

# COLORADO FOUNDATION



## FOR CONDUCTIVE EDUCATION

... Achieving independence through active learning

Winter Newsletter 2015



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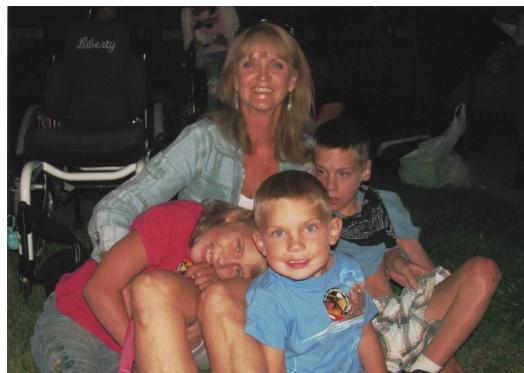
The Colorado Foundation for  
Conductive Education is a 501(c)(3)  
public charity committed to providing  
opportunities for individuals  
with motor challenges to achieve  
optimal physical, cognitive  
and social independence  
through the application  
and promotion of  
Conductive Education principles.

## Where It All Began: A Conversation with CFCE's Founder

**R**ecently, we had a chance to sit down with the founder of CFCE, Roxanne Waechter, at the January 24<sup>th</sup>, BOEC Ski Day to talk about how CFCE got started. Many of you know Roxanne Waechter as the founder of CFCE, but we wanted to learn more about her vision for CFCE from the beginning.

CFCE's roots trace back to 2001, when Roxanne and her husband, Jim, became the proud grandparents of twins, James and Libby. Both James and Libby were born prematurely and developed Cerebral Palsy early in life. The Waechter family began searching for programs that could help James and Libby receive the best therapy available. After visiting a center in Arizona, Roxanne learned about Conductive Education (CE) and knew she had discovered something incredible:

*"When the twins were 6, I attended an intensive Conductive Education summer camp at a center in Tucson, Arizona, with James, Libby and their mother, Katie. I watched James & Libby achieve amazing results in a short period of time using the techniques of Conductive Education. I knew we needed to start a CE center in Colorado similar to Tucson's. Fortunately, Jim & I had the means to do this financially. It had always been my desire to give back to others when we have been so blessed. I also knew that there were many other children in Colorado who could benefit from this alternative therapy. Jim and I met with an attorney and our Wells*



Fargo banking team and soon thereafter,  
CFCE became a reality."

And so it began! CFCE started in the spring of 2008 and was incorporated that following November in Loveland, Colorado with a group of 6 children. Roxanne overcame numerous challenges and obstacles to start the center and gain momentum. CFCE has grown tremendously in Colorado, and it remains the only Conductive Education center in the region! Soon after it began, many families looking for a new approach to teaching their children how to live more independently found the Center offered a great way to meet each child's developmental needs and help them learn skills that could really make a difference in their lives.

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"It was quite the fight to start Conductive Education because it was a new approach that many people had never heard of. One of the biggest obstacles to setting up our center was dealing with US Immigration to hire conductors. The process took so much longer than we ever anticipated. Other challenges arose when Jim and I applied for grants which, unfortunately, brought in very little funding because they didn't understand the concept of Conductive Education. We continually went around in circles trying to get additional dollars to grow the center. CFCE could not have survived without the generous support we have received throughout the years."

In addition to working through these early challenges and early successes, Roxanne's commitment to running CFCE after it started lasted a lot longer than she had originally anticipated!

"When we started, my intent was to incorporate CFCE, and then step back out of the day-to-day management. However, I soon realized that was not going to happen if CFCE was to grow into a thriving business capable of bringing in new students. It was going to take a fulltime commitment. Here we are today beginning our eighth year and still going strong!"



Not only did Roxanne use her past skills and background of business to run CFCE, but she also spent a lot of time finding new ways to increase funding and resources to help grow CFCE into a broad program to serve as many families as

possible. While Roxanne was running CFCE day to day, she initiated all the programs that exist today, including the summer camps, the annual golf tournaments, BOEC ski days, the children's art program with ARK (Art Reaching Kids), various other small fundraisers, as well as expansion into Metro Denver.

"When we started, we wanted to keep tuition affordable for the families. Our tuition began at half the rate of other centers in the country while still providing outstanding therapy programs! Because CFCE was not able to support itself through tuition alone, Jim and I knew we needed to start an annual fundraiser that would supplement our program so that parents could afford to bring their children. Our golf tournament has done that and this year we will be hosting our 6<sup>th</sup> tournament!

