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# Denver CENTRAL PARK LIVING

SEPTEMBER 2026

## BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURES AT ANCHOR CENTER FOR BLIND CHILDREN

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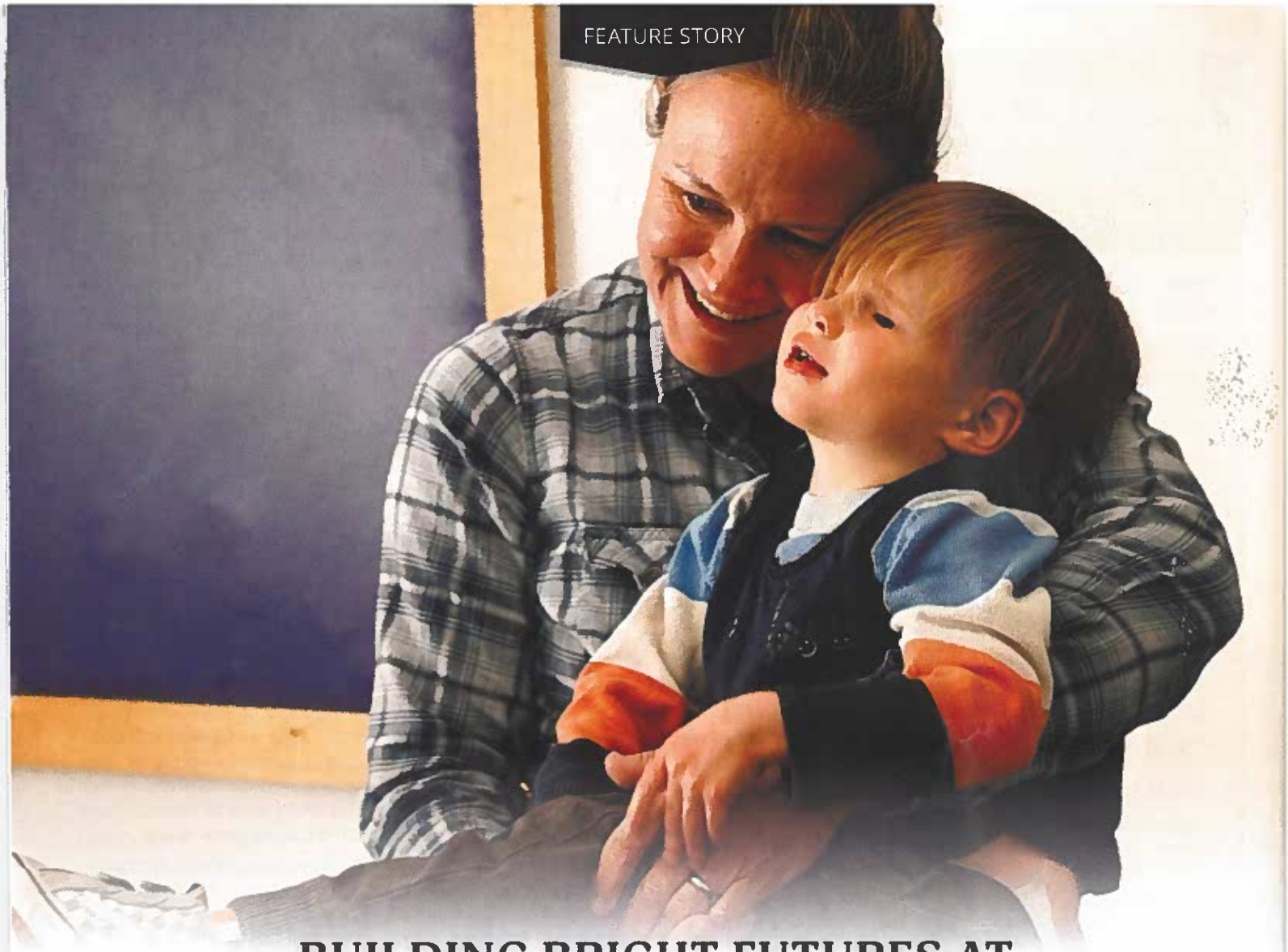

# BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURES AT ANCHOR CENTER FOR BLIND CHILDREN

STORY BY ERIKA DURBIN | PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ANCHOR CENTER FOR BLIND CHILDREN

For more than 20 years, Anchor Center for Blind Children has quietly been transforming lives right here in Central Park. Families walk through its doors during some of the most uncertain moments of their lives, often after learning that their infant or young child is blind or visually impaired. What they find is far more than specialized services. They discover a community that believes every child can learn, grow, and thrive.

