FOR BLIND CHILDREN

# HOPE JOY TRIUMPH

FY2021 ANNUAL REPORT JULY 2020 - JUNE 2021 1



#### Dear Friends,

After a tumultuous 2020, I'm sure many of you shared my hope that 2021 would bring health and peace to our world. Unfortunately, that was not the case. But like so many other organizations, amidst the chaos, Anchor Center's grace and grit, and its commitment to children, families, collaboration, and quality were never more evident! I remain so proud of our team and the things we accomplished, despite another challenging year.

We completed construction and unveiled our new state-of-the-art eye clinic in the lower level of the Anchor building in October. Dr. Robert King, our Pediatric Ophthalmologist, saw his first patients in the new clinic in November. The new clinic provides ample space for Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments to observe and assist with appointments, for family members to comfortably attend appointments in the exam rooms, and for Dr. King and Dr. Anna Steele to see more patients overall. Families are welcomed to the clinic by a whimsical ocean-themed sensory wall, designed by Maria Cole, original architect of the Anchor Center building. This wall consists of many different elements, textures, and lights, which children can tactilely explore while they wait for their appointment. It has been a big hit!

I want to acknowledge that none of our accomplishments you will read about in this year's Annual Report would have been possible without the support of our steadfast and generous donors. It has been a scary time for nonprofits, as many foundations and donors turned their efforts toward immediate needs, such as food insecurity, mental health, and natural disaster relief. Rightfully so. But a great many of you continued your support, or stepped up for the first time to support us, and that allowed us not only to continue our high-quality services for children and families, but to enhance them. On behalf of the Anchor Center staff, thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

With Gratitude,







## HOW DO WE MEASURE A YEAR?

Over the 2020-21 school year, Anchor Center served 110 children, 248 primary caregivers, and 22 siblings through center-based, home visitation, and enhanced virtual services.

99 New Referrals (114 hours)

**179** Eye Exams (**179 hours**)

Low Vision Clinics (**4 hours**)

**70** Functional Vision Assessments (**84 hours**)

**19** Transdisciplinary Arena Style Assessments (TBPA) (**48 hours**)



**41** Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) Range Assessments (**123 hours**) **85%** of children demonstrated an improved or stable CVI Range Score after receiving Anchor Center services.

**27** Neonatal Assessment Visual European Grid (NAVEG) Screenings (**13.5 hours**) *Assessment Screening for CVI* 

**812** Home Visits **31%** increase in home visit programming hours



### PROGRAMS



# **INFANTS** (0 - 18 months)



Teachers and therapists help caregivers gain understanding of their child's unique vision challenges and strengths; strategies to care for

their infant's special needs; and tools to nurture their child's early development.

Tivoli, 14 months old, has been in our Infant Program since she was 4 months old. She has a retinal disorder that impacts her vision. It has been so fun to watch her learn and grow over the past year! She has some amazing tactile exploration skills...she amazes us with how willing she is to use her hands to explore different textures and environments. Tivoli is a mover...she crawls and explores all over each classroom, eager to take in everything she can about her surroundings. She has an adorable little personality and is extremely social. After she knows she's done something good she looks up at the adults nearby with a big smile, anticipating the praise she knows is coming! Tivoli is a jourte bare in our program eventues!

is a joy to have in our program every week!

Tammy Miller, CSVI, Infant & Toddler Program Coordinator

25 Students Served

# **TODDLERS** (18 months - 3 years)

Teachers and caregivers work with toddlers on their visual, auditory, and motor development, orientation and mobility, including cane travel and pre-literacy, communication, and social skills.

> Our daughter Anvitha has had an amazing journey and experience with Anchor Center. The love and care provided at Anchor Center helped her overcome some of the challenges with vision and mobility and continue to do so in our journey. We are so fortunate and blessed to be part of an amazing place such as Anchor Center to support our child's overall development.

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Vamsi, Anvitha's parent

Anvitha

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# **PRESCHOOLERS** (3-5 years)

Preschoolers receive individualized early childhood special education via the nationally accredited Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). Preschool advances instruction in orientation and mobility, literacy and braille, prosocial and daily living skills, and the use of assistive technology. Preschoolers also enjoy multisensory education through music and horticultural therapies, as well as community field trips and events.

I met Milad in our Infant/Toddler Program almost 2 years ago, and now have the pleasure of having him in my preschool classroom, The Green Squares! A couple of years ago, Milad had trouble processing a lot of clutter; auditory, visual, and physical. Often, he would retreat, avoid, and become upset. The strides he has taken since then are incredible to witness. Coming to preschool, and his family working diligently together has helped Milad integrate his senses and really blossom. He is now curious of his friends and wants to share experiences with them, looks forward to eating lunch at school, and best of all... the family has shared that Milad has now been able to truly enjoy the company of his cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents when they come over to visit. Way to go, Milad.

