

RITEVIEW

January – April 2023



Kristin Uhler, Ph.D.
Kelley Family/Schlessman
Family Scottish Rite Masons
Chair in Childhood
Language Disorders

Together we can increase awareness!

Each February all RiteCare Partners are invited to celebrate our remarkable partnership we have with the Scottish Rite Foundation of Colorado during our annual luncheon meeting. Being able to celebrate in person was a welcome change, as we had not been able to since 2020. Please scan the QR code below to view the RiteCare and Treasure Chest program reports, collectively we were able to serve 981 children.



This year's annual meeting was a wonderful opportunity to reconnect, share stories of what has changed since the COVID 19 pandemic, and discuss new opportunities for supporting the speech, language, and learning needs for more children and families across the state of Colorado. As you will read in the Executive Secretary's, L. Bryant Harris, article, we are excited to launch a pilot program in Yuma Colorado to provide services once again on the Eastern Plains. A continuous theme that has arisen over the past three years is the need to increase

awareness about the services supported by the Scottish Rite Foundation and the need to support the speech, language, and learning services. There simply is not a better month to launch these efforts than May.

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May is Better Hearing and Speech Month. During this month Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology professionals highlight their role in providing diagnostic, intervention, and prevention work. This RiteView amply demonstrates how our RiteCare® partners, including our Treasure Chest colleagues, are achieving better communication for all children. With Scottish Rite Foundation help, we make every month "better hearing and speech month" for so many children. We are so fortunate and grateful for the

Foundation's continued support and partnership! And equally important, I want to thank each of you for your dedication, contributions, and expertise in our field of speech, language, and learning for all the children and their families we have the privilege to serve.

Scottish Rite Foundation of Colorado

From humble beginnings at the Children's Hospital of Colorado the Foundation's vision "that all Colorado children with language disorders will have the opportunity to receive treatment and care" has inspired Scottish Rite Freemasons of Colorado to seek new partners across the state. Beginning in 1986, a partnership was created with St. Mary's Hospital in Grand Junction. Throughout the ensuing years, Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Montrose, Ft. Collins and Craig have welcomed new RiteCare partners to provide services to their communities.

For many years it has been a desire of the Scottish Rite Foundation to reestablish services for children on the Eastern Plains of Colorado. We feel fortunate that after nearly a decade of services being supported by the Scottish Rite Foundation in Sterling and LaJunta that we are able to launch a new, innovative approach to service provision in Yuma. We are launching a pilot program with Jennifer Seedorf M.S., CCC-SLP, a local Yuma speech-language pathologist. Her years of experience in the school system and her connections to the local community are a great resource to ensure that the Scottish Rite Foundation can make the most of this new outreach. As this is a new beginning in Yuma, the Scottish Rite Foundation has chosen to carefully focus on children who will benefit the most from this one year pilot program. If successful, it is anticipated that the program design will be improved from lessons learned in the pilot phase and a permanent program will be established.

Another new beginning this year is the addition of Metro State University second year graduates to the eligibility pool of the Dwight A. Hamilton Graduate Scholarship in Speech-Language Pathology. MSU began administering a very successful Treasure Chest Program in 2022. Building on that success, their new second year graduate students are eager to engage with the Scottish Rite Foundation of Colorado. During the presentation of the criteria and history of the scholarship, Bryant Harris (Executive Secretary of the Scottish Rite Foundation of Colorado) noted the significant diversity among these students. Their questions ranging from "Who are Scottish Rite Masons?" to "Will you be interested in helping us reach out to the community when we graduate, even if we didn't receive a scholarship?" demonstrated a deep interest in our communities.

New programs always come at a cost. Sometimes that cost is financial, which your Scottish Rite Foundation was intended to support. Other costs are in manpower. There simply are not enough Speech Language Pathologists to provide the needed care from Yuma to Grand Junction and points North and South. If you would like to assist the Foundation in meeting the costs of direct support to children, or contribute the education of future Speech Language Pathologists, please visit our website www.scottishritefoundation.org or call the Executive Secretary at 303-360-7537

**Submitted by: L. Bryant Harris, 32° Knight Commander of the Court of Honor
Executive Secretary, Scottish Rite Foundation of Colorado**



