



SEE LIFE DIFFERENTLY.



HOPE.  
JOY.  
TRIUMPH.



FY2017 ANNUAL REPORT

## YEAR IN REVIEW



FY2016-2017

Dear Friend,

Twenty-seventeen (2017) marked 35 years since our humble beginnings in 1982 when Anchor Center for Blind Children was launched in the basement of a church for a small group of preschool children. Little did the founding women know that the organization they built would grow to impact thousands of children and families – giving each child and family loving support to explore, confidence to take risks, and early education, laying a strong foundation for their lifelong journey.


Twenty-seventeen (2017) also marked the 10 Year Anniversary of operations in Anchor Center’s beautiful school. Lovingly designed by architect Maria Cole, and funded in full by our incredible donors and philanthropic community, the center has withstood the test of time and still gleams like new. Across the years, thousands of babies have been carried, toddlers have crawled, and preschoolers have walked (and yes, even run) down its grand corridor on a mission to get to their next destination: the Light Room, Children’s Kitchen, Literacy Room, Art Room, Classrooms, and of course the ever popular Motor Room and Gardens.

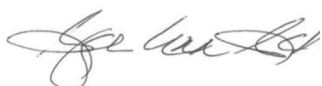
Year after year, great strides are made at Anchor Center. In 2017, one of our largest preschool graduation classes of 12 remarkable children accepted their diplomas and prepared for the next great adventure in their lives: kindergarten. In the same year those children graduated, 105 new children were referred for services, most often arriving in the arms of their parents, grandparents and foster parents, taking the first “step” on their unique journey at Anchor Center. This year also marked the expansion of Anchor Center’s Eye Clinics. Operated in partnership with Children’s Eye Physicians, a new doctor, Dr. Annie Steele, joined Dr. Robert King in the wheelhouse, increasing exam days at Anchor Center to three clinics per month. Thanks to their volunteer work, in 2017, Dr’s King and Steele provided ophthalmology exams and consultations for 160 babies, toddlers, preschoolers and young children at Anchor Center.

People are often surprised to learn that Anchor Center is funded nearly in full by donors and grantors. Such has been the case since we were founded 35 years ago. Our community’s support comes to us by way of individual donations, corporate gifts, grants, bequests and events. Collectively, in 2017 gifts to Anchor Center totaled just over \$1.4 million. If it had not been for the incredible support of this community, not the least of which are the wise and generous women of Delta Gamma, Anchor Center for Blind Children would never have been built; it certainly would not be here today.

This year’s annual report gives a glimpse into how Anchor Center is a community built and sustained by the remarkable generosity of our donors and funders, the incredible dedication and giftedness of our staff, the loving contributions of our volunteers, and the loyal leadership of our board of directors. Collectively, we all make up the family that is Anchor Center.

On behalf of the board of directors and staff, thank you for being in our family. Thank you so very much for helping to make 2017 a success. Thank you for making Anchor Center – a gift for children and families, a shining beacon in our community – such an incredible space, such an incredible place!

 Heather Cameron, Executive Director

 Sage Ann Scheer, Ph.D., President of Anchor Center’s Board of Directors

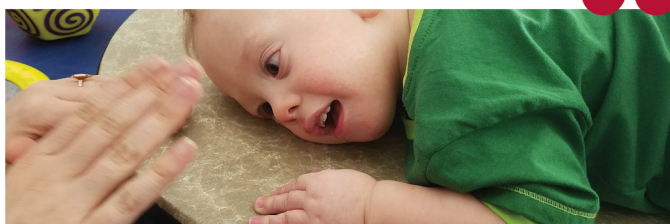
# ANCHOR CENTER'S INFANT PROGRAM NURTURES VITAL DEVELOPMENT SKILLS IN CHILDREN BIRTH TO 18 MONTHS, BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR LEARNING.



