

St. Mary's Life Center
Providing Outpatient Rehabilitation Services for St. Mary's Hospital
Vernon B. Ingraham, 33°, Grand Cross
Executive Secretary
Scottish Rite Foundation of Colorado
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St. Mary's Life Center

In 1986 the Scottish Rite Foundation of Colorado began expansion of the Colorado RiteCare Program outside the Denver Metropolitan Area when it formed a RiteCare partnership with Hilltop Rehabilitation Hospital in Grand Junction. In 1995 Hilltop became St. Mary's Hospital and in 1998 the St. Mary's Life Center was created to serve the hospital's outpatients with rehabilitation and therapeutic services.

St. Mary's is a not-for-profit organization, founded in Grand Junction in 1896 by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. It is a premier regional medical center providing a full range of health care including neonatal, pediatric, cardiac, cancer, and comprehensive surgical and rehabilitation care – just to name a few of the health care areas included in its services. It is the largest medical center between Denver and Salt Lake City with more than 350 beds. Its staff includes approximately 2,000 health care professionals and 300 active physicians representing more than 40 specialties.

In 2009 St. Mary's Hospital was named a "Highest Value Hospital," by the Leapfrog Group. It is one of only 13 hospitals in the United States and the only Colorado hospital to be recognized for its combination of quality care and appropriate use of resources. St. Mary's earned this award based on top scores for coronary bypass graft procedures, coronary intervention procedures, treatment of acute myocardial infarction, and pneumonia care. The Leapfrog Group is a consortium of major companies and other large private and public healthcare purchasers which provide health benefits to more than 37 million Americans in all 50 states.



RiteCare Director Amy Brophy-Neilsen working with child

St. Mary's Life Center is the home to the hospital's outpatient therapy and rehabilitation services for adults and children. The center provides children with occupational, physical, and speech therapy programs provided by therapists specially trained to work with children. The hospital's website states: "St. Mary's speech and language development program is generously supported by Colorado's Scottish Rite Masons. The Masons provide eligible children the financial assistance they need to receive therapy and instruction through their Scottish Rite Foundation scholarship program."

Since inception of our St. Mary's (formerly Hilltop) RiteCare partnership in 1986, through 2009 the Foundation has provided \$2.3 million in financial assistance for speech therapy and related services in Grand Junction. This has enabled 1,130 children in Grand Junction and the surrounding communities to receive these services. These communities include, but are not limited to, Fruita, Palisade, Clifton, Mack, Loma, Parachute, Rifle, Silt, and Collbran.

The speech-language services provide treatment for a variety of conditions including language delay, hearing loss, cleft lip and palate, autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, and brain injury, to name a few. The Center provides special programs for groups such as autism programs for various sized groups based upon chronological age and functional skill age; toddler programs for 1- to 2-year olds who are delayed in understanding and/or using language; literacy programs for children with reading and writing difficulties related to language learning challenges; and preschool programs which provide social usage and interaction of language for small groups.

In 2011 we will celebrate 25 years of RiteCare service in the Grand Junction community. The outstanding speech-language services provided by St. Mary's helps hundreds of children overcome speech-language challenges. We are proud to have such a highly valued partner as St. Mary's serving children and their families on Colorado's Western Slope.