

In 2014-2015:

Anchor Center served **382 children and families**.

Teachers and therapists provided **437 home visits** to children too medically fragile to attend center-based services in Stapleton.

Teachers and therapists made **8 rural outreach trips** to support families throughout Colorado.

Staff participated in **69 IFSP/IEP meetings**, which are planning/goal setting meetings required by law for all children with disabilities.

In addition, the Family Support/Education Staff held **136 parent/family group meetings** on a variety of topics, including specific diagnoses. The team also provided individual assistance to families.

The staff from Children's Eye Physicians provided **101 eye exams** to children who receive our services and also to children referred to the program.

Our new respite program with the Denver School of Nursing served **123 children** and gave parents and caregivers a night off.

Anchor Center for Blind Children is the only private organization in Colorado serving children from birth to 5-years-old who are blind, visually impaired or deafblind. Most of our funding comes from individuals. No family is ever denied services due to an inability to pay a nominal tuition fee.

Annual Report

July 1, 2014–June 30, 2015

Lives Transformed: Patrick's Journey

"Wait and see," doctors said.

Erin walked out of her 26-week ultrasound terrified and shocked. Scheduled as a routine appointment, what should have looked like brain matter showed only an empty mass of black fluid.

Routine became a world filled with specialists, none with any clear answers. Patrick was born at 36 weeks via caesarian section, his head circumference the size of a typical 5-month-old infant.

Birth memories and newborn photos are usually joyful for new parents. For Erin, even now the pain is sometimes too challenging to bear. Her first thoughts of "Will he walk? Will he talk? How long will he live?" progressed to "Will he ever be able to take care of himself?"

After undergoing neurosurgery to place a shunt in his brain to drain excess fluid, Patrick was diagnosed with hydrocephalus, an interhemispheric cyst, and callosal agenesis. Erin explains this means he has two brain cysts and is missing part of the brain that connects the left and right side.

A follow-up appointment is when the doctor suggested "It's possible he can't see."

"His eyes would cross nearly constantly (strabismus) and he didn't ever look at us. The thought that he could be visually impaired never occurred to us," Erin said. "In all of the heart-wrenching conversations this had never come up." Patrick's diagnosis — Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) — is currently one of the most commonly diagnosed visual impairments in the developed world.

After being referred for an assessment with Anchor Center's professional staff, Patrick qualified for infant services and received the comprehensive support needed. With a limited time frame for early visual development, it's critical that children like Patrick receive intervention services. Our skilled teaching staff provide needed light-based

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Patrick's Journey, continued

and sensory experiences appropriate for a diagnosis of CVI. Such opportunities at an early age provide the chance for children like Patrick to improve vision skills and develop better social responses essential for lifelong growth.

“On our first day there, the teacher showed a puppet to him,” Erin remembers. “She moved it ever so slowly, talking to him about it. He was responding to her unlike anything I had ever seen. I knew at this point that Anchor Center was something special and this place was going to change our lives forever. Anchor Center is our community, our support, and a home away from home. It is a place where the dignity and potential of every individual is respected,” Erin remarks. “It is a place where the focus is on what kids *can do* rather than what they *can't*.”



Patrick as an infant

Longtime Staff Say Goodbye

Anchor Center for Blind Children said goodbye to many staff members this year, as well as welcomed new professionals to the outstanding Anchor Center team.

33 YEARS

Carol Puchalski

Developmental Psychology Consultant

After being hired, Carol was surprised to learn of her collegiate fraternity's founding link to Anchor Center. “There would not be an Anchor Center for Blind Children without the Delta Gamma Fraternity. The vision to start a center in Denver came from the handful of area DG alumnae who saw that this was being done in other parts of the country and believed strongly in the philanthropic Service for Sight/Aid to the Blind foundations of Delta Gamma. Once established, they put in countless volunteer hours to keep Anchor Center afloat.”

21 YEARS

Wendy Woodard

Classroom Aide

Living with vision impairment herself, Wendy knows the challenges facing our children and has had a special connection with so many of our students. “It's so interesting to see the shape kids are in when they first come here and how well developed they are when they leave,” marvels Wendy. “I will miss being a part of that. Anchor Center has given me a place to be.”

18 YEARS

Amanda Bryant

Music Therapist/Consultant

In June of 1997, I watched my first class of Anchor students graduate. In June 2015, I watched my 19th set of graduates. It has been an amazingly rich experience to serve Anchor all these years. Anchor has shaped me, and more importantly how I work with kids as a therapist. The strengths of our talented “cast” has always propelled me to be the best I can be, and our families' experiences are an inspiration to live in the moment.



2014-2015 Staff

Alice Applebaum, *Executive Director*
 Sarah Azibo, *Teaching Assistant & Super Sibling Program Lead*
 Gwen Borchert, *Office Manager*
 Lorraine Chevarria, *Teacher of the Visually Impaired*
 Pam Coen, *Office Manager*
 KT Colgan, *Volunteer Manager*
 Linda Corssmit, *Special Projects*
 Mindy Doyle-McCall, *Physical Therapist*
 Louanna Gerleman, *Teaching Assistant*
 Donna Halffield, *Occupational Therapist*
 Stefanie Kirkwood, *Teacher of the Visually Impaired*
 Sue Kliner, *Early Childhood Special Educator*
 Jennifer Klyczek, *Teacher of the Visually Impaired*
 Paula Landry, *Teacher of the Visually Impaired*
 Caroline Lemmens, *Early Childhood Teacher*
 Amy Marians, *Physical Therapist*
 Karen McClean, *Teaching Assistant & Nurse*