UNC Program Updates and Graduate Students Feedback

The University of Northern Colorado Speech-Language Pathology Program is wrapping up another Spring semester and our second-year students are preparing to graduate in a few short months! We are incredibly grateful to the Scottish Rite Foundation for helping to ensure that our SLP graduates are well prepared to support the speech and language needs of children and their families. To illustrate the impact the Scottish Rite Foundation continues to have on our graduate students, we have included some student feedback below:

- *“After completing my semester working with the Treasure Chest program, I felt more confident in discussing evidence-based practice with parents as I demonstrated and explained strategies.”*
- *“I feel I have built confidence in how to communicate and coach parents on how to build their child's language by making their own opportunities.”*
- *“I learned a lot about myself and what I would like to do for my future career.”*
- *“I am so grateful for the Treasure Chest program experience. It will be important to have the skills and confidence to work directly with families, as that is always the most meaningful approach”*

Dr. Caitlin Raaz will be traveling to Orlando, Florida later this Spring to share information about this wonderful program with other faculty members at the Annual Convention of the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders. We hope this will help other programs to better prepare their SLP graduate students to work with young children and their families.



Submitted by: Caitlin Raaz, RiteCare Program Director, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley

CU Boulder Speech Language Hearing Clinic - Summer Program Information

The University of Colorado, Boulder Speech Language Hearing Clinic (SLHC), which is part of the CU Boulder Master's Degree program in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP), will be offering a variety of therapy services for children during the summer of 2023. In the SLHC, services are provided by graduate student clinicians under the supervision of experienced SLP clinical faculty members.

Highlights of programs taking place during summer '23 are:

- **Colorado Speaks:** A one-week experience for teens who stutter, June 11 – June 16
- **Social Warriors:** A social communication skills group for upper elementary (grades 3-5; ages 8-11) age children with social communication needs due to autism spectrum or other condition, June 19 – June 29
- **Early elementary age oral communication group** for children ages 5-7 with hearing loss, June 26 – June 29
- **Toddler group:** Intensive sessions for toddlers (ages 2-3) with developmental communication needs, June 12 – June 22 and July 17 – July 27

Those who are interested in these or other programs available to children with speech, language, and/or literacy needs during the summer of '23, please contact the CU Boulder SLHC at SLHC@Colorado.edu or call (303) 492-5375. Scholarship funds are available for qualifying families for these programs through the Scottish Rite Foundation. Please ask for more information about this support by contacting the SLHC.

Submitted by: Alison Lemke, RiteCare Program Director, University of Colorado, Boulder

St. Mary's Hospital - RiteCare Speech and Language Program

Happy Spring! It has been an exceptionally long winter for the Grand Junction area. We have experienced many more snowy and cloudy days than any of us remember, and now we are looking forward to Spring with an increased availability of water.

We opened the New Year with two new speech therapists joining our speech therapy department. We are extremely excited to have them on our team. They have brought with them a great deal of talent and expertise and allow greater access to our speech and language services.

Over the winter of 2023, as COVID cases decreased, we expanded the number of group speech and language therapy sessions offered to our children. We currently have 22 therapy groups each week. The group sizes range from 2 to 6 participants, with age ranges from 2 to 16 years of age. The groups are designed to target each child's individual communication needs and focus on allowing the children to learn and practice their goals in a realistic setting.

Children are grouped together based upon their communication needs and general age range. The groups for younger children often focus on turn taking, using some form of communication to greet others, follow simple directions, make requests, and share comments, and most importantly begin to socially interact with their peers and with adults. The older age groups include groups for specific work on articulation skills, language skills, social pragmatics, and using alternative communication methods.

Our goal in providing the group speech and language therapy is to immerse each child in an environment that gives them the opportunity to practice communicating in settings where they feel safe and comfortable and then they will be confident to use their voice in real-world settings that they will navigate during their life.

Submitted by: Amy Brophy-Neilsen, RiteCare Program Director, St. Mary's Hospital Grand Junction



The Piñon Project Treasure Chest Program

The Treasure Chest Program at The Piñon Project is currently serving eight Early Childhood sites. Teachers at early learning centers utilize The Treasure Chest Program during their days, which has encouraged more families to participate in the program. Families look forward to receiving new chests and exploring a variety of themes. Here is one family's story that they shared with their child's teacher.

A family using the Treasure Chest Program wanted to increase the amount of time they played with their child. The family self-implemented a rule in their home that before turning on the TV at night they would spend thirty minutes playing with their child. The parents placed the Treasure Chest in front of the TV as a reminder to play. The parents reported that they were more likely to play with their child when they had books and activities readily available. The family enjoyed more quality time together, and had a decrease in unwanted behaviors because of participating in The Treasure Chest Program.

