




**Hope
Joy
Triumph**

FY2016
Annual Report



anchor center
FOR BLIND CHILDREN

See life differently



Our Infant Program nurtures vital development skills in children birth to 18 months, building a foundation for learning

The Steady Drum of Growth

“Bang! Bang!” go the drums. J.J. loves his drum set at home and at Anchor Center. Diagnosed with Optic Nerve Hypoplasia at 5 months old, his family was referred to Anchor Center for our Infant Program. “Thoughts of helplessness, fear and uncertainty began immediately after hearing the news,” Dad Jerome recalls.

Eager to learn, the family turned to every resource they could find. Concrete answers were difficult to obtain. “The internet had outdated information and opinions. Anchor Center offered our family a resource to better understand J.J. and construct short- and long-term goals to get the most from his limited vision,” Jerome says.

The support Anchor Center gave J.J.’s family offered hope and guidance on this journey for their son. Coming here allowed J.J.’s family the holistic support they needed to thrive. For J.J., this meant having his grandparents join him in program. “They are willing to work with J.J.’s grandparents in the classroom in order to help them feel comfortable and confident with his path to success,” says Stephanie, J.J.’s mom.

Knowledge and strategies learned at Anchor Center help the family gain and instill confidence. Jerome remembers: “Watching him learn and develop has been as fun and rewarding for us as it has been for him.

“We’ve learned that the more time we put into his progress, the more we get back.”

Progress takes shape in a variety of forms — for both J.J. and his family. As Dad and Mom will share, “We are students and teachers in this process.” The opportunity to learn together provides a sense of unity. “Witnessing the willpower of the children and parents at Anchor Center has really helped us accept J.J.’s reality and approach it with determination and optimism,” Stephanie explains.

Sitting in Music Therapy, J.J. is courageous. It is here that he first built up the confidence to play the drums he loves so much, a memory his dad treasures. Surrounded by friends, each child is learning at his or her own pace. “Bang! Bang!” go the drums, as J.J. plays away, friends cheering him on.



Infant Program Overview

Families attend the Infant Program twice a week with their baby. Our team of vision teachers and physical, speech/language, occupational and music therapists:

- Work with babies on sensory exploration and development
- Teach families about infant development and caregiving specific to their baby’s vision and/or vision/hearing impairments
- Demonstrate and teach a wide array of early childhood and infant care, such as positioning, crawling, feeding and eating, sleeping, and infant socialization
- Share play-based learning activities that can easily be done at home
- Help families understand their child’s diagnosis and strengths
- Connect families with families who share their journey

Our Toddler Program focuses on group play and socialization for children 18 months to 3 years old

Jordan Inspires — and Blasts Through Boundaries

Six years ago, Lee participated in the ForeSight Golf Classic, a fundraiser for Anchor Center. Lee and Kiera didn't have children at the time. They had no idea how important Anchor Center would soon be to them.

Four years later, Jordan was born weighing just 3 lbs. 10 oz. "We knew she'd go straight to the NICU due to an Intra Uterine Growth Delay, possibly needing oxygen," Kiera said. "We had no clue that later that week our lives were going to change forever."

Jordan was diagnosed with Wolf Hirschhorn Syndrome, an extremely rare chromosomal disorder. The multiple developmental and intellectual delays were only compounded by Jordan's vision loss. Fear soon set in. "After first visiting Anchor Center, that shortly went away," Kiera remembers. "A new vision for Jordan's future shined through."

With the support of Anchor Center's multidisciplinary team, Jordan is experiencing progress and success. Music brings out the best in Jordan and is one of Kiera's favorite memories so far. After months of working diligently on helping Jordan sit up independently, Jordan was feeling strong. Previously only able to sit alone for a minute, this day was different. "My eyes started to tear as I watched my baby girl sit like a rock. She had been waiting for this moment — and now was sitting on her own," Kiera remembers.

"I do not know where Jordan would be," Kiera exclaims. "Anchor Center has been a huge resource with all the great teachers, therapists, learning tools, and emotional support."

Together, with your help, Anchor Center celebrates the milestones with families like Jordan's. As Kiera puts it, "It has opened our eyes to another world, one of beauty and grace, one that inspires, celebrates and empathizes in the special life we get to live."



