“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.

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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

continued next page
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.”

Longtime Staff Say Goodbye

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.
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
Total: $1,948,779

Sources of Contributions:
- 51% individual: $628,594
- 36% foundations: 442,278
- 8% corporate: 96,555
- 5% group: 59,913
Total: $1,227,339

Sources of Expenses:
- 79% program services: $1,892,368
- 11% fundraising: 264,169
- 10% management / general: 251,391
Total: $2,407,928

Sources and Uses of Income: FY 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 Halford, 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 Mclean, Teaching Assistant & Nurse

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
“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.”