

# 2017 Community Update



**AS** I sit here sipping my coffee, watching the sun come up, listening to what seems like the beginning of the endless rain of the Seattle winter, I look back over this past year at SANCA and I'm endlessly grateful.

**Grateful for our staff** — who show up each and every day to enrich the lives of our students and make every day a little more fun. With more than 1,000 students and families coming through SANCA's doors every week, it's a busy circus! It's a joy to see all the activity in SANCA, from tots learning to tumble, to adults learning new ways to work with their bodies, to our staff and visiting professionals who continue to amaze and inspire all of us toward ever more challenging feats of circus.

- ❖ **Youth Scholarships:** I'm very pleased to share that SANCA has continued its commitment to make circus possible for any child through our need-based scholarship fund. This year we gave \$221,645 in scholarships to 847 youth to take circus classes or participate in Social Circus and Every Body's Circus.

**Grateful for our partners** — who help us bring circus to more kids in schools and community centers throughout Seattle. We've continued our work with wonderful partners like Broadview Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing; Powerful Schools; Refugee Women's Alliance; Rainier Boys & Girls Club; Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative; and the South Park, Delridge, and Garfield community centers.

- ❖ **Circus works!** Over the past year, SANCA partnered with the **American Youth Circus Organization (AYCO)** to participate in a **Socio-Emotional Learning Study** conducted by AYCO and the **Weikart Center** that unequivocally demonstrated that circus arts improve the socio-emotional health of youth. **Compared with national data of youth development programs, social circus has proven to be among the top-ranking, exemplary programs.**

**Grateful for YOU, our supporters** — who have faith in us and the work we do to bring circus to the world — **which is exactly what we did this year!** In the following pages, I'd like to share with you some of this year's highlights and the impact you have made with your support.

I am grateful. Each and every day.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristina Wicke".

**Kristina Wicke**  
Executive Director

## Smithsonian Circus Arts Folklife Festival

**This** summer, SANCA was invited to the Smithsonian Institution's 50th Anniversary Folklife Festival in Washington DC. The focus of the festival was on American Circus Arts. SANCA was one of 22 youth circuses and 15 professional circuses invited to the festival, and as well, was invited to be the sole representative of adaptive circus — circus for people with disabilities. Via our Every Body's Circus program, we sent a team of coaches for ten days, and we made a huge impact across the entire festival.



SANCA coaches Tyler Henry and Amber Parker demonstrate fabric and sling to onlookers at the Smithsonian Circus Arts Festival.

SANCA coaches were the only circus artists permitted to work directly with the public, so we were able to interact with hundreds of visitors to the national mall, including groups of youth with disabilities. It was a vital opportunity to showcase how much impact circus can have for people of all abilities; and we were able to share some of that knowledge with other circus institutions.



Coach Ian Jagel works on tight rope with visitors to the Circus Arts Festival.

Altogether, the Circus Arts Festival produced 724 public events in ten days, hosted over 600,000 visitors, and with SANCA leading the way, served hundreds of people with disabilities. The festival also received two Congressional commemorations and a DC proclamation.

While we were in DC, we had the opportunity to participate in a day-long convening at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) about the role of circus as an art form in the U.S. Meeting and talking with our circus elders and circus innovators resulted in an amazing day filled with inspiration, collaboration and sharing an abundance of knowledge about the proliferation of circus arts in the U.S.!

## Social Circus & Every Body's Circus

**These** programs are booming! This year we reached 547 youth through partner programs, camps, and classes for marginalized youth and youth who have disabilities. Every Body's Circus (EBC) has so much demand that there are now more than ten youth on a waitlist, and some may have to wait almost a year before space is available to take a class at SANCA. Our partner-site work is similarly stretched to capacity, working with offsite groups every day of the week. To address this, we are working to hire and train new

coaches, and making plans to purchase a second van so that we can reach more partner sites. Our efforts to support these programs include new pending, grant proposals for program support, as well as seeking continued support from our community. **I'm excited to report that just this week we received a new \$5,000 partner grant from the KING5 / TEGNA Foundation to support our Social Circus programs!**

## Social Circus – RODA

Our spring Social Circus – RODA project was a huge success! The youth in the program who came to us from our partner organizations Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative (SYVPI) & the Rainier Valley Boys & Girls Club created a social justice circus show called “Break Out,” which explored the problem of mass incarceration in the U.S.

The RODA project has had such great success that we’ve expanded it into a year-long after-school program. We’ve deepened our partnership with SYVPI, and received an

Office of Arts & Culture | Seattle - Youth Arts program grant for the next 2 years to help support RODA, which will help us to continue this really compelling, inspiring work. RODA launched in October with ten new students, who will come to SANCA twice each week through May. One of the most exciting things is that a former participant, Monte, is joining us this year as a student assistant and peer mentor. He’ll be learning to teach circus with our coaches and helping mentor younger students in the program. It’s a testament to the power of circus!

You can learn more about Social Circus and Every Body’s Circus on our [website program pages](#).

## Cirque du Monde Training



We were exceedingly fortunate to partner with **Cirque du Monde** — the social circus arm of **Cirque du Soleil** — to host a week-long intensive Social Circus training about working with youth who are at risk in October. Cirque du Monde sent trainers to SANCA to teach approximately 15 of our coaches and 5 circus trainers from across the country about the pillars of social circus and how we can bring this work to all of our circus interactions. The week was full of games, shared learnings, intense

conversation and riotous play! It has given our coaches a wealth of new knowledge and techniques for working with youth who are at risk, including new ways to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of our programming. We will have the great pleasure of hosting a second training in later February with the same



The RODA Program in action.

group of people, to continue to learn and expand on the knowledge that we gained in October. We are very proud and delighted to have been chosen to receive this very generous gift of training and community building from Cirque du Monde!

