
THE GREAT ALL-AMERICAN YOUTH CIRCUS



PARENT & PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK 2017-2018 SEASON

WELCOME TO THE GREAT Y CIRCUS!

GREAT Y CIRCUS: HISTORY & MISSION

Founded in 1929 by YMCA Director Roy Coble, a former Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey performer, the Great Y Circus is a unique tradition in Redlands, California. It is the oldest community circus in the world and one of only a few programs like it in the United States. The Great Y Circus started small as a "family fun night" and has grown tremendously throughout the years. The YMCA is more than a place to exercise; it is a gathering place for families and a very important part of life in our community. There is no better program that exemplifies this than the Great Y Circus.

The Great Y Circus is a Redlands Family YMCA program and is organized by YMCA staff. The Great Y Circus is funded through performances, fundraisers, class fees and YMCA memberships. Unlike other youth activities, Circus is noncompetitive and focuses on individual and group skills presented in an entertaining and artistic theatrical performance, with choreography, lighting, costumes and music.

The Circus program emphasizes teamwork, dedication, trust, family bonding, skill, showmanship, excitement and fun for both the participant and the observer. Circus teaches young people important values, such as responsibility, commitment, self-confidence and self-discipline, along with specialized skills. The Great Y Circus is supported primarily by family, friends and volunteers, as well as many alumni who have gone on to become professionals, who return to help the next generation learn circus skills.

Young bodies are pushed to their maximum as they master new physical movements that often rival feats performed by professional circus performers. Students work hard throughout the season; following the YMCA philosophy of "building a strong body, mind, and spirit". Circus inspires the highest potential of personal achievement in each child, and their energy and enthusiasm to do their best is contagious! Circus becomes a second family for children and adults alike; making it truly one of our most unique programs.

REGISTRATION & PAYMENT FOR CIRCUS CLASSES

Circus participants must be **full facility members** of the YMCA in order to register for classes. **Pre-registration is required for all classes, with payment for each new session made by the 10th of the month.** Late payments will have an additional, non-refundable \$10 late fee added to the existing charges. Any outstanding balance dues could result in your child(ren) being removed from their classes.

Participants will not be permitted to continue in Circus classes if their class fees have not been paid by the 10th of each month. You are required to sign up for an EFT (electronic funds transfer) payment to ensure that your class fees are paid on time each month. EFT debits can be charged to your checking, savings or credit card account on the 10th or 25th day of each month. EFT forms are available at the Membership Desk. If you wish to draft from your bank account, you need to give a voided check. Cancellation requires a **5-day written notice** before the day of withdrawal. Cancelling your Circus class enrollment will not cancel your YMCA membership. All payments for Circus classes will take place at the Membership Desk.

When registering for any circus classes, participants must meet the minimum age requirement by **the first day of classes (September 5th)**

CIRCUS CLASS FEES

Class Fees for the upcoming Circus season are \$40/per one act monthly, \$80/per two acts monthly, \$110/per 3-5 acts monthly and \$310/family rate. The family rate offers one overall fee that covers everyone on your account in any circus class that they qualify and register for. Please note that members using the family rate must be in the same household and on the same YMCA membership account. You may register for up to five classes if you have met the prerequisites for those classes. Financial assistance is also available. Please inquire at our Front Desk.

Financial Assistance

The YMCA of the East Valley's goal is not to turn anyone away from participating in our programs because of an inability to pay. The YMCA and CCAC (Community Circus Arts Corporation) provide financial assistance, based on need, to those demonstrating they are unable to pay in full. The YMCA's and CCAC's scholarship applications are available at the Membership Desk. Families interested in applying for financial assistance from CCAC are required to apply for YMCA Financial Aid first. You are invited to apply for financial assistance from both organizations and have the opportunity to receive assistance from both organizations. Please submit your applications (w/ appropriate documents) to Emilie Gleisberg, Circus Director, or the front desk for processing. Please make sure that they are aware it is for circus fees.