Katie McLaughlin, *Parent Counselor*
 Kelly Mitchell, *Teaching Assistant*
 Lindsey Mohatt, *Occupational Therapist*
 Lisa Roll Moore, *Teacher of the Visually Impaired*
 Zoe Morgese, *Speech/Language Pathologist*
 Kivanc Ozer-Afsar, *Family Specialist*
 Andrea Peralta, *Program Director*
 Carol Benson Puchalski, *Psychology Consultant*
 Dawn Schipper, *Special Events Coordinator*
 Belinda Severtson, *Transportation Manager*
 John Taylor, *Accounting Manager*
 Sarah Bickford Vallese, *Teacher of the Visually Impaired*
 Angela Vanderlan, *Teaching Assistant & Horticultural Therapy Program*
 Savannah Wippel, *Assistant Development Director*
 Kristine Wolfe, *Development Director*
 Wendy Woodard, *Classroom Aide*

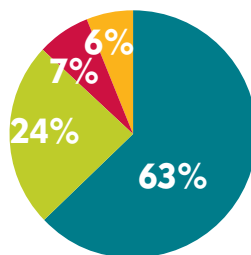
2014-2015 Board of Directors

Murri Bishop
 Cheryl Blankenship, *Second Vice President*
 Randy Braun
 Curt Brown, *Past President*
 Matt Duncan
 Susie Horner
 Michael McNeill
 Pam Metzger
 Andy Miller
 Donnis Moore
 Kerry Musfeldt, *President*
 Amy Naes
 Marlo Naumer
 Tami Perez-Mesa
 Kirsti Peterson, *First Vice President*
 Doug Reeb
 Sage Ann Scheer
 Sherry Stripling, *Secretary*
 Keith Vaughn
 Jeff Watkins, *Treasurer*

Consulting Partners

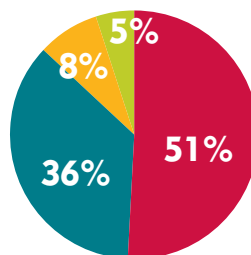
Amanda Bryant, *Music Therapist*
 Pat Lewis, *Teacher of the Visually Impaired*

Sources and Uses of Income: FY 2014-2015



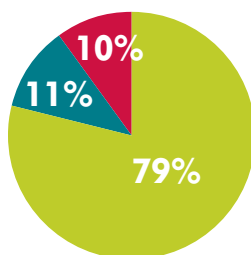
SOURCES OF INCOME

63% contributions	\$1,227,339
24% special events (net)	466,766
7% investment income	138,963
6% program fees	108,938
0% other	4,740
0% state grants	2,033
	<u>\$1,948,779</u>



SOURCES OF CONTRIBUTIONS

51% individual	\$628,594
36% foundations	442,278
8% corporate	96,555
5% group	59,913
	<u>\$1,227,339</u>



SOURCES OF EXPENSES

79% program services	\$1,892,368
11% fundraising	264,169
10% management / general	251,391
	<u>\$2,407,928</u>



Alice Applebaum Retires: A portion of her thoughts on leaving Anchor Center after 19 years

"I want to talk about the building because not only was it one of the most fun (and challenging) things I got to do, but also because it symbolizes the best of who we have been and can be. This building is about what it means to be on the same team, about cooperation, collaboration, of listening and acting in good faith. And with the outcome being so much bigger than any one of us. In fact, it's so much bigger than all of us.

There are hundreds of stories about the building but here's what I want to say about it. When we were designing and building, we were also in the process of updating our mission/vision and branding. All we could talk about was the building and finally our consultant asked us, "So, do you want to be known as the people with the beautiful building or is there something more to you?" That sure got our attention.

As we know, we are about a lot more! At the same time the building represents so much of that. This building is symbolic of a time of everyone having a voice. We took every idea and did our best to incorporate it — from the motor room, where we don't have to take down and put up equipment every 45 minutes, to the observation windows, to the messy play art room being connected to the light room. I cannot see any of those without hearing the voice of the person who put it on the list. The decisions were thoughtful and always based on what we felt was best for the children!

The building has been used for so much more than our programs and events: We've held three touching memorial services here, we hosted client events for board members who wanted to share our story with their clients, a graduation party, we even had a wedding here.

We have Delta Gammas (along with their husbands and children) who have Anchor Center in their blood and bones.

Their commitment is unwavering and their names are on the walls and thresholds and garden signs. From writing by-laws, to doing maintenance and cleaning the old building, to making chicken salad and hosting events, and begging for money and support — these women built a deep and strong foundation upon which we've been able to continue to build.

Now I'd like to leave you with two thoughts:

First, when we opened the building, one of the things I said in my little speech was a quote by Meister Eckhart who said, "If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is THANK YOU, it will be enough." Thank you for the memories, the trust you had in me and for sharing this journey. Your future lies ahead and as I watch and wish the very best for Anchor Center — for the children and families — I also know that it's time to let someone else steer this ship, and the kindest, most helpful, gracious and generous thing I can do is get out of the way and let Anchor Center soar.

Second: I want to quote one of the finest graduation speeches I've ever heard, not by Steve Jobs, Maria Shriver or Oprah, who have all made fine speeches, but by Anchor Center graduate Claire Naumer who said, "Now that I'm in kindergarten I can use big words. The word for today is bittersweet."



Anchor Center for Blind Children is a not-for profit organization dedicated to providing early intervention/education to blind and visually impaired children throughout the state of Colorado. Our staff of highly trained vision specialists, therapists and teachers strive to foster the full potential of children who are blind by providing exemplary education, therapy and family support services.

Our mission is to teach visually impaired infants, young children and their families, providing hope and a nurturing environment where children reach their highest potential.



"Seeing life differently"

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