Grand Challenge: Community Vitality

Title: 2018 Community Organization Award

Why is this issue important?
In Topeka, the Easterseals Capper Foundation serves 2,584 children and adults with disabilities. One Capper program that serves youth with developmental and physical disabilities is the Civitan Day Camp. This six-week summer camp provides games, art, sports, music and gardening to its campers.

How did Extension address this issue?
The Shawnee County Extension Master Gardener Special Needs Gardening Committee has assisted the Parks and Recreation staff to implement gardening activities as part of the camp’s activities for many years. Beginning first with flower beds around the clubhouse, the committee and campers have expanded the project to include a Sensory Garden. This garden is not only available and maintained by the Civitan campers, but is also maintained after camp by the Special Needs Gardening Committee for the general public to enjoy.

What was the impact?
In recognition of the efforts at the Civitan Day Camp, the Capper Kidlink Preschool and Childcare Program, the Adult Day Program and the Residential Program the Shawnee County Extension Master Gardeners were awarded the 2018 Community Organization Award by the Easterseals Capper Foundation. When presenting the award, Edie Smith, the Vice President of Development said; “We would like to thank this group for the energy and passion they put into enriching the lives of the persons served at Easterseals Capper Foundation by sharing their knowledge and love of gardening.”

Above: The plaque given to the Shawnee County Extension Master Gardener Special Needs Gardening Committee with tiles hand-crafted by individuals in the Capper Adult Services program.

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