



I feel blessed for the ways that my family has benefited from the Circus: better communication, more exercise and better skills. *Marcela M., parent*

It's great because it's a way in which my children can exercise. At home, [my daughter] always likes to demonstrate everything she has done in practice and she arrives [home] very motivated. *Marco A., parent*

Fern Street Circus...got me inspired... It helped me solve problems. *Andrea N., circus student*

My daughter has become more responsible... Her grades have improved and she does her homework quickly so she can be early to the practices. *Carmen M., parent*



## Highlights from Our Neighborhood Tour, October 2017



Bill and Jan Biggerstaff Present  
**CIRCUS REPORT**  
AND  
ShowBiz USA

Vol. 45 No. 22 America's Favorite Circus Newsletter \* celebrating our 45th year NOVEMBER 24, 2017

## FERN STREET CIRCUS NEIGHBORHOOD TOUR

by Don Covington

San Diego's homegrown community circus embarked on an ambitious neighborhood tour in October 2017 to celebrate its re-emergence in the cultural landscape of Southern California. The beloved organization survived a series of setbacks during the past few years that had local supporters concerned about its survival. Several fortuitous circumstances provided incentive for revival, the most important of which was the return of original founders John Highkin and Cindy Zimmerman who utilized their vision, dedication and enthusiasm to jumpstart moribund programs. Fern Street performances always combined professional circus performers with students from their circus skills programs, but this time out, the goal is more clearly aligned with social circus.

The 2017 neighborhood tour presented a professionally produced show in venues selected to provide much needed live family entertainment to underserved populations. The cast included representatives from a mix of cultures and backgrounds, including an Ethiopian foot juggler; a Guinean acrobat and a Mexican American ringmaster who provided non-stop bi-lingual commentary. A four-person Gypsy jazz band provided music. Youthful performers from Fern Street's after school programs overflowed with boundless enthusiasm and charm, obviously relishing the opportunity to display their newly acquired circus skills to an appreciative audience. For many of them, the tour provided a rare chance to move beyond their home base and into the larger community. Thanks to a grant from the City of San Diego and other donors, all shows were free to the public. In many venues, local organizations provided information on community services; food trucks offered refreshments and craft tables allowed children to create their own souvenirs.

At the conclusion of each show, the audience was invited into the ring to dance with the cast and crew, celebrating the bond between the circus and the community. There couldn't be a better way of demonstrating that Fern Street Circus is back and that San Diego is the richer for having it.

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## Annual Report, 2016-17 Neighborhood Tour 2017 (Oct. 12-29)

### After-School Circus Program

Partnership with Park & Recreation Dept.

45 students served twice weekly

48 weeks per year

8 teaching artists/coaches; 2 bilingual staff

Lead funder: The David C. Copley Foundation

Participant in national Social-Emotional

Learning study to be published Jan. 2018

Other programs: DEEP (Diamond Education

Excellence Partnership) summer program;

Boys & Girls Club, 4S Ranch Branch

### Performance

78 shows, assemblies, presentations, field trips

Total Served: 10,805 in 41 communities

Partners include: Park & Recreation Dept.,

Port of San Diego, San Diego International

Airport, S. D. Unified School District,

SAY San Diego, United Taxi Workers San

Diego, Somali Bantu Association; City

Heights Library; LindleyLopez Circus

7 shows, 6 park venues

Attendance: 1,608 (average, 230)

13 Professional Performers, 4 Musicians,

10 Technicians

33 Student Performers

Total cost: \$48,470

### Organization

Income: \$184,680

Accumulated surplus/reserve: \$28,926

6-member Board of Directors

1 full-time employee, 28 part-time contractors

Funders include California Arts Council;

County of San Diego (Districts 1 & 4); City

of San Diego: Commission for Arts and

Culture, Council Districts 3 & 9; David C.

Copley Foundation; C.J. & Dot Stafford

Memorial Trust; California Endowment,

US Bank, Norris Foundation, Zable

Foundation & many more!