

RITEVIEW

Winter



Kristin Uhler, Ph.D.

Kelley Family/Schlessman
Family Scottish Rite Masons
Chair in Childhood Language
Disorders

Looking Back with Gratitude, Looking Forward with Purpose

With each New Year, I find myself pausing to reflect on what I am grateful for and what I have learned, and this year is no exception.

I am deeply grateful for each of you who serve families through your clinical expertise, time, and dedication. It has been truly inspiring to watch parents grow from navigating the process of finding services, to confidently implementing therapy strategies at home, to becoming fierce advocates for their children. The heartfelt parent letter shared by Patti Anderson and the Montrose Regional Health team in this issue is a beautiful reminder of why this work matters so deeply.

I am proud to share that together we met, and exceeded, our goal of serving 1000 children across Colorado this year. That achievement reflects the commitment of every clinician, coordinator, and volunteer across our network. Thank you.

We also held our third annual Round Table, bringing together the Board of Trustees of the Scottish Rite Foundation, Treasure Chest program leadership, and RiteCare directors from across the state. These conversations continue to strengthen our collective work and deepen the connections between our programs and the communities we serve.

This issue of the RiteView is filled with stories of that impact, from the Montrose Regional Health team's inspiring parent letter and holiday celebration, to updates from our dedicated partners across the state. I continue to learn from each of you, and I look forward to everything we will accomplish together in 2026.

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Scottish Rite Foundation of Colorado

I recently had the opportunity to attend a Scottish Rite Leadership Conference. All the topics were valuable, but one portion of a presentation especially stood out to me because the text being read was familiar: it was something I had written. They were discussing the early beginnings of RiteCare, which started right here in Colorado and has since grown into a national program.

In 1952, William G. Schweigert, Almoner of the Rocky Mountain Consistory in Denver, received a call from Children's Hospital about a four-year-old boy with a severe language disorder who needed help. His widowed mother simply could not afford the therapy he needed. Schweigert went to see a speech therapy demonstration for himself, and what he witnessed stayed with him. That one child's struggle became the spark for something much bigger.

Schweigert shared what he had seen with Judge Haslett P. Burke and Gerald L. Schlessman. They looked into the need more deeply, met with hospital staff, and watched therapy sessions themselves. They brought people together, built support, developed a plan, and, in 1953, the Rocky Mountain Consistory and Colorado Consistory voted overwhelmingly to form the Scottish Rite Foundation of Colorado.

Because of those first steps taken in 1952, the Scottish Rite Foundation of Colorado has helped 39,000 children in Colorado, has expanded to 11 clinics across the state, including rural communities, and has provided more than 115 scholarships for graduate students in Speech-Language Pathology.

The Scottish Rite has expanded RiteCare nationally, and there are clinics, centers, and special programs for children operating throughout the United States. Don't forget, though: Colorado is where RiteCare began. That is our history. That is our identity. And it is absolutely something we should be proud of.

The greatest things often start small. It started because of just one child. It started because of the dedication of the therapists and other speech professionals in Colorado. It started because Colorado Scottish Rite Masons chose compassion over indifference. They saw children struggling and chose to act rather than look away.

Our RiteCare partners and the Colorado Scottish Rite Masons carry these values forward today. The message is simple and timeless: care about others, live with integrity, and put your values into action.



**Scott Bates, 33°,
Secretary to the Board of
Trustees, Scottish Rite
Foundation of Colorado**

Treasure Chest Comes “In House” at CU Boulder

The Child Learning Center (CLC) is excited to share that the Treasure Chest Program is moving in house at CU Boulder and will be implemented within the CLC, which is housed in the Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences Department. This new chapter is a meaningful expansion of what CLC provides to children and families as we celebrate 50 years of inclusive, relationship-based early learning.

At CLC, our work is grounded in the belief that children learn best through warm relationships, play, and language-rich daily routines. Treasure Chest aligns beautifully with our Storybook Journey approach—where high-quality children’s literature becomes the “anchor” for classroom experiences, vocabulary growth, social-emotional learning, and family connection. Through this Scottish Rite-supported partnership, CLC will strengthen the bridge between school and home by extending story-based learning into meaningful, hands-on family experiences.

This initiative also creates a powerful training and service opportunity for CU Boulder graduate clinicians. Under the leadership of our preschool speech-language pathologist, Katie Miller, graduate students will have the opportunity to participate in a model that reflects Scottish Rite’s focus on supporting children’s communication and early language/literacy development—while also learning how to partner with families in practical, strengths-based ways.

We are grateful to the Scottish Rite Foundation of Colorado for investing in young children, families, and the future workforce. As CLC marks its 50th anniversary, we are proud to grow in ways that deepen our mission: nurturing belonging, strengthening communication, and building foundations for lifelong learning.

Submitted by **Holly Kleiber, RiteCare Program Director, CU Boulder**





CENTRO

Utah • Nevada • Colorado

Treasure Chest News

Hello all! As winter is ending and spring is upon us, we are working on wrapping up our school year at Centro! As we start to pass out the surveys, we are pleased to have both parents and children excited to see what they get each month. Parents have reported how excited they are to play with their children in a way that they know is educational as well as fun!



One family let us know how excited they were to receive the toys related to cooking! They had no idea that their four year old was able to help with mixing, pouring, measuring, and other fun items that are baked! They loved talking about the muffins they made with the materials that we provided them.