I cannot thank enough the many dear friends, family members, business associates, and last, but certainly not least, the families who support CFCE today. Their monetary and emotional support has been fantastic and unwavering! CFCE would not be where we are today if not for all of our wonderful supporters who believe in our cause!"

A few of you may know the blood, sweat, and tears that has gone into establishing CFCE, but you may not know that Roxanne worked for years to establish CFCE as the President and as a donor! Roxanne's dedication to making CFCE work for the families has enabled us to grow over the years. From six children in Loveland in 2008, we're now celebrating our eighth year and we've grown to two centers serving over 30 children! We talked with Roxanne about her vision for CFCE and where she hopes CFCE can grow in the coming years.

*"It's all about the children - they are so important!"*

*-Roxanne Waechter*

"My ultimate dream is and has been for CFCE to be housed in its own building. I would love to see CFCE operate as a school with academic and conductive ed classrooms, additional rooms for Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy. Ideally, we would have overnight rooms for visiting conductors and families who come from long distances for monthly sessions & summer camps, and a conference room(s) for an integrated team of therapists & Conductors to collaborate. Over the years there have been many ups and downs, and we have a lot of work to do before we reach this goal, however, I believe someday we will get there! My mantra is always 'It's all about the children! They are so important!'"

Please join with me to show your appreciation for a wonderful and dedicated founder who has changed the lives of many kids and families in Colorado. It is only thanks to the effort and time she put in that we have a supportive network of friends and family and that we're making progress every year towards our goals!

As a parting note, we asked Roxanne what she's looking forward to in the next few years now that she is retiring from CFCE's day to day operations: "Continuing with my photography, getting back in my watercolor studio, traveling and spending more time with our very dear grandchildren!" As Jim, Roxanne's husband, likes to say "Jennifer may be the face the children and families see at CFCE but Roxanne is CFCE." Roxanne and Jim have handed over CFCE to Jennifer and Peter Doyle's capable hands - "We know they will do a fantastic job." Roxanne and Jim will remain on the board and as consultants for CFCE.



## CFCE's First Ski Day of 2015!

**O**n January 24th, 2015 we had our first day up at Breckenridge Ski Resort with the fabulous non-profit, Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center (BOEC). This program provides adaptive ski lessons and experiences for children and adults of all ages and disabilities. It was a really special experience for the families to be able to watch their children dash down the slopes in different adapted ski set ups. The BOEC can get nearly anyone with a disability up on the slopes and this year we were fortunate enough to be able to take 11 CFCE children up to the program.

Each child had two volunteers who were all very experienced skiers. They each made sure the kids had the best time on the slopes, whether it was going really fast and getting their hair blown back, or taking the turns a little slower and enjoying the scenery. Now that this was the 4th year going to BOEC, some of the kids were working on more advanced techniques, such as leaning from side to side in order to turn the Bi-ski by themselves, or trying out the outriggers in standing to control themselves going down the slope. The skill and understanding of the BOEC staff to be able to work with the CFCE children was outstanding. The staff members were patient, very caring and were devoted to helping the kids have fun doing something they wouldn't otherwise be able to experience for themselves.

One example was Luke, a 4 year old boy who has been attending CFCE for over two years. This was his first time going skiing and it was one of the happiest experiences he has had. Even putting on the helmet and getting fitted up was exciting for him. Luke loved going down fast and was giggling and laughing the whole way down. All this excitement did wear Luke out by the end of the day, so much so that he managed to fall asleep on the last run down and remained sleeping in the Maggie restaurant for his Après Ski! Luke can not wait for the next time he can go skiing.

We would like to give a very special thanks to all the staff and volunteers at BOEC who made this possible. We would also like to thank the generous people who pledged towards the ski days this year. Without your generous donations, we wouldn't be able to take as many kids this year as we did. And finally, we would like to thank Roxanne and Jim Waechter for setting these ski days up with BOEC. It is thanks to them connecting with the BOEC program that we are able to go there multiple times a year.

We are all excited about the next ski day on February 28th, 2015 back at the BOEC in Breckenridge. This time we will be taking 12 children and hopefully seeing just as many smiles coming down the mountain!



**Donate today!**

Go to: [www.conductiveed.com](http://www.conductiveed.com)  
Your donations help change lives!



## MORE FREE DAYS COMING THIS SPRING!

### Meet a Child: Cody (written by his mom, Lisa)

**C**ody was born premature, but had an uneventful stay in NICU and became a good-natured, funny, and lively baby. Cody had just started walking around 19 months when we noticed a change. Instead of improving, his walking skills started to decline, and he started dragging one foot and clenching his hand. Within a period of several months, Cody's condition worsened until he was unable to crawl even a few feet without resting, could not pull up or feed himself, and completely stopped talking.

