



**For Immediate Release**

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**Global Research Institute at  
University of Colorado Denver Aims to Eradicate the Ill Effects  
associated with Down Syndrome**

*Anna and John J. Sie Foundation Commits \$34 Million to establish Colorado as the  
Worldwide Beacon for Research and Care*

Aurora, Colo. (Sept. 22, 2008) - Anna and John J. Sie have high hopes for their granddaughter Sophia, born five years ago with Down syndrome. Today, through the largest private contribution dedicated to people with Down syndrome, the family is determined to significantly enhance the lives of all people with Down syndrome. The new Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome unveiled at the University of Colorado Denver's Anschutz Medical Campus will have the single research focus of eradicating the ill effects associated with Down syndrome and will be the first to comprehensively address basic research, clinical research and clinical care all under one umbrella.

After years of due diligence and in the face of steady decreases in National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding for Down syndrome, the Anna and John J. Sie Foundation decided that the best hope for real break-through and advocacy was a combined force made up of the University of Colorado Denver, the University of Colorado at Boulder, and The Children's Hospital in Aurora. Each organization has committed space, personnel and overhead to the Institute and it will be managed out of the Anschutz Medical Campus.

Chancellor M. Roy Wilson stated, "It has been a pleasure working with the Sie family in establishing this premier Institute here at the University of Colorado Denver. They bring a unique combination of philanthropy, family focus and business acumen to the table. The first \$1 million in research grants that the Sie's supported in 2006 has already started to bear fruit. We are confident that insights that might be unimaginable today will soon be within our grasp due to the work of this Institute."

The Institute will aggressively recruit the best and brightest talent worldwide – both inside and outside the field of Down syndrome and is expected to grow into a \$150 million organization within ten years with staff estimated at more than 160.

World-renowned neurologist, William C. Mobley, MD, PhD, has signed on as the Executive Director of the Institute and has been a life-long advocate for Down syndrome related research.

“One of the focuses of the Linda Crnic Institute for Down syndrome is to better understand ways to improve the cognitive ability of people with Down syndrome. We are going to do that by chasing down the genes that are responsible for the problems with cognition that happen in children” said Dr. Mobley, executive director of the Institute. “Through research and improved care, we can make it easier for them to go to school, make friends, have jobs, get married and ultimately live independently. We will help them live richer, fuller lives.”

One in 733 babies in the United States is born with Down syndrome. A chromosomal disorder caused by an extra chromosome, more specifically, the presence of all or part of an extra 21st chromosome. The condition is associated with impairment of cognitive ability and an increased chance of various medical issues. An estimated 400,000 people in the United States have Down syndrome and millions more worldwide.

Leslie Leinwand, PhD, of the University of Colorado at Boulder and Denver has served as the Interim Director of the Linda Crnic Institute. She said, “The establishment of the Linda Crnic Institute by Anna and John J. Sie Foundation is a landmark event for research in Down syndrome. This Institute will attract the best and the brightest minds to Colorado to tackle this complex problem to work with our existing outstanding faculty.

“Sophia has been such a blessing in our lives and has led us to meet brilliant and huge hearted scientists such as Linda Crnic, Leslie Leinwand, Larry Gold and the wonderful new leaders at the University of Colorado and The Children’s Hospital. It has given my wife, Anna, and I a whole new purpose in life and Sophia’s parents, Michelle and Tom Whitten, have been laser focused on understanding what we can do better for not just Sophia but for generations of people with Down syndrome to come. We are grateful that the best place to effectuate real change and discovery happens to be in our own back yard,” said John J. Sie.

The Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome is named in honor of the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine professor of pediatrics and psychiatry who died in a bicycle accident in 2004. Linda became a friend and mentor of Michelle and Tom Whitten when they received the prenatal diagnosis that Sophia would have Down syndrome. Linda has inspired the Whittens and the Sies to establish this global institute for Down syndrome that will provide the highest quality of basic, clinical and translational research trials, therapeutic development, medical care, education and advocacy.

The Anschutz Medical Campus is the largest academic health center between Chicago, Texas and the West Coast. The campus is home to the health sciences programs of the University of Colorado Denver as well as University of Colorado Hospital. UC Denver researchers have a proven record of success and expertise in innovation, discovery and

commercialization of therapies, drugs and medical devices. Research accomplishments of being “the first” include the development of a classification and numbering system for human chromosomes, the identification of a genetic factor that converts normal cells into cancer cells, discovering that lymphocytes are preprogrammed to respond to antigens, the foundation of modern immunology, how a human cancer gene functions, and first to identify that naturally occurring proteins in the blood prevent the AIDS virus from reproducing and spreading to healthy cells. The Anschutz Medical Campus stands as a model across the nation for a successful redevelopment of a decommissioned army base.

The University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine faculty work to advance science and improve care as the physicians, educators and scientists at University of Colorado Hospital, The Children’s Hospital, Denver Health, National Jewish Medical and Research Center, and the Denver Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Degrees offered by the UC Denver School of Medicine include doctor of medicine, doctor of physical therapy, and masters of physician assistant studies. The School is part of the University of Colorado Denver, one of three universities in the University of Colorado system. For additional news and information, please visit the UC Denver newsroom online.

The Anna and John J. Sie Foundation supports the sharing of knowledge amongst peoples and cultures throughout the global community, with an emphasis on Down syndrome, international security and diplomacy, education, media, business and technology. The foundation is a supporter of the The Children’s Hospital, the University of Colorado’s “The Sie Family Down Syndrome Break-Through Research Initiative,” the University of Denver’s Korbel School of International Studies, the Denver Art Museum, the Starz Film Center, and numerous other civic, social and educational institutions.