Toddler Program Overview

Families or caregivers attend the Toddler Program twice a week at Anchor Center with their child. Our team of gifted teachers and therapists:

- Foster early literacy with pre-braille and pre-reading
- Facilitate early peer and social interaction
- Teach routines in daily activities
- Lead group activities like snack time, music and play time
- Guide and encourage safe, independent exploration and mobility including introduction to canes and assistive walking devices as needed
- Help children gradually separate from family members or caregivers in preparation for Preschool

Our Preschool Program prepares children, 3 to 5 years old, for life in school and the community

Ava's Fighting Spirit: You Give Her Hope

Ava is happy. At 4½ years old, she loves music, dancing, jumping on her trampoline and being with people. She greets you with a smile on her face and is filled with endless hugs. Looking back, “Neither Ava, nor I, could ever have understood what Anchor Center was and what it would come to mean in our lives,” mom Jessica says.

Her first ophthalmology appointment was at 2 months old. Doctors told Jessica that Ava had no vision and set them up with a one-time home visit. Left with a light box, red ball, and black and white books, Jessica was scared for Ava's uncertain future.

Moving to Colorado to be near family was the next step. A referral brought them to Anchor Center. “I remember pulling up to the building and thinking, ‘I'm in the wrong place,’” she recalls. “But I was mistaken. It was so amazing — everything Ava could possibly need was right here.”

Anchor Center's multi-sensory learning approach strengthens Ava's other senses. Understanding her diagnosis allows Jessica to work in tandem with the Anchor team to help Ava use her vision to the best of her ability. Finally, there was hope for Ava.

Once limited to her few tools, Ava now receives tailored care and an adaptive environment at Anchor Center — from high contrast objects, using flashlights to help her see, to working with sensory and motor stimulation. “We are essentially helping reconstruct her visual pathways,” remarks Callie, Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments. “Anchor Center has allowed us both to be part of a community

that makes it possible for us to thrive,” Jessica beams. “Ava finally has friends — and so do I. Meeting parents traveling through similar journeys who know the struggles and triumphs, truly is a miracle.”

When she first came to Anchor Center, Ava was in her own world, with her head down. Now, following a surgery to remove half of her brain to reduce uncontrollable seizures, our physical and occupational therapists work with her to build strength and confidence. Today, Ava walks proudly to the Motor Room, head held high. Callie says: “This is her happy place. She is resilient and has an enthusiasm for life. Here, all children get to thrive and shine.”

This personalized support has allowed Ava to blossom. As an infant and toddler, adults were her safe haven. Interacting socially with peers was overwhelming. Now, she enjoys group time at the end of each day in a loud environment that once would have been a sensory barrier. Jessica couldn't agree more. “I look at my daughter now and see an inquisitive, social, interactive student. Ava has truly progressed because of her time at Anchor Center.”

Ava's fighting spirit will walk across the stage this summer as part of Anchor Center's graduating class of 2017. In the words of Jessica and so many families that have come before her, it is “truly bittersweet.”



