



The Children's Hospital

News Release



www.thechildrenshospital.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elizabeth Whitehead, Children's, 720-777-6388
media pager: 303.890.8314
Michelle Root, Sie Foundation, 303-468-6663

The Children's Hospital Announces the Establishment of the Anna and John J. Sie Center for Down Syndrome *Center will be first of its kind in the Rocky Mountain Region*

(Denver, CO – July 30, 2008) The Children's Hospital announced today the receipt of a multi-million dollar gift from the Anna and John J. Sie Foundation that will go toward the establishment of the Anna and John J. Sie Center for Down Syndrome (the "Sie Center for Down Syndrome"). The Sie Center for Down Syndrome will be the first of its kind in the Rocky Mountain region.

The gift includes a \$2 million endowment and up to \$175,000 per year for ten years. The announcement of the Sie Center for Down Syndrome marks the beginning of a two-month celebration to raise awareness and support for programs that are helping make Denver the national leader in health care and research for people with Down syndrome. The Sie Center for Down Syndrome at The Children's Hospital will provide medical care to children with Down syndrome, hire and mentor a medical "dream team," provide up-to-date information on Down syndrome to women who have received a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome and participate in collaborative ground-breaking clinical trials.

"We are committed to hiring and inspiring a comprehensive team of national experts who together will make tremendous strides in caring for children with Down syndrome," said Jim Shmerling, DHA, FACHE, president and CEO, The Children's Hospital. "Ultimately, we hope to help change the paradigm of how individuals with Down syndrome are perceived by society."

"The Sie Center for Down Syndrome will provide, locally and globally, the highest quality clinical care, therapeutic development including physical, occupational and speech therapies, medical care, societal education and advocacy in the pursuit of its mission," said Stephen R. Daniels, MD, PhD, pediatrician in chief at The Children's Hospital. "Our experts from a variety of fields will have the opportunity to catch medical issues early so the trajectory for children with Down syndrome will be greatly improved." Daniels is overseeing a national search for a dedicated clinical care center director.

"One of the key goals of the Anna and John J. Sie Foundation is to make Colorado the best place for people with Down syndrome to live," said Michelle Sie Whitten, executive director, Anna and John J. Sie Foundation. "It is our belief that innovative and effective private-public-government collaboration in service, intervention, and research is required in order to achieve that goal. Once achieved, the expectation is that Colorado will serve as a template for other states, regions or even countries in terms of successfully tackling issues related to Down syndrome."

- more -

Anna Sie continued, “When our granddaughter, Sophia, was born we had no idea what an uphill battle children with Down syndrome can have in our society. Low expectations and poor health are at the root of the problem. That’s why excellent medical care for these children who can then sleep better, do well at school and contribute on so many levels to society and our community is at the heart of what we anticipate this Center will do. We are thrilled about the prospects.”

With a shared vision of offering the best clinical care for children with Down syndrome in the nation, the gift from the Anna and John J. Sie Foundation has already enabled The Children’s Hospital to recruit Patricia Winders, the world’s leading physical therapist specializing in Down syndrome. Winders is the author of *Gross Motor Skills in Children with Down Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals*, the only comprehensive physical therapy work that provides essential information for both parents and professionals. Recruiting Winders, who joined The Children’s Hospital in December 2007, was the first step toward fulfilling this vision.

At today’s press conference, 5-year-old Sophia Whitten, who happens to have Down syndrome and is the granddaughter of Anna and John J. Sie and daughter of Michelle Sie Whitten and Tom Whitten, had the honorary distinction of cutting the ribbon that symbolizes the hope and excitement surrounding the creation of the new comprehensive Sie Center for Down Syndrome.

About The Children’s Hospital

This year, The Children’s Hospital celebrates 100 years of pediatric healthcare excellence. Founded in 1908, The Children’s Hospital is a leading pediatric network entirely devoted to the health and wellbeing of children. Continually recognized as one of the nation’s outstanding hospitals by U.S. News & World Report, The Children’s Hospital is known both for its nationally and internationally recognized medical, research and education programs as well as the full spectrum of everyday care for kids throughout Colorado and surrounding states. With more than 1,000 healthcare professionals representing the full spectrum of pediatric specialties, The Children’s Hospital network of care includes its main campus, 14 Children’s Care Centers and more than 400 outreach clinics. For more information, visit www.thechildrenshospital.org.

About the Anna and John J. Sie Foundation

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