Credits and Refunds

Program Fees – After the session start date (the 1st day of each month for Circus), no transfers, credits or refunds of a program will be issued without a **written excuse**. For cancellations prior to a program session starting, one of the following may be requested w/ Director approval:

- Transfer to another YMCA program
- YMCA credit towards future use of programs (expires one year from date of issuance)
- Refund by check. A \$10 service charge will apply for each refund. Please allow two weeks for processing. NO CASH REFUNDS.

If the YMCA cancels a program, we will make every effort to transfer participants to another class, or fees will be returned at no charge.

PARTICIPATION & PERFORMANCE IN CIRCUS CLASSES

Participants enrolled in circus classes will learn the skills involved in very specific circus acts. Each participant will be expected to do their very best in every class under the close supervision of our Head and Assistant Trainers. Participants will be expected to attend every class; arriving 10 minutes early to help with the set-up of equipment, or staying later to help with tear-down. Participants are not allowed to participate in any classes that "overlap"; please make the decision on which class you prefer to attend on a regular basis.

Parents are invited to attend the first class with their child(ren) so that they can hear the Trainer's introduction and orientation "first hand". Parents are also encouraged to observe any/all classes throughout the season. Participants must be picked up directly after their classes have ended; no child should be left unattended at any time.

Preschool participants under the age of 6 **must participate** in one of our Mini Acro classes prior to joining any of the Pyramid Acro classes, the Combo Circus and/or Swinging Ladders classes. The Mini Acro classes will be open to children, ages 3-5 ½ yrs. The children will be placed in groups according to their skills and ability to follow directions. Mini Acro I participants must be potty trained, comfortable in a large group and able to follow directions. Parent participation is encouraged for Mini Acro I. Mini Acro II participants are encouraged to have 1 year of Mini Acro experience, must be able to follow directions, able to perform a forward roll with good form, able to support own body weight and comfortable with parent out of the room. Mini Acro III participants must have 2 years Mini Acro experience or invited by Trainer, able to follow directions, able to perform level II skills, has a good start on a backward roll, has a good start on a bridge and comfortable with parent out of the room. Please note: Parents are asked to wait outside of the room for Mini Acro II and III.

Our T/TH Circus Essentials class is the perfect place for **a new and/or returning participant who is looking to learn or improve upon their skills in tumbling, beginning balancing, mini trampoline, and beginning pyramid acro skills**. This class prepares the children for Pyramid Acro, Mini Trampoline, Tumbling, Juggling, Poi and more! Every child develops at their own "pace"; not only learning the physical skills, but also developing body awareness and the ability to follow direction and understand class expectations.

Enrollment in classes **does not** guarantee a performing spot in the annual show for any participant. Participants must continually demonstrate a positive attitude, maintain regular attendance in their classes, be respectful of their trainers and other participants, as well as, be able to perform all of the required skills for their act before consideration of performing in the show takes place.

If, for any reason, a participant would not be performing the act in which they were enrolled, the Circus staff would work with that participant to see whether he or she could still perform elsewhere in the show (unless discipline or lack of attendance is the issue).

Some acts, due to limited rigging space or equipment, might require participants to **rotate shows**. This means that the participant would **not** perform in every show, but rather he or she would take turns with another performer either by switching nights or positions, in order to allow more people the opportunity to take part in the circus experience. (Remember: paying class fees does not guarantee a performing spot in show) The performance must be **earned** by means of consistent attendance, positive attitude and demonstration of required strengths and skills in classes.

CIRCUS CLASSES PREREQUISITE EVALUATIONS

Prior to enrolling in a few of our beginning classes, and all of our intermediate & advanced circus classes, each student must undergo an evaluation to test the participant's eligibility for each class. Participants, with or without previous experience, must attend this evaluation prior to registering for this class.