## MEET XANDER

**I honestly believe Xander would not have hit the developmental stages in the time he has without the help of Anchor Center. They have shown a lot of patience and compassion in helping Xander excel as much as possible.**

*Ryan Dreher, Xander's Dad*



## INFANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

*(Ages newborn – 18 months)*

Parents and their children work in small groups and one-to-one sessions where teachers and therapists lead structured “centers” focused on each child’s visual, auditory, motor and cognitive strengths. Our team of vision teachers and physical, speech, occupational and music therapists:

- Work with babies on sensory exploration and development
- Teach families about infant development and caregiving specific to their child’s vision and/or vision/hearing impairment
- Share play-based learning activities that can easily be done at home
- Help families understand their child’s diagnosis and strengths

After Xander was diagnosed with Septo-optic Dysplasia, his family was lost and “everything seemed like chaos,” recalls Xander’s dad, Ryan. However, when Xander was referred to Anchor Center at 6 months old by Children’s Hospital Colorado, his family started to feel a sense of relief.

“Early on, the staff at Anchor Center were very supportive and understanding. We also met other families in similar situations. Seeing their success stories and learning how Anchor Center was able to help their child helped us to better adjust to Xander’s diagnosis,” says Ryan.

Quickly, Xander started adjusting too. When he first started at Anchor Center, he didn’t interact much with his surroundings or activities. As time went on, his family noticed that he became more interactive and even started focusing on objects more. “We discovered that he enjoyed the music room a lot – and it’s still one of his favorites today,” says Ryan. “Recently, he’s been the life of the party during classes and it’s just so exciting to see. He is a completely different child from when he started.”

Ryan also credits Anchor Center’s on-site eye exam room as a huge help. “With an on-site doctor, we can get answers quickly and teachers and therapists can share what they have observed with Xander during program. This helps us get a better understanding of Xander’s vision. It allows everyone to communicate easier and be on the same page when it comes to treatment. Also, because Dr. King (Anchor Center’s on-site volunteer Ophthalmologist) sees so many children with vision impairment, he knows what to look for and how to better explain the condition to parents.”

Xander’s family is hopeful for the future. “Early after Xander’s diagnosis,” recalls Ryan, “his future appeared bleak. Now, after the therapies and help he has received at Anchor Center, he is overcoming obstacles, exceeding expectations and is always surprising us with what he is able to accomplish. He is a fighter and I am excited to see what the future brings for him.”

## INFANTS SERVED: 57

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sage Ann Scheer, *President*  
 Kerry Musfeldt, *Immediate Past President*  
 Matt Duncan, *First Vice President*  
 Sherry Stripling, *Second Vice President*  
 Jeff Watkins, *Treasurer*  
 Pam Metzger, *Secretary*  
 Murri Bishop  
 Cheryl Blankenship  
 Randy Braun  
 Adam Kemp  
 Andy Miller  
 Donnis Moore  
 Amy Naes  
 Marlo Naumer  
 Doug Reeb

