

Michelle Sie Whitten

President & CEO, Co-Founder, Global Down Syndrome Foundation

Michelle Sie Whitten is the Co-Founder, President and CEO of the Global Down Syndrome Foundation (Global). Global is dedicated to significantly improving the lives of people with Down syndrome through Research, Medical Care, Education, and Advocacy. Its primary focus is to support the first academic home in the United States committed to research and medical care for people with Down syndrome made up of key affiliates – the Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome and the Rocky Mountain Alzheimer’s Disease Center, both at the Anschutz Medical Campus, and the Sie Center for Down Syndrome at Children’s Hospital Colorado.

Global publishes the award-winning quarterly magazine – [Down Syndrome World™](#) and is a leading national lobbying and advocacy organization for people with Down syndrome. Specifically, Global is the lead voice in requiring a comparable, fair share of federal government support for research, improved medical care, and improved educational standards for people with Down syndrome. Global organizes the award-winning [Be Beautiful Be Yourself Fashion Show](#) – the single largest annual fundraiser for Down syndrome, and administers the *Quincy Jones Exceptional Advocacy Award* each year. Programs established by Whitten, and organized and funded by Global include the [Be Beautiful Be Yourself Dance Class](#), [Ed McCaffrey Dare to Play Football and Cheer Camps](#), [Global Down Syndrome Educational Series](#), the [Dare to Play Soccer Camp](#), [Dare to Play Tennis Camp](#), and more.

Michelle has also served as the Executive Director of the Anna and John J. Sie Foundation since 2005. Since that time, the Anna and John J. Sie Foundation has become the largest private source of grant money for Down syndrome-related research and programs. Michelle was a key architect in establishing the Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome and the Sie Center for Down Syndrome at Children’s Hospital Colorado.

For her Down syndrome-related work, Michelle has received several awards including the 2014 Triumphant Woman Award from the Excelsior Youth Center, the 2013 Colorado Cross Disability Coalition Award, the 2013 National Down Syndrome Congress’ President’s Award, the 2011 inaugural National Football Foundation Community Outreach Award, seventeen ICON awards from 2011 to 2015, the 2010 Rainbow of Hope Award from Keshet of the Rockies, the 2009 Developmental Pathways Frances Owens Family Involvement Award, and the 2007 Arc Thrift Community Leadership Award.

Prior to her career in the non-profit sector, Michelle was President and CEO of Encore International, Inc., then the China division of Liberty Media Corporation. She worked in the cable industry from 1993 until 2005 and is considered a pioneer in the China media industry. For her work during that time, she received the 40 Under 40 Achievement Award, the Real Women: Outstanding Entrepreneur Award and the Women in Cable & Telecommunications Walk of Fame Award.

Michelle sits on the boards of Arc Thrift of Colorado, the Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome, Denver Mayor’s International Council, and [Constellation Philanthropy](#). She holds a Master of Arts degree in Regional Studies – East Asia and a Graduate Certificate in Business Administration, both from Harvard University. She studied Mandarin Chinese at Peking University and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Asian Studies from Tufts University.

Michelle is married to Tom Whitten, a China and contemporary art expert. They live in Denver, Colorado and have two children, one of whom has Down syndrome.