All Act Participants - your evaluations will be carefully reviewed by the Circus Director and/or the Head Trainers of these specific classes PRIOR to you being informed of what class to register for. The reason behind this is to make sure that you are enrolled in the most appropriate class based on your safety, strength, skill, and maturity. Results of the evaluations will be emailed to you at the end of each night of evaluations. Registration will not take place until all of your evaluations have been completed for each of your children.

Registration for ALL classes will open on August 28th.

Prerequisite Evaluation Schedule

- On **Tuesday, August 22nd beginning at 5:00pm in the Coble Gym** for Intermediate Unicycle, Advanced Unicycle, Juggling, Intermediate Teeterboard, Advanced Teeterboard, Pyramid Acro 3, Intermediate Handbalancing, Advanced/Elite Handbalancing, German Wheel, Intermediate Diabolo, Advanced Diabolo, Chinese Pole, Clowning, Tumbling, and Intermediate Poi.
- On **Wednesday, August 23rd beginning at 5:00pm in the Coble Gym** for Pyramid Acro 2 & Intermediate Wire.
- On **Thursday, August 24th beginning at 5:00pm in the Coble Gym** for Rings, Beginning Hammock, Anchors & Aerial Y's, Intermediate/Advanced Hammock, Swinging Ladders, Multiple Trapeze, Aerial Chair, Multilane Cradle, Spanish Webs, Low Casting, Duo Cradle, Duo Cube, Single Trapeze, Hanging Perch, Advanced Lear, Swinging Single Trapeze, Pyramid Acro 1, Risley Duo, and Ribbon.

*Circus classes that do not require evaluations prior to registering include: Beginning Teeterboard, Beginning Unicycle, Beginning Wire, Aerial Workout, Circus Essentials, Balloon Art, Mini Acro and Stilts & Globe, Men's Rings Strengthening, and Balance Perch.

At the prerequisite evaluations, Trainer's will be using Skill Evaluation Forms that list the strength & skill requirements needed for specific classes. Each participant will be given the opportunity to perform these skills to be the best of their ability. Circus participants will be placed into the most appropriate classes according to their strength, experience and skill development. All of our Circus classes have established class size maximums for safety reasons, so to avoid being wait-listed you are encouraged to register promptly each month once you have been notified of the classes your child(ren) have successfully qualified for.

If a class reaches its maximum capacity, your name will go on a waiting list. If a space opens up in a class that has a waiting list, we will offer the open space to the first person on the list. We are very aware of the children who are wait-listed and we will keep in touch with you to keep you informed of any openings in classes as they come available. Please do not call the YMCA to inquire of your Wait List status.

Enrollment for ALL classes closes on October 31st. You will be able to register for classes until October 31st unless these classes have reached their maximum capacity prior to that deadline.

EVALUATION PERIODS IN CIRCUS

There are **2 formal evaluation periods** within each circus class: Conditioning (or strength) Evaluation and Skills Evaluation. The participants are evaluated during this time to ensure they are able to perform all of the skills required, as well as to measure their strength and endurance in order to progress safely. Participants who wish to join a class **after the first or second evaluation period** has passed will have to be evaluated for prerequisite skills as well as the strengths or skills covered in the most recent evaluation before enrollment in that class can be confirmed. **No exceptions.**

Conditioning: September 5th through October 13th (6 weeks)

Conditioning Evaluations occur the week of **October 16th**. Conditioning is an ongoing process, and we strongly encourage Circus participants to work out at home **in addition** to their workouts in class. Ask your Trainer for suggested exercises to do at home. For example, the upper body strength needed for most acts can take a long time to build, especially if a student has no previous circus or gymnastics experience. A pull-up bar can be purchased at any sporting goods store for about \$25, and are fairly easy to install into a standard doorway or hallway. Performing several pull-ups on that bar can help you achieve your upper body strength you need in no time!

Skill Development: October 23rd through December 8th (7 weeks)

During this time, participants will learn the skills or tricks they will need to know for the performance. **Skill Evaluation** occurs the week of **December 11th** with the evaluation results being communicated to the parents before winter break.

