



Highlights from Our
Neighborhood Tour, October 2017

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*



**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.

FERN STREET CIRCUS
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Annual Report, 2016-17

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; Lindley Lopez Circus

Neighborhood Tour 2017 (Oct. 12-29)

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!