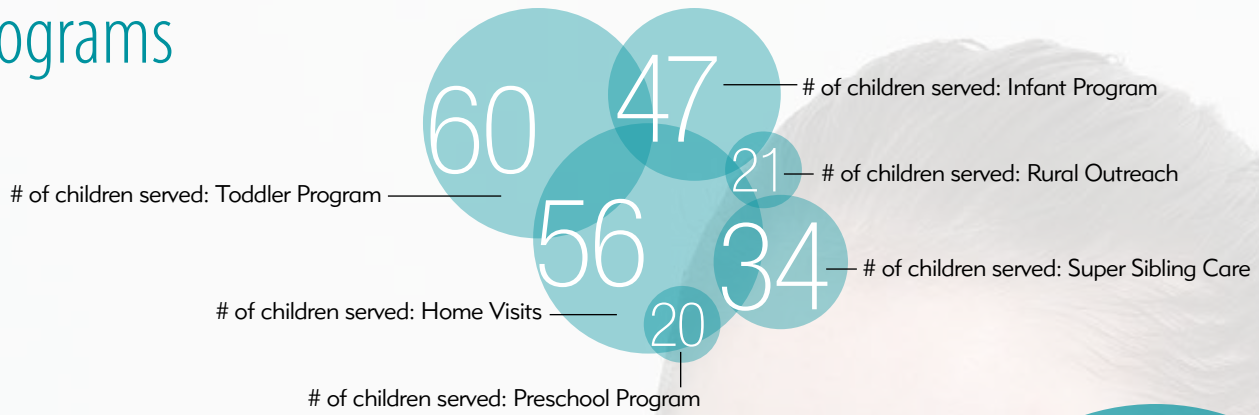
Preschool Program Overview

Children are independent of their families or caregiver during program and attend twice a week. A typical Preschool

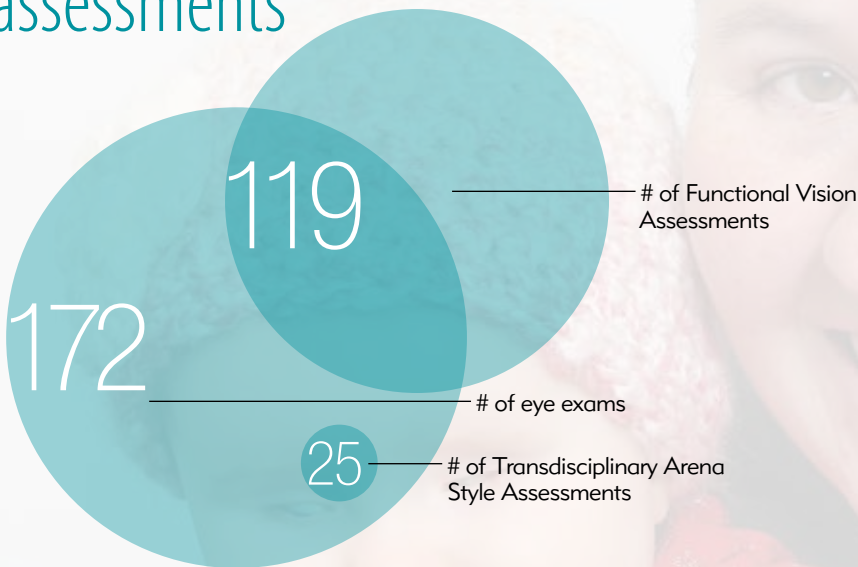
Program week might include:

- Literacy, including pre-braille and story time
- Community meal or snack time
- Orientation and mobility skill building
- Motor development and outdoor play
- Gardening and horticultural therapy
- Field trips
- Music therapy

programs



assessments



Referral sources: pediatricians, ophthalmologists, Children's Hospital, community centered boards, medical professionals, self-referrals

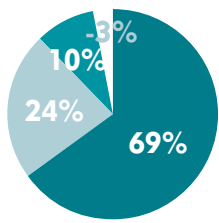
board of directors

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- Marlo Naumer
- Tami Perez-Mesa
- Doug Reeb

staff

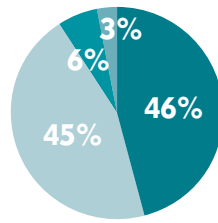
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- Heather Cameron, *Executive Director*
- Lorraine Chevarria, *TSVI*
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- Elise Darrow, *Teaching Assistant*
- Mindy Doyle-McCall, *Physical Therapist*
- Morgan Fitzpatrick, *Teaching Assistant*
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- Kelly Mitchell, *Teaching Assistant*
- Lisa Roll Moore, *TSVI*
- Zoe Morgese, *Speech Language Pathologist*
- Frances Owens, *Community Relations Manager*
- Kivanc Ozer-Afsar, *Family Specialist*
- Sarah Roberts, *Administrative Assistant*
- Dawn Schipper, *Special Events Coordinator*
- Belinda Severtson, *Transportation Manager*
- Callie Spotted Elk, *TSVI*
- John Taylor, *Accounting Manager*
- Sarah Vallese, *TSVI*
- Angela Vanderlan, *Teaching Assistant*
- Savannah Wippel, *Director of Operations*
- Kristine Wolfe, *Development Director*