### Discovering the Power of Circus and the Power of You

I'm delighted to announce a new pilot project under our Every Body's Circus Program – **The Transformational Women's Circus Project (TWC)**. This project is a 12-week group therapy and circus arts intensive for adults who identify as women whose lives have been impacted by trauma or who have a history of depression and anxiety.

TWC utilizes circus arts, group drama therapy, performance, and social science research to support the mental health and trauma recovery of participants. Twelve students will join our Winter Troupe to explore issues of personal growth, mental health recovery, and creative expression, with a cumulative performance at the end of the quarter. Participants of TWC will meet once a week for three hours over an 11-week period and engage in trauma-informed drama therapy and circus-arts training, with a cumulative performance at the end of the quarter. This is exciting new ground for us. We can't wait to see this project develop. For more information, visit our project page at: [Transformational Women's Circus Project](#).

## SANCA's Youth Performance Program

**Much** like the rest of our programming, the Performance Troupes are growing too! In fact, we now have **fourteen** Magnificent 7s! It's been a busy, busy year for our youth in the performing program. They've appeared at many exciting events, including landmark Seattle events like Moisture Festival, Georgetown Carnival, Georgetown's Art Attack, the upcoming Seattle Center's Winterfest, and more. As if that were not enough, they took time out to go to New Jersey, and to create an entire brand new annual show!



Ava Drummond standing tall at AYCO.

### AYCO Youth Circus Festival

Holy cow! What a week we had in New Jersey at the AYCO Youth Festival with 400 of our closest circus friends! We were hosted by the Trenton Circus Squad, where members of Cirrus Circus and The Magnificent 7 deepened their circus educations by participating in skills workshops; meet students and coaches from all over the country; and perform for their peers! Plus, we ate ice cream!

It was the largest contingent of SANCA youth to appear at an AYCO festival to date! The kids came away from the trip with an appreciation of what circus can do and the excitement to bring back what they had learned to share with others. This bi-annual festival is such a great opportunity for youth to come together to meet like-minded peers, learn amazing things, and stand on new people!

## Acro-Biographies – The Cirrus Circus Annual Show

Cirrus Circus just put a wrap on their annual show! *Acro-Biographies: Flipping the Page* debuted on November 10<sup>th</sup> at the Broadway Performance Hall, and this stunning production amazed us all. A quiet day of introspective study at the library turned into an unexpected celebration of stunning circus with juggling acrobatics, German and Cyr Wheels, anti-podism, and aerial silks and trapeze. Who knew such wonders existed in books?



The teeter-board act during *Acro-Biographies: Flipping the Page*.

This show featured one of the most beautiful Cirrus show sets to date — a visually stunning library filled with rows and rows of books. We can't thank our troupe parents enough for all the time and effort spent building this year's set, and going the extra mile to make sure the show looked so stunning. Thank you!

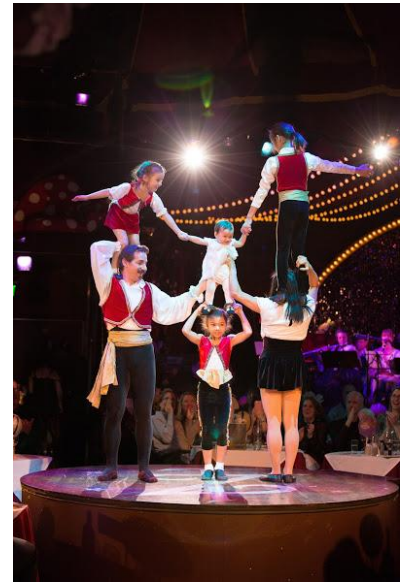


You can learn more about SANCA's performing troupes, or even book them for a party at the [Youth Performance Troupes webpage](#).

## Coming Up!

**The** year's not over yet! We're winding up 2017 with the return of long-time SANCA affiliate circus troupes **Acrobatic Conundrum** and **Famiglia Gentile**. Both groups will be in residence at SANCA in November and December in preparation for shows in December.

Famiglia Gentile will appear with Acrobatic Conundrum and other guests artists in 'Volume 5.' Every year, Acrobatic Conundrum curates a cabaret, adding a new "Volume" to the ever-evolving story of circus. Each Volume is a world unto itself, featuring original pieces — long and short — from circus artists of all stripes. There's no telling what's in store for "Volume 5," but it's guaranteed to be filled with jaw-dropping, knee-slapping, thought-provoking, and heart-filling circus. "Volume 5" is directed by Ty Vennewitz and features Anna Thomas-Henry, Cooper Stanton, Emma Curtis, Mark Siano, Melissa Knowles, Terry Crane, Ty Vennewitz, and Xochitl Sosa; with live music by: Faith Stankevich, Laurie Miller, and Andy Stoller.



Famiglia Gentile performs at SANCA's 2017 Up, with a Twist!

Later in December, Acrobatic Conundrum will also present a new full-length work, 'The Fig Tree



Waltzes.' In a world where stakes are high and time is running out, "The Fig Tree Waltzes" is a paean to the human drive to keep playing against overwhelming odds. This evening-length performance blends circus and dance into a poetic experience that pushes the artists to the edge. The performance features athletic choreography from Costa Rica's Jimmy Ortiz Chinchilla, in addition to ensemble-based aerial work and a touch of humor. Directed by Terry Crane and Acrobatic Conundrum, with artistic advice from Krin Haglund, performers include: Caterina Albani, Terry Crane, Melissa Knowles, Xochitl Sosa, and Cooper Stanton.

To learn more about these shows and buy tickets, visit the [Acrobatic Conundrum website](#).