Submitted by, Elizabeth Russell, Treasure Chest Program Coordinator, Cortez

Montrose Regional Health Mountain View Therapy

Happy Spring! The Montrose program has been steadily becoming more and more busy with referrals and appointments heading into the summer program. We are planning for a busy summer. It was wonderful to meet with many of the RiteCare directors and board members at the annual RiteCare luncheon in February. The roundtable discussion following the meal was very informative and interesting. I'm sure we all came away from that discussion with new ideas for program development and implementation. Thank you Dr. Uhler, this was a great success. Our Montrose multidisciplinary team of pediatric therapists continue to learn and enjoy the information shared by members of the Autism Team at Children's Hospital, Colorado, about the complex diagnosis of Autism. This is a great opportunity for us to learn about the newest research and apply it in therapy by using a whole team approach. Thank you, Scottish Rite Foundation of Colorado, for funding this worthwhile program. Montrose Regional Health is in the process of building a new Ambulatory Care Center in Montrose. It is exciting to watch the process of construction of this beautiful building. Let's all hope the weather warms up soon and we can all enjoy the coming summer.

**Submitted by Patti Anderson, RiteCare Program Director
Montrose Regional Health**



In the Spotlight at Children's Hospital Colorado

Stacey Bernal, M.A., CCC-SLP

Interviewed by Lisa Powers



Lisa: Tell me a little about yourself.

Stacey: I live in Pueblo West, Colorado with my husband of 32 years, and we have 25-year-old triplets who still like to hang out with us. We moved to Pueblo West in 1993 from New Mexico after college. Now that we are empty nesters, we are taking advantage of the time to travel. This summer we will be going to Austria. We both love to travel and go out to eat. We are not foodies by any means but just love the experience of going out together and not having to cook. I love to play darts and pool, watch movies, take walks and bike. Although I am not an outdoorsy Coloradan, I do appreciate the mountains as I always know the direction I am going!

This June will mark my 30th year as a speech-language pathologist (SLP). I started my career working in nursing homes, hospitals, and with the birth to 3 population before joining Children's Hospital Colorado (CHCO) outpatient clinic of Pueblo in 2001. Over the years, I have developed specialties and a passion for working in the areas of stuttering and apraxia. When the Pueblo clinic was closed in 2020 following the start of the COVID pandemic, I transitioned to fully Telepractice-based therapy with CHCO. Currently, I am the Clinical Practice Specialist for the Speech and Learning Telepractice program.

Lisa: What do you find most rewarding about your work?

Stacey: When parents notice the little things that their children have improved upon and celebrate those things with you. It is also rewarding when a child makes substantial changes as well that positively impact their life. Every day, I smile and laugh in my therapy sessions and just experience joy through interactions with my patients.

Lisa: If my child were to have you as a therapist, what could I expect?

Stacey: I am a warm, caring therapist who puts a lot of energy and enthusiasm into speech therapy sessions. I establish rapport easily with kids and love to build on that relationship. I always have the child's communication and overall confidence in mind; therefore, I do tend to structure sessions so that the child experiences success step by step. I try to make therapy as engaging and fun as possible for the child. Like all therapists, I strive to meet the child and family where they are right now.

Some of the ways that have helped me engage children over Telepractice sessions are that I use a lot of green screen backgrounds, PowerPoint activities, and on-line games. I can also give remote control to the child so that they can participate hands-on in activities presented through ZOOM. I often send home craft materials for the families to use in addition to *Play With Me!* boxes (generously funded by the Scottish Rite Foundation). If I can, I will always incorporate a book and theme as these create loads of learning skills beyond the targeted goals. Even after being an SLP for so many years, I recognize that I am a lifelong learner. Every child is different and unique and keeps you on your toes, which is a wonderful thing about being an SLP.

Lisa: You have continued to maintain 100% of your caseload as Telepractice. What do you like about Telepractice?

Stacey: I like that it has given me a new outlet for my creativity. I have had to adapt materials from in-clinic use to virtual. It was a steep learning curve, but I adjusted quickly and developed new skills as a teletherapist. One of the unexpected benefits of Telepractice is that parents must be more involved in their child's therapy. I do miss not being able to participate physically – on floor with toddler, for example – yet the benefit is that I cannot 'take over the session.' I must really show and demonstrate to the parents what they can do with their child. Telehealth works best when parents feel supported in that more direct role they will be taking in their child's speech therapy program. Another benefit is that attendance is often more consistent for the families I work with as there is no need to cancel for weather, sick siblings, or transportation issues.