Caroline Vaszauskas, Early Childhood Special Educator

Milad

Students

Served

Students <u>Served</u>

"

#### HOME VISITS (0-3 years)

Provided in the child's home, our Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVIs) offer one-to-one vision consultation and training to parents/caregivers and children. Our TSVIs assist parents in adapting their homes and practicing techniques to promote and nurture infant and early childhood development, exploration and learning.

Harper participates in our Home Visit program and is an exceptional learner. Born with bilateral microphthalmia (underdeveloped eyes), Harper has very limited vision and will be a braille reader in the near future. She already seeks the braille dots in her home environment and in the books we share and read together. The vision she does have she uses intently to examine objects, people, and the environment she navigates. She is drawn to light, patterns, and things with beautiful colors. She creates elaborate rhythms with her feet by the way she methodically hits the floor or the ottoman that sits in the center of her living room. Most of all she is daring and trusting of those she works with and will try anything new and adventurous, as she has so demonstrated at her neighborhood swimming pool by laying back in the water when prompted for learning to perform a back float.

Callie Robinson, Early Childhood Special Educator, Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment Harper

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### WHO WE SERVE

#### Dec. 2021

this dension is in honor as my grandbuggelin hullie. Bue Obstruction To Mu. Anchor Centers millie is a thriting Second Ende Bludent in Jafro anazing stellt TARANKS Despite his varial contriged set 9 Despite ner voluar and voluer of the of learning how rule of the unheld baller and climb the managed has baller and climb at school with his unheld at school with the unheld at school billiout to unheld at school be used site o falay Ander Contr will for andu Brakkin Sudi

Generous support received by Connie Brakken Smith, Millie's grandmother

### **FAMILY SERVICES**

Our Family Support Services team provides a welcoming, safe environment that builds confidence and develops lifelong skills. Family is at the core of who we are. Services include: a talented professional team founded in early intervention and childhood development, opportunities to learn from and build connections with other families, routine educational and informational sessions with experts in the field, support and education for siblings of Anchor Center children, and respite programming to ensure the well-being of families and caregivers.

### SPOTLIGHT

#### "

Anchor Center is such a wonderful place and Millie brings up her time there often.

Currently, Millie is in the 2nd grade, she absolutely loves school and she's thriving. She is learning Braille, she reads print and she's still the happiest little person around. She recently learned how to ride a bike and she's the queen of the monkey bars.

Millie and her dad and I are so thankful for the support we received during such a challenging time in our lives. Thank you for all you do!







Children Attended

9 Events



#### PARENT/CAREGIVER EDUCATION

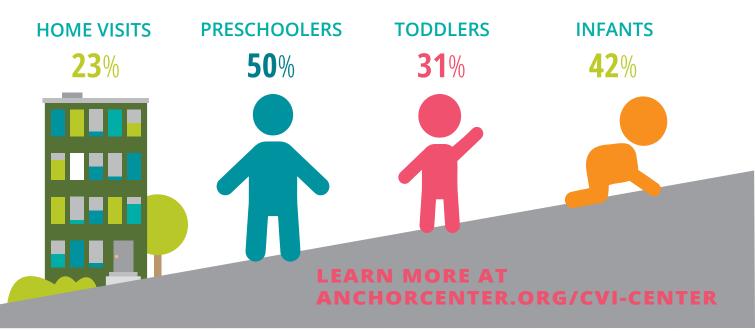






## CORTICAL VISUAL IMPAIRMENT (CVI) DIAGNOSIS BY ENROLLMENT

Roughly 45-50% of our students have been diagnosed with CVI, which is a brain-based visual impairment. That means the eyes are healthy, but the brain is not able to interpret visual information. It is the current leading cause of visual impairment in children in the developing world, including the United States and it often presents with other neurological disorders.



### **CVI INITIATIVE**

As a nationally recognized leader in the field of pediatric blindness, Anchor Center's new CVI Initiative will broaden our scope, benefit children and families in need, and positively impact research and practice in our growing field.

