOPEKA LOCATION
THIS FALL—STAY TUNED!

Your Legacy, their Future.



Make your legacy part of Capper's future.
Contact Stephanie Gassen, Development
Advisor: Phone: 785-272-4060 ext. 1140