If for any reason, a participant does not successfully achieve the goals of the Conditioning or Skills Evaluations, Circus staff will work with that participant & parent to find an alternate class in which he or she can continue learning safely, based on the student's level of strength, experience and skill.

HOLIDAYS - NO CIRCUS CLASSES ON:

- Thanksgiving: November 20th-26th (Classes will NOT be held during this week)
- Winter Break: December 22nd – January 6th (Classes Resume on January 7th)
- Equipment Rigging Week/ Spring Break = March 19th – March 23rd. (Coble Gym Closed)

The regular Circus season runs from September through May. If a holiday is not listed above, that means the YMCA facility remains open on that date and **classes will be held as scheduled**. Please make your best efforts to bring your children to their classes on holidays that the YMCA does not observe, as the Trainer will be prepared to hold class as scheduled. Each class counts the closer we get to our Shows!

EXCUSED & UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Participants **must maintain** regular attendance in classes. However, we realize that a missed class occurs once in a while. An **excused absence** would be the result of an event of serious, unavoidable nature such as illness, funeral, wedding, snowed in, and/or family vacation. An **unexcused absence** would be events or activities that take place resulting as a conflict with a participant's Circus class. Each absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Head Trainer of the specific class/act. Should a participant fall behind in a class due to absences, the Trainer will notify a parent in an attempt to rectify the situation prior to it resulting in removing the participant from the class/act. Please notify us when your child is unable to attend their classes by calling the circus office at (909)798-9622 x205. We will communicate the information to the Head Trainer(s).

APPROPRIATE ATTIRE FOR CIRCUS CLASSES – DRESS CODE

Trainers, assistants, facilitators, and participants must wear comfortable, athletic-type, “snug fitting” but flexible clothes in order to participate in classes. Examples: spandex shorts, fitted t-shirts, leotards, leggings, bicycle shorts, unitards, mat shoes or tennis shoes. Please **do not** wear jeans or loosely fitted clothing. Aerial Participants **MUST** be in a leotard. **NO JEWELRY** should be worn by participants, trainers, facilitators, or assistant trainers. Participants in Unicycle, German Wheel, and Teeterboard, **must wear tennis shoes or Feyue-like shoes**. During Show: Long hair must be pulled back in a tight bun or French braids (Pony tails are NOT acceptable). Nets are to be free of any holes and shall not show any dirt on the bottom of the feet. Specific act dress code may vary. Please talk to your Head Trainer for specifics for your act.

Program / Act Support

The Circus program is largely dependent on volunteers, so if you are interested in volunteering your time, we would welcome your participation! Many of our parents provide support by helping the Trainers with taking attendance or with spotting in classes. Those who are not available to volunteer during class times due to extenuating circumstances can work with Circus staff or CCAC to find another volunteer position that suits their schedule.

Get Involved with your Children – Full Season Positions: September through May

- **Spotters/Act Support** are needed all season to help ensure the safety of the performers, especially aerialists, by standing beneath them and observing the contact points between the performers and the equipment. (We will teach you how to spot!)
- **Act Parent** volunteers assist the Trainers in taking class attendance, distributing program flyers and/or newsletters, making reminder calls, and help measure the students for their Show costumes.

Pre-Show Positions: These positions are needed from January through April:

- **Merchandise Sales** volunteers sell circus merchandise during shows. Please Contact CCAC.
- **Costumes** are prepared throughout the year and organized during show time. We always need help sewing and designing costumes, and managing the dressing trailers during show. Please note: you do not need to sew in order to help with costumes. Please Contact CCAC
- **Ads & Fundraising** volunteers help organize year-round publicity for circus as well as selling ads for the printed show program. Please Contact CCAC.
- **Show Promotion** volunteers will go out into the community to spread show material to local business. Help get the audience in our seats.