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In the Spotlight continued

Lisa: What is your dream for the Telepractice program at Children's Colorado?

Stacey: The Telepractice program is now more of a part of our speech department than it has ever been. The dream is that families and staff alike will know the value of Telepractice and recognize that it is just as effective as in clinic therapy for many children. I would like to see more group programming, especially during after school times. I would like to see more early phonological awareness groups to address early literacy because so many of the kids we work with are at risk of learning difficulties. It would be great to reach more rural areas of Colorado, where there might be limited access to services. I would love to keep the *Play with Me!* boxes going as a resource for our Telepractice families.

Lisa: How has the Scottish Rite Foundation (SRF) impacted the care you provide?

Stacey: Since my first days working at the Pueblo clinic, I became aware of the awesome gentlemen of the Scottish Rite Foundation. One of the gentlemen, Jack, used to come to the clinic often to visit and bring us chocolate treats. Every year, for about 20 years, the Scottish Rite gentlemen from the Southern Colorado region hosted a summer picnic at the Zoo and a Christmas party for the children. Over the years, I have worked with many children whose therapy was funded by the Scottish Rite Foundation. Parents have always been incredibly grateful. The Scottish Rite Foundation has monetarily supported many projects and camps for children served at CHCO.

Two of those that I was directly involved in were 1) a Stuttering Camp in conjunction with CU Boulder Speech Clinic and 2) the *Play with Me!* boxes – which were kits of speech and language toys, books, and activities sent to the child's home to help support speech Telepractice services. I was so impressed (but not surprised) at the generosity of making these two ideas become a reality. The SRF Masons are a most generous group of individuals and really are an integral part of our speech program success.

Lisa: What would you like to tell the SRF Masons?

Stacey: I could not have anticipated how much your presence in my career has positively impacted the families that I work with as well as my own experience. I so appreciate how open you are to unique, creative ways of supporting children and families in addition to the scholarships, such as camps, play boxes, and parent education. I am grateful for your support.

Lisa: You said you love to travel, what vacation destination would you recommend?

Stacey: Rome, Italy was my favorite vacation. It was warm, sunny, and fascinating. Throughout the city, there are pieces of ancient civilization that you can access and explore. Tuscany too! It was a dream to visit!

**Submitted by: Lisa Powers, Associate Clinical Manager
Children's Hospital Colorado**



Memorial Regional Health Program Updates

Tucked into the Northwest corner of Colorado, here in Craig, we have seen a record amount of snow this winter! Luckily, that hasn't stopped our patients from coming in for therapy.

Our pediatric team is excited to be able to collaborate and learn from the team at Children's Hospital Colorado via monthly training beginning this quarter. Through the Scottish Rite Foundation, our entire pediatric team is expanding our knowledge on Neurodiversity and Autism and directly applying this to our patient care. This training and networking opportunity provides us with the resources needed to provide the best care possible to our under-served community. This coincides with our goal of becoming a Four Star Hospital. We are so grateful for this partnership with the Scottish Rite Foundation.

Submitted by: Colleen Boyle, Speech-Language Pathologist, Memorial Regional Health



CSRC Update:

Dave Boon has retired after 7 years of being CSRC's Executive Director. Under Dave's leadership, CSRC opened a satellite office in Loveland, expanded our reading staff and preliteracy program, and with the help of many donors and a generous 2:1 matching grant from the Shuler Foundation we were able to purchase a permanent home for our Fort Collins office so that CSRC can continue serving children for another 30 years!



CSRC is pleased to announce the promotion of Cheryl Campbell to Executive Director. Cheryl has been one of our speech-language pathologists for 2 years and has trained with Dave Boon. She had this to say about her new role: "I am happy to learn new skills as I take on responsibilities as the Executive Director for CSRC while I also get to continue to work with clients. My past experience of running my own private practice will hopefully pave a smooth transition. I am excited to help further CSRC's mission to help the children of northern Colorado build a strong foundation of speech, language & reading skills."

Submitted by: Cheryl Campbell, RiteCare Program Director Children's Speech & Reading Center, Ft. Collins