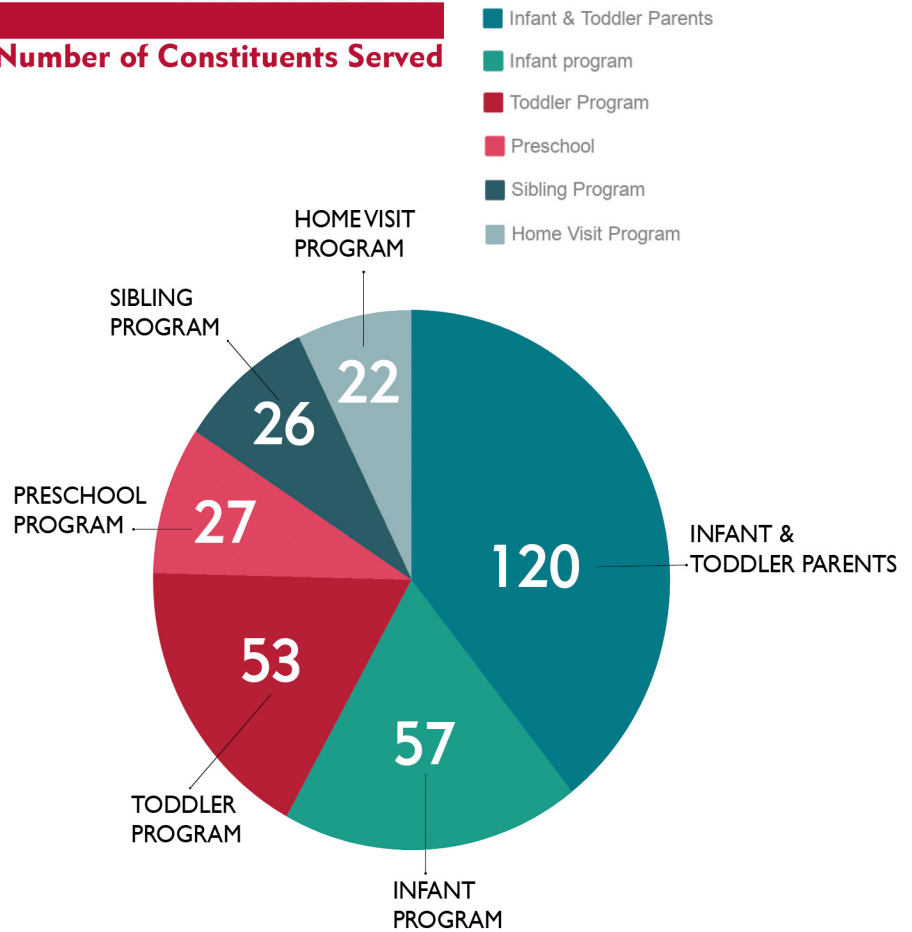
## STAFF

Naomi Aitken, *Volunteer Manager*  
 Caroline Calabrese, *Teaching Assistant*  
 Heather Cameron, *Executive Director*  
 Lorraine Chevarria, *TSVI*  
 Linda Corssmit, *Eye Clinic Coordinator*  
 Deb Curry, *Family Services Manager*  
 Elise Darrow, *Teaching Assistant*  
 Mindy Doyle-McCall, *Physical Therapist*  
 Morgan Fitzpatrick, *Teaching Assistant*  
 Gwen Gale, *Office Manager*  
 Lisa Gallegos, *Donor Relations Manager*  
 Louanna Gerleman, *Teaching Assistant*  
 Donna Halfield, *Occupational Therapist*  
 Mollie Hiebert, *Family Services Intake Coordinator & Music Therapist*  
 Ali Huckins, *Developmental Psych Specialist*  
 Karen Jamison, *TSVI*  
 Joy Jessop, *Occupational Therapist*  
 Melissa Licon, *Kitchen Assistant*  
 Erin Lovely, *Horticulture Therapies Coordinator*  
 Amy Marians, *Physical Therapist*  
 Tamara Miller, *TSVI*  
 Kelly Mitchell, *Teaching Assistant*  
 Kelsey Montague, *Communications Manager*  
 Zoe Morgese, *Speech/Language Pathologist*  
 Frances Owens, *Community Relations Manager*  
 Sarah Rice, *Administrative Assistant*  
 Callie Robinson, *TSVI*  
 Belinda Severtson, *Transportation Manager*  
 Dawn Schipper, *Communications and Grants Manager*  
 Lindsay Standish, *Director of Programs*  
 John Taylor, *Finance Director*  
 Kathryn Tower, *Speech/Language Pathologist*  
 Sarah Vallese, *TSVI*  
 Savannah Wippel, *Director of Operations*  
 Kristine Wolfe, *Development Director*