Show-Time Positions: Positions needed from mid-April through May:

- **Ticket Sales** begin in March. Help sell tickets a couple nights a week while your kids rehearse.
- **Parent Patrol** keep an eye on performers as they wait to perform during rehearsals/shows.
- **Rousts** help during run-throughs, rehearsals and shows by setting the equipment for each act.
- **Ushers** direct audience members to their seats during show time.
- **Merchandise Sales** volunteers sell circus merchandise during shows.
- **Concessions** are sold at every show. Help run the concession stand by preparing/retrieving refreshments as they are ordered.

CLASS POLICIES

("Participants" includes performers, trainers, assistants & facilitators)

1. Participants must be appropriately dressed for all classes. (Please see **Appropriate Attire** section)
2. Participants must arrive for classes on time. Arriving 15 minutes or more late to a class will be considered an unexcused absence. Trainers must arrive 10-15 minutes prior to their assigned class to get the equipment set-up in order to start the class on time.
3. Participants should not be on any of the equipment outside of class time, or without a trainer or spotter present during class.
4. Participants and Trainers should not be eating, drinking or chewing gum during classes or in class areas.
5. Participants are invited to eat their snacks and/or meals in The Fireplace Room. Please respect this policy.
6. No horseplay allowed in classes or on any equipment (including the mat cart and roll-up mats). No running between classes or in the hallways. Safety first!
7. Only YMCA Staff, Equipment Managers, Safety Committee members, Head Trainers and Assistant Trainers are allowed in the Equipment Room. Shoes must be worn when moving equipment in & out of room. (No one under the age of 14 allowed in the "hole").
8. Participants must show respect for their Trainers and classmates, be responsible in assisting their Trainers in setting up and/or tearing down their equipment, and should demonstrate a caring attitude for others.
9. Participants must maintain regular attendance of classes. Participants may not miss more than 2 classes per month (for weekday classes) or they risk being removed from that act. Missed classes should be reported to respective trainer(s) prior to missing class, whenever possible. However, reporting an absence before it occurs does *not* guarantee that it will be regarded as an excused absence.
10. Participants must demonstrate positive attitude, motivate and encourage others, and a willingness to do their best in every class every time. Participants will be evaluated on this behavior; the core values of the YMCA: Caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.
11. Conflicts between participants will be taken seriously and the work toward a resolution will be handled with integrity and discretion. If a conflict should arise, we encourage you first to speak face to face with the other person(s). If you feel uncomfortable doing so, or if you could not reach a resolution between yourselves, please bring it to the class Trainer's attention. If further assistance is required, please bring the concern to the attention of the Circus Director right away. We will respect each participant's right to privacy, so conflicts will be treated seriously and will not be talked about with unrelated parties, unless those parties are direct witnesses to the incident.
12. Participants are expected to keep personal cell phones and iPods "out of sight" during classes. These items cause distraction in classes, and could also be easily misplaced. Such devices will be taken away for the remainder of the class time.

13. Participants must maintain regular class payments. All fees are expected to be paid by the 10th of each month. Anyone unable to continue with making payments will be removed from classes. Remember, the YMCA and CCAC offers financial assistance. (Please see **Financial Assistance** section).

REHEARSAL, RUN-THROUGH'S AND SHOW ATTENDANCE

It is extremely important for all participants, performers, trainers, and spotters to attend all run-throughs, rehearsals and shows. This is something that all Circus families need to understand. Please make sure your child arrives **on time!** We plan on starting the run-throughs and rehearsals on time, so it's important that everyone is warmed up and ready to go when needed to be.

Notes and other important information will also be given prior to rehearsals and shows, so it's crucial that all participants are present for these pre-rehearsal/pre-show meetings designated as call times. If even one person is late, it can affect the whole group, so please be respectful of everyone's time!

RUN-THRUS & REHEARSALS

First Half only run-throughs will be held on Tuesday, April 3rd and Tuesday, April 10th at 5pm.