Another family let us know that after receiving the dinosaur toys, their child started talking a lot more! They mentioned how now he says "Bounce" when he wants to play with his riding dinosaur, and how he started saying the colors of all the toys in his room when before he would refuse to talk and just point toward the objects.

Parents have been letting us know how grateful they are for this extra support. One parent told us "I am so grateful for all the special gifts that we have gotten this year. They are exceptional and appreciated."

Thank you so much to the Scottish Rite Foundation for their support in the lives of so many children in our communities we serve. We look forward to continued support as we continue our program this year.



**Submitted by: Lisa Morgan, Treasure Chest Program Coordinator,
Grand Junction**

University of Northern Colorado **Program Updates**

Happy New Year from the UNC Speech-Language Pathology Program! As we closed out the Fall 2025 semester, we're reflecting on another successful term for the Greeley Treasure Chest program. Fourteen first-year graduate students had the opportunity to develop their skills in parent coaching and early intervention while serving local families. Our remaining first-year cohort will rotate into the program this spring.

We were excited to participate again in the SEVA Community Holiday Fiesta in December. Our graduate students led a holiday craft activity and shared resources on early language development with families in attendance. The event was also a wonderful opportunity to connect with new families and spread the word about Treasure Chest. We're grateful for our ongoing partnership with the SEVA Community, which provides the off-campus space where our Treasure Chest sessions take place.

We're also thrilled to share that Dr. Kim Murza will be returning to the Communication Sciences and Disorders faculty in Spring 2026. Dr. Murza will be contributing her expertise to the Treasure Chest program, and we look forward to the ways her involvement will strengthen our work with families and enhance the training experience for our graduate students.

Thank you to the Scottish Rite Foundation for your continued support of this program. We're excited to build on this momentum in the new year and continue serving families in our community.



Submitted by: Caitlin Raaz, RiteCare Program Director, UNC, Greeley

Montrose Regional Health Program Updates & Parents Appreciation

As we look back over the events of the Montrose RiteCare program of 2025, there are several events that stand out in my mind. Most of them are with the children and families with whom we are privileged to serve. Their spirit and potential are worth celebrating. We have had two fun and well-attended parties in the clinic this year. We have gained new therapists in our multi-disciplinary based clinic, and have said good-bye to few as well. We look forward to the new adventures of 2026. Please enjoy these pictures from our 2025 Holiday party, as well as an inspiring letter from a parent of a child receiving RiteCare funding. These are the things that make coming to work every day a joyous adventure!

"We are writing with a heart full of gratitude to thank Scottish Rites for the incredible support they have provided to my child and so many other children through access to affordable speech therapy. Because of your generosity and commitment, families like ours have been given opportunities that truly change lives. When my son began speech therapy, we were hopeful but also uncertain about what the future might hold. Thanks to your assistance, he was able to receive consistent, high-quality therapy that has made a remarkable difference in his confidence, communication, and overall growth. Hearing his voice become clearer and watching him express himself more freely has been nothing short of amazing, and it is a gift our family will always cherish.

Your organization does more than provide financial support—you give children a voice and families hope. The impact of your work reaches far beyond therapy sessions and into everyday moments, milestones, and futures that are brighter because of you.

Thank you for believing in our children and for making such a meaningful difference in our lives. Please know how deeply appreciated you are. With sincere gratitude."



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

Families Express Their Gratitude

St. Mary's Hospital Rite Care Speech and Language Program

It is difficult to believe that 2025 has come and gone. As we look back at 2025 and look forward to 2026, we are most grateful that our program continues to be blessed to be partners with the Scottish Rite Foundation Philanthropy, giving us the support to care for the speech, language and learning needs of children in our community. I want to share with you once again some "thank you notes" from the families receiving Scottish Rite financial assistance throughout 2025.

"We would like to start this letter by expressing our gratitude for the past six months of approved assistance. Access to therapy services through these past months was a true blessing that was foundational to our daughters progressing speech development and to her efforts to assimilate to a mainstream kindergarten classroom. The road is ever winding but we could not have gotten to this point without the expert guidance of our speech therapist nor the incredibly gracious and generous financial support of the Scottish Rite Foundation. We can never adequately communicate our gratitude to all who have made this happen for our family!"

"Our son has made so much progress in this program, we have been blessed to be a part of it, watching him grow and get the help he needs, we have been able to see so many positive changes in his behavior, learning and socialization in the group therapy, we would not be financially able to come to both group and individual speech therapy without the help we have received. Thank you"

"Thank you so much for your help. You have been a blessing to our family"

"Our son is making so much progress in his speech therapy program. We wouldn't be able to get him the help he needs without this program, so thank you.

"Our daughter is such a kind and fun girl. She loves to learn but really struggled due to her speech delay and specific learning disability. During her time working with her speech therapist, she has made tremendous improvements in her speech and comprehension. My husband and I are so thankful for the help you provide so that our daughter has access to the therapy she needs."

We closed 2025 with a wonderful Christmas Party. The party included a pancake breakfast, family photos with Santa, gift bags filled with toys, a book for every child, face painting, cotton candy, and a variety of games. All thanks to the efforts of our local Scottish Rite Review Board Members, the Western Slope Scottish Rite Masons, the Rainbow Girls, the St. Mary's pediatric therapy team, and the Western Slope VFW Auxiliary 3981.

THANK YOU for the gifts you have given us in 2025, and we are looking forward to 2026!

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

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