Thanks to a wonderful team of doctors, Cody was diagnosed with a genetic disorder called Leigh's syndrome that is due to a mutation of his mitochondrial DNA. The mitochondria are the "powerhouses of the cells" and without them functioning properly, Cody's body was simply not producing enough energy. For him, this energy deficit caused some damage to his brain which in turn causes motor difficulty. Cody is currently involved in a trial for one of the first drugs intended to treat mitochondrial dis-



### Free Days for New Families

**T**his past Christmas 2014, we had the opportunity to offer free classes to new children interested in Conductive Education. We were able to offer a 3 hours session for those who were interested so that they can learn what CE is and how it might be a great holistic approach for their child. We had quite a few families interested and 4 children managed to schedule classes with us. We also had several families interested after Christmas as a result of parents spreading the word to their friends. We are really excited to see so much growth already in 2015 and we look forward to our summer camps and expanding our outreach to more families this year.

We will be offering a similar opportunity during Spring Break 2015. We will have a free 3 hour session for children new to CFCE and a free session for any current student who refers another family. We hope to get similar interest during Spring Break and hopefully fill our summer camps this year.

eases like Leigh's, and his energy level has improved dramatically in the last six months.

Shortly after Cody's diagnosis, we had an opportunity to relocate to Denver. Part of our decision to come was being able to get Cody involved with Conductive Education, as these types of programs are rare within the US. Prior to our move, we really enjoyed traditional PT/OT/ST with Cody but knew that the more integrated approach of Conductive Education made sense to us. It's been about two months since Cody started working with Jen though CFCE, and he has already re-learned to roll over (a big accomplishment!) and is working on lots of other skills. Not to mention he absolutely adores these play dates!

Cody is now 33 months old, and is already practicing with Jen to be able to blow out his birthday candles this year! Cody's favorite activities are playing hide-and-seek and riding in his seat on Mom's bike. We are all looking forward to Cody's first summer camp with CFCE this year, and feel very lucky for the opportunity to have CFCE be part of our life.

**Donate today!**

Go to: [www.conductiveed.com](http://www.conductiveed.com)  
Your donations help change lives!



## Two More Ski Days Yet to Come

Here at CFCE, we just love taking the children to hit the slopes each year, and so when we discovered that we had enough support, and of course plenty of interest, that we could hold a third ski day this year, we were thrilled. CFCE recently took 11 children up to Breckenridge on Saturday, January 24th. We are now sending another 12 children up for our second ski day of 2015 on February 28<sup>th</sup> at BOEC and 13 more children to Winter Park on March 15<sup>th</sup> for a third ski day.

We are so grateful to those of you who pledged and donated to this program so that the children are able to attend these ski days. We also want to thank BOEC and NSCD for the work they do to make this such a great experience for our children. These kids just love this experience. The feeling of freedom and independence the children experience while skiing is immeasurable. It is such a valuable trip.



A huge thank you to this year's GOLD SPONSORS:

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## SAVE THE DATE: 6th Annual CFCE Golf Tournament

### June 11th, 2015

The 6th Annual CFCE Golf Tournament date has been set! Mark your calendars and plan to join us on Thursday, June 11th, 2015. We are returning to Arrowhead Golf Club in Littleton, CO for this year's tournament. Many of our past players note this as their favorite course. More information and registration forms will be coming in February. We hope to see you all there this year!



## Seasonal Help Wanted

### Summer Camp 2015

**Are you looking for a rewarding work experience?**

**Are you interested in working with children with disabilities?**

- Come be a class assistant for Colorado Foundation for Conductive Education
- Camps are held in June/July, M-F, 9 am-2 pm in Loveland and the Denver Metro area
- This will be a fun and inspiring opportunity to learn new skills and help children with cerebral palsy become more independent.

We are specifically looking for people who are studying in the healthcare (therapy) or education field who have experience working with children of any age, but willing to train the right person.

**Please send resume, summer availability and references to:**

**[office@conductiveed.com](mailto:office@conductiveed.com)**



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## IMPORTANT DATES:

**BOEC Ski Days at Breckenridge - Jan 24 & Feb 28, 2015**

**NSCD Ski Day at Winter Park - Mar 15, 2015**

**6th Annual Golf Tournament at Arrowhead - June 11, 2015**



### I'll do my part to help CFCE....

**Yes,** I would like to donate to CFCE and help individuals with motor disabilities. I want to do my part to help them achieve their goal of independence. I've enclosed my **tax-deductible** gift of:



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