Second Half only run-throughs will be held on Thursday, April 5th and Thursday, April 12th, at 5pm.

Refer to the act order to see which half your act(s) is in. Early on in our run-throughs, some acts may be run out of show order. It is imperative that all participants arrive at the designated start time regardless of where their acts fall in the show order. Transitions are not generally set into the act order until later in April.

Tuesday and Thursday classes are not held at their regular times in April. However, it's possible that your child's Head Trainer may call an additional act practice that might take place previous to a run-through, on a Wednesday, or on the week-end. You will be notified in advance of this practice.

A "run-through" is the step we must take before we can hold an official rehearsal. The main difference between a "run-through" and a "rehearsal" is that we might have to stop to make adjustments to the staging of an act during a "run-through"; during a rehearsal, we will start from the beginning and run the show straight through to the end without stopping, just as if we were performing it for a live audience.

Run-throughs do tend to be lengthy, so the sooner we get started, the sooner we finish. Participants are free to leave a run-through after their last act has finished performing and they have been released by their Head Trainer. Please be prepared by bringing snacks, water, homework/and or toys to help keep kids occupied during these evenings.

There are two formal dress rehearsals for all performers: Wednesday, May 4th and Thursday, May 5th starting at 5pm. Opening night for this year's performing season is Friday, May 7th. * Show dates and times can be found on the following page.

Absences

Absences are only excused if the participant has extenuating circumstances. We understand that sometimes a family emergency, religious observance or some other unforeseen circumstance will prevent a participant from attending a run-through or rehearsal, but please be reminded that in our "ensemble" or group acts, one performer being absent can affect the entire group's ability to perform their routine. Please notify the Circus Office of any possible absences before run-throughs begin in April so that we can plan ahead to accommodate for the absence. Thank you.

CIRCUS CALENDAR

APRIL 2018

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|---|-----------|---|--------|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 1 st Half Run Through 5pm (Mini Acro 4:15-5) | 4 | 5 2 nd Half Run Through 5pm (Mini Acro 4:15-5) | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 1 st Half Run Through 5pm (Mini Acro 4:15-5) | 11 | 12 2 nd Half Run Through 5pm (Mini Acro 4:15-5) | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 Full Show Run Through 5pm (Mini Acro 4:15-5) | 18 | 19 Full Show Run Through 5pm (Mini Acro 4:15-5) | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 Full Show Run Through 5pm | 25 | 26 Full Show Run Through 5pm | 27 | 28 Production Load-In <i>ALL DAY</i> |
| 29 Production Load-In <i>ALL DAY</i> | 30 Sound & Lights Technical Rehearsal 6pm | | | | | |

Please arrive ON TIME for all run throughs and rehearsals. Please bring a snack or meal for your children during extended practices. Thank you.

CIRCUS CALENDAR

MAY 2018

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| 29 Production Load-In <i>ALL DAY</i> | 30 Sound & Lights Technical Rehearsal 6pm | 1 Rousts Rehearsal 6pm Call | 2 Full Show Dress Rehearsal 5pm | 3 Full Show Dress Rehearsal 5pm | 4 Opening Night 5pm Call 7pm Show | 5 3pm Call 5pm Show |
| 6 1pm Call 3pm Show | 7 | 8 | 9 Act Pictures 5pm Call Trainers Mtg. 7pm (Awards) | 10 Act Pictures 5pm Call | 11 5:30pm Call 7pm Show | 12 3:30pm Call 5pm Show Alumni Night |
| 13 1:30pm Call 3pm Show Mother's Day | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 5:30pm Call 7pm Show | 19 3:30pm Call 5pm Show |
| 20 1:30pm Call 3pm Show • 7pm- 9:30pm Awards Ceremony | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 CAST PARTY Pot Luck | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |

Every Show is considered mandatory.

Missing a show may result in removal from following shows.

Please contact the Circus office with any questions that you may have.

(909) 798-9622 x 205