Founded in 1982, Anchor Center was created by a group of visionary women from Delta Gamma who recognized that Colorado lacked specialized services for young children with visual impairments. Their belief was simple but powerful: children who are blind or visually impaired deserve the same opportunities as every other child, especially during the earliest years of development, when learning happens at an incredible pace. More than four decades later, that mission continues to guide every aspect of Anchor Center's work.

Today, Anchor Center is Colorado's only privately funded nonprofit dedicated exclusively to serving children who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind from birth through age five. Each year, the organization supports approximately

500 children and family members through individualized early intervention, specialized preschool education, orientation and mobility instruction, occupational and physical therapy, speech-language services, family coaching, pediatric eye care, and transition support as children prepare for kindergarten.

"Vision plays a critical role in early childhood development," explains Executive Director Meghan Klassen. "Children with visual impairments often need specialized support to develop skills related to learning, mobility, communication, and social interaction."

By providing individualized services during the first five years of life, when the brain is developing most rapidly, Anchor Center helps children build foundational skills and confidence that can last a lifetime.

What makes Anchor Center especially unique is its collaborative approach. Rather than treating each service separately, educators, therapists, orientation and mobility specialists, vision professionals, and family support experts work together to create an individualized plan for every child. Parents are active partners throughout the process because the organization believes families are a child's first and most important teachers.

That partnership has helped thousands of Colorado children achieve milestones many once believed impossible.

One inspiring example comes from an Anchor Center alumna whose parents were initially told she likely had no vision. Today, she has graduated as her high school's valedictorian, earned her driver's license with the help of adaptive training, qualified for the state swimming championships, and is preparing to attend Stanford University. Stories like hers are powerful reminders of why early intervention matters: not simply because it teaches skills, but because it helps children discover what they are capable of achieving.

Bentley, a more recent Anchor Center graduate, offers another powerful example of what can happen when children are given individualized support and opportunities to explore their abilities. Bentley is blind and autistic and has paralysis on his left side following significant brain injuries in infancy. While attending Anchor Center, he climbed a climbing wall for the first time and enjoyed it so much that he immediately climbed it again. His family says they have lost count of the things others once believed he might never accomplish, yet Bentley has continued to defy expectations.

"Without the team at Anchor Center, we would have felt lost," his family shared. "We continue to be amazed by everything he has achieved, everything he has learned, and his incredible ability to overcome what happened to him."

The organization's impact extends well beyond individual success stories. In the past year alone, Anchor Center served nearly 200 children, completed 748 in-home visits, and provided 298 comprehensive eye exams and assessments. Through these services, children developed essential communication, literacy, mobility, social, and school-readiness skills while families gained the tools and confidence to support learning at home every day.

Anchor Center also serves as a statewide leader in childhood visual impairment, particularly in the growing field of cerebral/cortical visual impairment (CVI), now recognized as the leading cause of pediatric visual impairment in developed countries. Through partnerships with Children's Hospital Colorado, the University of Colorado, and Children's Eye Physicians, the organization helps bridge the gap between medical diagnosis and the specialized educational services children need to succeed.

As the need for specialized early intervention continues to grow, so does Anchor Center's commitment to expanding access, strengthening family support, and increasing awareness about childhood visual impairment throughout Colorado. Anchor Center operates on an approximately $3 million annual budget. Because nearly 95 percent of its funding comes from private sources, philanthropy plays an essential role in making these life-changing services available at no or nominal cost to families.

There are many ways for neighbors to get involved, including volunteering, becoming a corporate sponsor, attending fundraising events, making a contribution, or simply helping spread awareness about the organization's mission.

One upcoming opportunity is the 30th Annual Sunset in the City Gala, taking place Saturday, October 24, at ReelWorks in RiNo. The signature fundraising event brings together families, supporters, and community members for an inspiring evening celebrating the accomplishments of children who are blind or visually impaired while raising critical funds for Anchor Center's programs.

As Anchor Center celebrates more than 40 years of service and more than two decades as part of the Central Park community, it remains focused on helping every child build confidence, independence, and the skills needed to thrive. Their hope is simple: that every child, regardless of visual ability, has the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

**30th ANNUAL**
**SUNSET IN THE CITY GALA**
Saturday, October 24, 2026
at ReelWorks in RiNo

## Quick Facts:

**Organization**
Anchor Center for Blind Children

**Founded**
1982

**Executive Director**
Meghan S. Klassen, M.Ed.

**Location Served**
Denver Metro Area & communities across Colorado

**Employees & Volunteers**
33 Employees & 150 Volunteers

**Children & Family Members Served Annually**
Approximately 500

**Website**
anchorcenter.org

**Facebook**
@AnchorCenterBlindChildren

**Instagram**
@anchorcenterblindchildren

*To learn more, volunteer, or support Anchor Center's mission, visit anchorcenter.org.*