\*TSVI: Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments

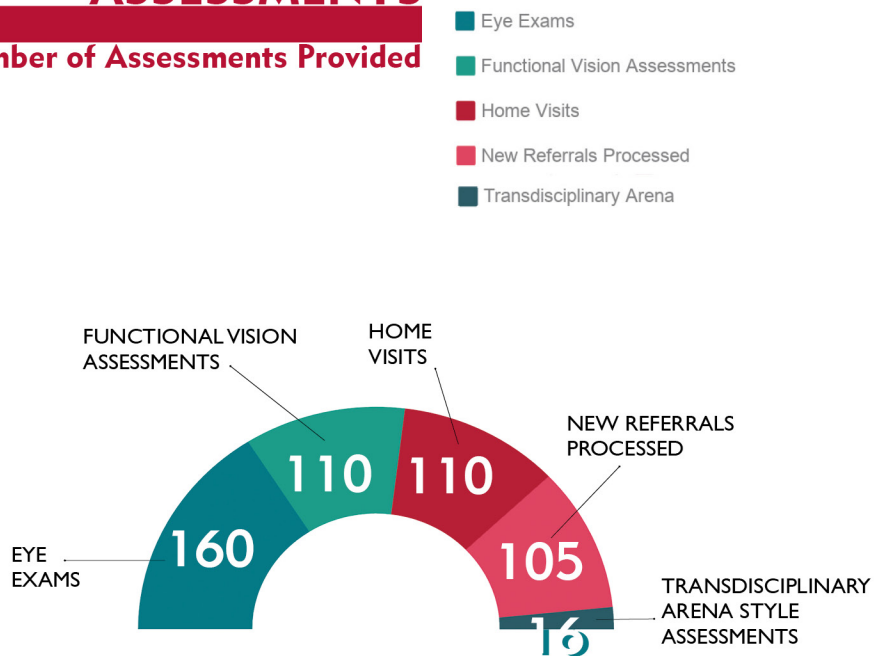
## PROGRAMS

### Number of Constituents Served



## ASSESSMENTS

### Number of Assessments Provided



# OUR TODDLER PROGRAM FOCUSES ON GROUP PLAY AND SOCIALIZATION FOR CHILDREN 18 MONTHS TO 3 YEARS OLD.



## MEET MATTHEW

I believe Matthew has all the potential for success as any other child without impairment - and even more - because the training he is getting at Anchor Center is helping him develop his skills, acquire new ones and expand his abilities.

*Flora Njionou Djofang, Matthew's Mom*



## TODDLER PROGRAM OVERVIEW

*(Ages 18 months to 3 years)*

Families and caregivers attend the Toddler Program twice a week at Anchor Center with their child and continue working on visual and auditory development, communication, and motor development, (as well as parent education). 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
- Guide safe and independent exploration and mobility
- Help children gradually separate from family members or caregivers in preparation for Preschool

When Matthew's ophthalmologist detected a visual impairment at three months, his parents knew exactly where to turn. His older brother, Serges, who was also born with ocular-cutaneous albinism, had started his own Anchor Center journey three years before.

"After seeing the incredible progress Serges made, we knew that Matthew would also be able to navigate, grow and flourish there – and that Anchor Center would continue to be a moral and emotional support for our entire family," recalls Matthew's mom, Flora.

Throughout the weeks and the months, Matthew's family witnessed him "changing from the little baby completely refusing to open his eyes under the bright light to a little energetic boy eager to discover everything around him."

At Anchor Center, Matthew is overcoming his fear of new floors and surfaces, due to his impaired depth perception. He is learning to explore with his cane, and practicing activities like swinging, spinning and putting his feet on the grass.

Similar to his brother, Matthew is improving quickly – "wanting to be independent, becoming his own problem solver and not letting his visual impairment prevent him from achieving whatever he has in mind," says Flora.

Even with all of their successes, Flora admits, "sometimes we feel overwhelmed by the task of raising children with visual impairments. But Anchor Center staff are always present with a smile, a word of encouragement, and tips and advice to help us on a daily basis at home."

Flora also credits the Family Services program at Anchor Center for providing additional support. "The possibility to share experiences with others going through similar experiences is like a group therapy for the parents," she says.

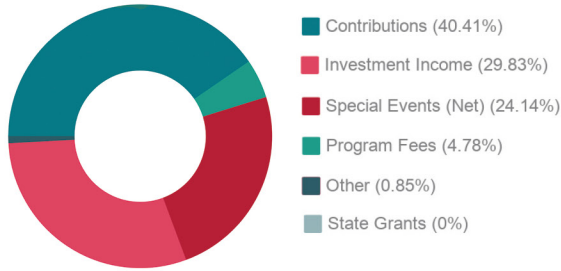
"Our whole Anchor Center experience," says Flora, "including the expertise of the staff, and the equipment and materials available, is irreplaceable."