SOURCES OF INCOME

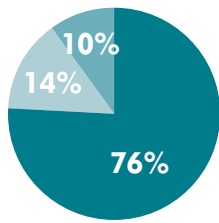
69% contributions	\$784,188
24% special events (net)	270,580
10% program fees	109,255
-3% investment income	(32,664)
0% other	4,478
0% state grants	0
	<u>\$1,135,837</u>



SOURCES OF CONTRIBUTIONS

46% foundations	\$362,638
45% individual	349,130
6% corporate	49,610
3% group	22,810
	<u>\$784,188</u>

End of Year Net Assets \$11,077,429



SOURCES OF EXPENSES

76% program services	\$1,581,726
14% fundraising	298,890
10% management / general	210,852
	<u>\$2,091,468</u>

FY2016

July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

Our Volunteer Program is filled with love and dedication and is essential in supporting our mission — from admin to classroom

Meet Mary Kelly, Our Volunteer Extraordinaire

Classroom volunteers are instrumental in ensuring our children feel secure while supporting our professional team's educational and therapeutic goals. Mary Kelly's dedication goes above and beyond. She has shared her warmth, compassion and love for Anchor Center for three years, volunteering twice a week in preschool.

"I have been very fortunate to have had Mary as a part of our classroom. Her extra hands have made it possible for me to actually lead the class," said Callie Spotted Elk, Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments.

Mary addresses each child with patience and is always ready to help with a smile on her face. As a recipient of the Anchor Center Virginia Deal Williams Award for excellence in voluntarism, Mary embodies the spirit of enthusiasm, dedication and willingness to serve beyond expectations.

She brings thoughtful insights to her role, of which Callie shares: "She allows us to process and collaborate on important issues. The children have developed a relationship with her and seek her out for meaningful interactions."

Beyond the classroom, Mary helps behind the scenes at events, with one-time volunteer needs and as part of our Anchor Night Watch Program. We couldn't do it without her or any of our volunteers — thank you!



groups: 312 volunteers / 28 groups / 941 hours

monthly relationships: Junior League for various projects and Denver School of Nursing for our Night Watch Program

quilt making: various volunteers have put in 344 hours to sew 130 quilts given to our infant families when they first come to us

events: many groups, such as the Delta Gammas, help us with our events; in FY2016, 172 volunteers worked 596 event hours

individuals: 721 volunteers / 3,635 hours

our individual volunteers help with one-on-one child support in programs, parent programming, administrative duties and garden activities, as well as helping with Night Watch, including approximately 90 nurses from the Denver School of Nursing. We are lucky to have 12 weekly volunteers and 19 monthly volunteers helping us provide care for our children and their families.



the year in pictures: children's activities, holidays and fundraising events





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Dear Friends: As we reflect on another year of service to children and families at Anchor Center, we are inspired by the bravery, hope and love we experience daily. The heart of Anchor Center continues to be our children and families. They are thriving because of you. Our multi-talented, professional staff provides tailored care, giving their very best every day to children like Ava, Jordan and J.J. We are grateful to be a part of each family's journey.

In reflecting on FY2016, we navigated a year of growth and transition. We were saddened to say goodbye to some long-time Anchor staff who left for new endeavors or retirement, and we wish them well. However, we've welcomed new staff members, and are energized by our new teachers and therapists who were honored to join our Anchor team.

Anchor Center for Blind Children is a remarkable community of people. We wouldn't exist without the incredible dedication of our staff and the wonderful generosity of our volunteers,

Sage Ann Scheer
Board President



Heather Cameron
Executive Director

donors and funders. Individual donations comprised 31 percent of our budget. Foundations contributed another 32 percent and groups and corporations contributed six percent, combined. Attendance at our major events, including Sunset in the Country and our 20th Annual Foresight Golf Classic, provided an impressive 24 percent of our budget. Indeed, with less than four percent coming from government sources, we are fully supported by the Anchor family of donors, sponsors, grantors and volunteers. Simply put, we couldn't do all we do for the incredible children and families we serve without you.

We are inspired by everything that makes Anchor Center for Blind Children such a beautiful organization: our fearless children, courageous families, gifted staff, dedicated volunteers, and generous community.

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors, thank you for joining us.

Thank you for believing in us and supporting all that we do. Thank you for helping all of us **see life differently.**