As a new branch of service, the CVI Initiative includes the addition of three core components to our programming and expertise:

- Highly specialized (CVI) screening and assessment services
- Rigorous research to advance the understanding of CVI and the field of pediatric vision impairment overall
- Valuable training for parents, caregivers, educators, and healthcare professionals on the application of evidence-based and best practices for young children with blindness and CVI

Overall, this groundbreaking initiative will:

Promote innovations in early intervention, education, and research for children with vision, cortical visual, dual sensory (vision and hearing), and co-occurring disabilities during their most formative years of development – birth to age five

Enhance opportunities to build expertise and knowledge in CVI amongst our staff, vision partners, and collective communities Create a national model for similar organizations across the globe, thereby filling an important niche in early childhood education and vision health services Dinah Sink

### VOLUNTEERS

Named after a long time Anchor supporter, the Virginia Deal Williams Volunteer Award is presented each year to an outstanding volunteer who embodies Virginia's enthusiasm, dedication and continued willingness to go above and beyond.

#### It is our privilege to recognize Dinah Sink as our 2021 recipient of the Virginia Deal Williams Award for her enduring commitment to our Anchor Center community.

As many of you know so well, what has grown to become our signature event began as "A Day in the Country," an afternoon picnic for a small group of Delta Gamma women and their friends. In 2004, the picnic turned into a major event when Jim and Pam Crowe generously hosted the first evening event, Sunset in the Country, at their beautiful home. Since that time, Sunset has netted

nearly \$5 million for Anchor Center ---- a remarkable achievement that would not have been possible if not for the incredible support of our community.

What many of you don't know, is the woman and force behind this event who has been responsible for so many years of its success. Since her first event at the Crowe's beautiful property in 2004, Dinah Sink, Jim Crowe's Executive Assistant, has been the behind-the-scenes architect for all its magic. From site arrangement logistics, to master timeline draftswoman, to vendor whisperer extraordinaire, this woman is a MASTER at her craft of juggling way too many balls (and plates, and elephants)-making the mad world of event planning look effortless and easy. Over the past 17 years, Dinah has easily committed over 2,000 hours of her time dedicated to ensuring every last little detail is thought of, managed and cared for. She is always the first one up on event day and the last one standing on tired feet as we leave the event site in the late night hours.

And...she has succeeded in pulling it off while keeping us in stitches. Her funny southern Virginia flare, sharp wit and unique phraseology, has kept us laughing and always in good spirits while navigating the sometimes stressful world of event planning and fundraising. And, perhaps most importantly, those of us who have been fortunate enough to work with her know that the size of her heart is equal to that of her talent. Simply put, she loves Anchor Center. She cares deeply for the precious and brave children and families we serve. Her commitment to our mission is profoundly personal and has helped us to ensure sustainability and growth for our programs. Thank you Dinah!

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS** Executive Committee

Jeff Watkins CPA President Amy Naes JD First Vice President Sherry Stripling SPHR Second Vice President Robert (Bob) King Secretary Shauna Callahan CPA Treasurer Mary Keller Andrews MBA Wendee Crowley Matt Duncan MBA Matt Harrington Maria Kunz Andrea Laser Ed.D Pam Metzger MBA Charles (Chic) Naumer Ph.D Karen Roberts MSW George Williams, JR. JD

## VOLUNTEERS

91 Volunteers Contributed 1,556 hours worth \$43,568

## STAFF

### 8 TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

(including **2** Orientation and Mobility Specialists)

### 5 EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATORS

### **THERAPISTS**

(with specialties in physical, speech and language, occupational, music, and horticulture therapy)

### **TEACHING ASSISTANT**

Molly Jenkins Grants and Proposal Development Manager

Diane Julio Student Records Administrator

Melissa Licon Sibling Program Coordinator

Meghan Klassen Executive Director

Jessica Meisel Early Childhood Spec. Ed. Teacher

Tammy Miller Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment, Infant & Toddler Program Coordinator

Kelly Mitchell Horticulture Therapist

Margi Moldane Early Childhood Spec. Ed. Teacher

Zoe Morgese Speech/Language Pathologist

Frances Owens Community Relations Manager

Jennifer Parker Early Childhood Spec. Ed., Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment, Home Visit Program Coordinator

Laura Perkins Marketing & Communications Manager Sarah Rice Volunteer Program & Administrative Services Manager

Callie Robinson Teacher of Students with Visual Impairement, Early Childhood Special Educator

Covi Rodriguez Lead Teacher

Cathy Smyth Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment, Director of Research

Jenn Taylor Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment

John Taylor Finance Director

Kathryn Tower Speech/Language Pathologist

Savannah Wippel Director of Development and Community Relations

#### CONSULTING PARTNERS

Ali Huckins Developmental Specialist

Marlene Evans BSN,RN, Pediatric Nurse Consulting Services LLC

Courtney Albers Intake and Referral Manager

Kenedy Brazzell Data Entry Clerk

Anne Brown School & Program Administrative Assistant

Caroline Vaszauskas Early Childhood Spec. Ed. Teacher

Melinda Carter TSVI, Director of Children's Programs & Services

Deb Curry Family Services Director

Elise Darrow Teacher of the Students with Visual Impairment, Preschool Program Coordinator