## TODDLERS SERVED: 53

# FY2017

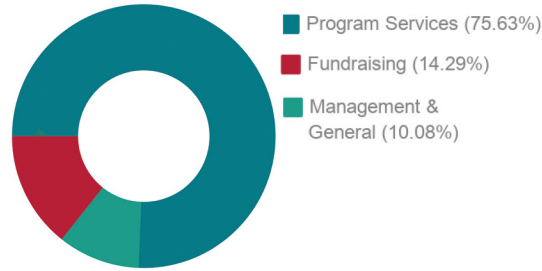
July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017

## SOURCES OF INCOME



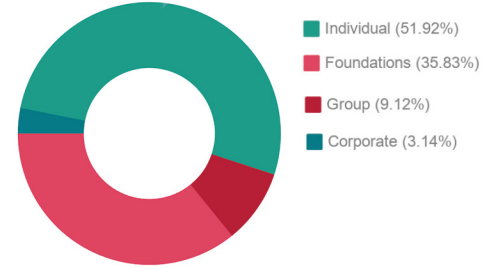
40% Contributions	\$780,886
30% Investment Income	\$576,352
24% Special Events (Net)	\$466,426
5% Program Fees	\$92,332
1% Other	\$16,384
0% State Grants	\$0
	<b>\$1,932,380</b>

## SOURCES OF EXPENSES



76% Program Services	\$1,581,726
14% Fundraising	\$298,890
10% Management & General	\$210,852
	<b>\$2,091,468</b>

## CONTRIBUTIONS



52% Individual	\$405,397
36% Foundations	\$279,800
9% Group	\$71,178
3% Corporate	\$24,511
	<b>\$780,886</b>

## VOLUNTEERS

### GROUPS: 265 VOLUNTEERS / 1,080 HOURS / 22 GROUPS

Group & Corporate relationships: Junior League of Denver, Excel Energy, Regency Centers, EKS&H, Stanley British Primary School, and Delta Gamma are just a few of the volunteer champions we partner with for various projects. Quilt making: various volunteers have put in 511 hours to sew 127 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 FY2017, 156 volunteers supported our special events.

### INDIVIDUALS: 366 VOLUNTEERS / 4,528 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 Anchor's Respite Program, Night Watch, including approximately 53 nurses from the Denver School of Nursing. We are lucky to have 35 regularly scheduled volunteers who provided 320 hours in program helping us care for our children and their families.



# OUR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM PREPARES CHILDREN, 3-5 YEARS OLD, FOR LIFE IN SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY.



## MEET LYDIA



The most measurable benefit to Lydia has been that her vision has actually improved! Her CVI scale has gone from a level I to a level III. We had only dreamed of such successes and are so proud of her.” Danae Davison, Lydia’s Mom



## PRESCHOOL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

(Ages 3-5 years)

This program is designed to increase each child’s level of independence and self-confidence with a special focus on preparing students for an appropriate kindergarten setting by age 5. Children attend program with their peers twice a week with classroom instruction led by Anchor’s transdisciplinary team who work in tandem to provide individualized early education instruction. A typical week might include:

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

Lydia was referred to Anchor Center at three years old, due to Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI). When she first started at Anchor Center, Lydia was unsure and timid...and so was her family. “It was the first place she had really spent time outside our home and we were so nervous to let others care for her,” recalls Lydia’s mom, Danae.

But they soon noticed that the Anchor Center staff was acutely attuned to Lydia’s subtle cues and was genuinely interested in learning how to best support her. It helped her family to feel comfortable and confident in allowing Lydia to become immersed in the Anchor Center experience.

“What we didn’t know before enrolling,” recalls Danae, “is that Anchor Center offers so much more than vision therapy. The vision services are what brought us in, but the accessible garden, motor room, music room, literacy room and art room gave a much broader range of experiences to Lydia than we were expecting.”

Soon, Lydia was communicating her favorite aspects of Anchor Center – smelling the thyme plants in the garden, riding in the red wagon down the hallways, playing the piano with her feet, and enjoying treats on friends’ birthdays.

Now a preschooler who will graduate this spring, Lydia has come to recognize Anchor Center as a safe place – a place of joy, where new experiences offer excitement instead of fear. “As soon as we enter the lobby she sits up a little straighter in her chair and she starts to wiggle her arms in excitement. Sometimes she even gives a big smile,” says Danae.

In fact, Lydia has thrived so much that this year her family enrolled her in an additional preschool program in their local school district. Danae credits Anchor Center’s teachers and therapists with helping her, as a parent, understand how to help Lydia “work on her vision, but also how to interact with the smells, textures, sounds and tastes of her world. And to be patient.”

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## PRESCHOOLERS SERVED: 27