LeAnn Donahue Special Events Coordinator

Mindy Doyle-McCall Physical Therapist

Laura Ganguli Music Therapist

Rachel Glaser Lawrence Occupational Therapist

Jessica Hank Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment

Gina Higbie Occupational Therapist



Navigators ensure Anchor Center's future and the future of Colorado's young blind children. By including Anchor Center in their estate plan or by making a planned gift, Navigators give families hope and help children "see life differently".

Questions? Contact us at PlannedGiving@anchorcenter.org or 303-377-9732 for more information.

### **ONOR SPOTI** Mary and Tom Rogers

"It goes without saying that early intervention for children, with or without disabilities, is very important, giving them the tools early on to become confident and competent individuals for all their years to come. The mission of Anchor Center is of utmost importance. Beyond the impact on children it serves, the support for siblings, and especially parents, is critical.

As a teacher who volunteered to read to the visually impaired and work with children with disabilities I saw firsthand the need for an organization like Anchor Center. When my fraternity alumnae (Denver Delta Gamma) was asked to expand our mission of Service for Sight to start a preschool for the visually impaired, I was all in!

Tom and I are thrilled to have the opportunity to include Anchor Center in our estate plan. To be able to "make a difference" means a lot to us, and fits well into our dreams and our values. There are clearly significant tax advantages to be realized as well.

Our hope is that a legacy gift will help to insure the ongoing success of our beloved Anchor Center for Blind Children and continue to impact children and families in the meaningful way that it has these past almost 40 years. Please consider joining us in this important endeavor."

Mary & Tom Rogers

#### **REFERRAL SOURCES** PARTNERSHIPS



**Children's Hospital** Colorado



Children's Eye Physicians







- **27**% COMMUNITY CENTER BOARDS
- **75**% **OPHTHALMOLOGY**
- **PEDIATRICIAN/PHYSICIAN**
- **16**% **PARENT/FAMILY** 
  - THERAPY SERVICES PROVIDER
  - **3**% OTHER

### **FINANCIALS**

### SOURCES OF INCOME

	<u> </u>
Other	\$2,625
Investment Income	\$1,426,565
Special Events (Net)	\$566,686
State Grants	\$312,975
Program Fees	\$100,339
Contributions	\$2,296,846

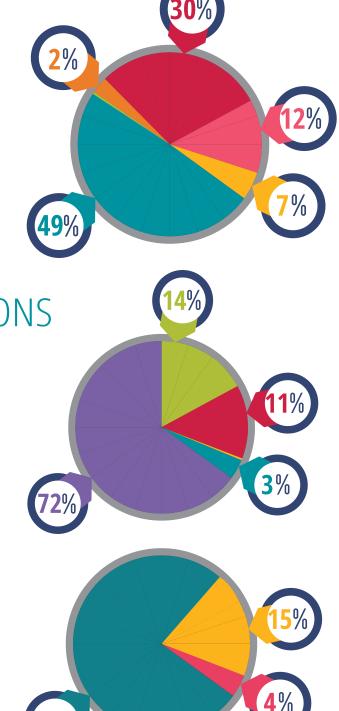
#### \$4,706,036

### SOURCES OF CONTRIBUTIONS

	\$2,296,846
Foundations	\$241,173
Group	\$6,082
Individual Bequests	\$330,896
Individual Donors	\$1,654,545
Corporate	\$64,150

### EXPENSES

\$2,283,97	5
Fundraising \$342,328	
Management & General \$97,719	
Program Services \$1,843,92	8



Zachary and Lacey Abote Sarah Abrams Geri and Mark Adams Kathryn and William Adams Adorn Salon Denver Mariam Ahmad Naomi and Alex Aitken Courtney Albers and Ken Cooper William Alford All For Kids Home Health Terry Alldredge Brandon and Katy Allen Jeffrey Allen and Libby Anschutz James and Sharon Allison Mary Louise Allison Alloya Amy Allured Altitude Sports & Entertainment Nedda and Ken Altschuld AmazonSmile Foundation Elizabeth Ameen Tracey and Cory Amend Paul T. Ammons Thomas Anderson True S. Anderson Carolyn Anderson **Balin** Anderson Greg Anderson Mary and Nick Andrews Mrs. Barbara Andrikopoulos Bruce Beck and Dawn Anna

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Carey Haas

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