

RING MASTER'S CIRCLE

Hello, hello!

Spring has sprung and I am full of circus! Filled up with all that circus is capable of – inspiration, awe and wonder, pride, and a feeling of belonging and community. We recently presented SASS (SANCA's Annual Showcase Spectacular), and I was amazed by so many things: the level of skill; the bravery of first-time performers; the age range; the support from students for each other; the staff – talented, wise, and collaborative; and the community support for the performers, each other, and SANCA. Watching it all unfold onstage reminded me of what we are doing at SANCA every day – *we are making good human beings!*

Circus is a pathway to creating trust and self-confidence. By using a strength-based approach to learning, and concentrating on the positive aspects of a situation, we find ways to encourage perseverance in the face of challenge. This starts with something as simple as turning a phrase around. At SANCA, we are constantly looking to find opportunities to replace the phrase "no ... but" with "yes ... and."

When we reframe the mindset that starts with a negative connotation it magically moves to a more positive, solution-based one. Using the word "and" as an amplifier, allows for more creative expression and a piling-on of ideas. This simple change has a profound effect on how students see the work they are doing.

Using the tools of circus arts, we find that youth are engaging in social-emotional learning at all levels and in myriad ways. They are creating positive, supportive, and trusting relationships with each other and their coaches – often by standing on them! Because we keep this top of mind, we are constantly finding ways to incorporate the opportunity for youth to give feedback and have reflection time about the work that they are doing. And since we are embracing the idea of developing well-rounded, informed, engaged, communicative youth – and adults, too – SANCA students are taking the things they are learning in circus with them out into the world.

We are building success one step at a time – whether that success is in learning a new circus skill or learning a new life skill.

This coming year at SANCA, we are committed to creating an environment that nurtures and supports our community in realizing their circus dreams. I would love to hear more from you about your desires, your wishes, and your dreams for SANCA, and I would be delighted to talk to you more about some of the amazing things that we are doing this year. Call me or write to me at 206-708-7052 or kristinaw@sancaseattle.org.

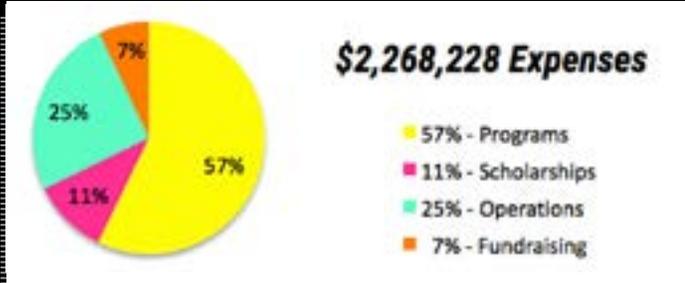
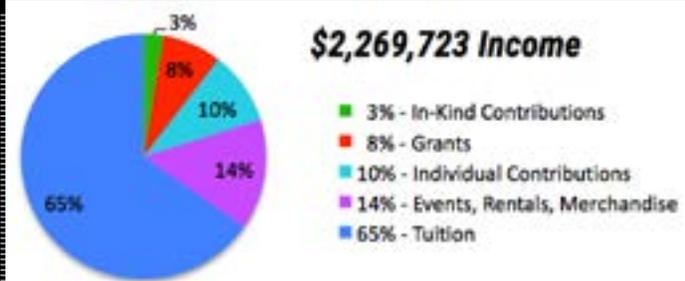
We are growing minds, growing bodies, and growing hearts!
Won't you join us?



Kristina Wicke
Executive Director
SANCA – School of Acrobatics & New Circus Arts

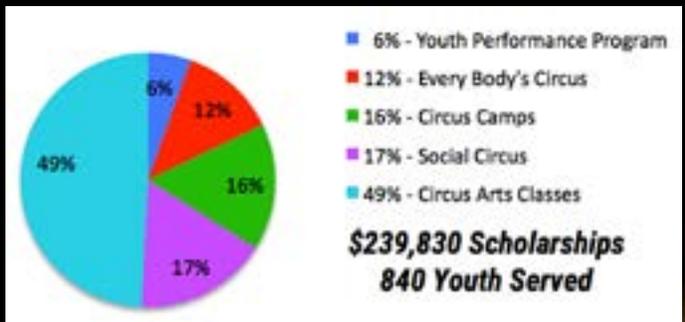
SIDESHOW

2017 Preliminary Financials*



Net Profit / (Loss) \$1,495

*The 2017 financials are preliminary and do not include depreciation or other adjustments. Final numbers will be presented with the IRS 990 Tax Return, available in fall.



Your generous gifts of support make it possible for hundreds of youth to benefit from SANCA's circus arts programs. Need-based scholarship awards increased more than 13% this year.



Photo: John Cornicello

CENTER RING

With SANCA now in its 15th year as Seattle's only non-profit circus arts school, it was time to evaluate our work from a big, broad lens, and with an eye to our future. Recently, a group of SANCA Board and Staff members reviewed our mission, vision, and values.

SANCA's original mission still holds strong. Our vision and values were updated to reflect new aspirations to carry us through another 15 years. We came away from the project with a renewed sense of purpose, and we're excited to share this affirmation of SANCA's work with you. We hope that you find these words inspiring in your own circus practice!

Mission

SANCA's mission is to improve the mental, emotional, and physical health of children of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities by engaging them in the joyous creativity of acrobatics and circus arts.

Vision

Circus is the home of the spectacular . . .

We dream of a world in which all people share in an inspired and thriving community transformed by world-class instruction, performance, and play.

We know in our bodies that every body can benefit from the joys of circus. We are unbounded in our imagination and unbridled in our ability to explore the fullest capacities of the human body and spirit.

We know in our minds that lives can be forever changed by a single moment of inspiration. We nurture a broad spectrum of creative expression from clownish hilarity to acrobatic virtuosity.

We know in our hearts that circus arts provide vital pathways to personal and collective empowerment. We cultivate the spectacular in unexpected places, dissolve perceived differences, and celebrate our collective strength.

Circus is for Every Body!

Values

The SANCA community embraces the following core values in the work we do, the circus we learn, and the relationships we build:

Inclusivity: We create a welcoming community that fosters trust, cooperation, and a sense of belonging. We provide access for all to experience the joy of circus arts, whether as active participants, as engaged spectators, or as patrons of circus arts.

Play: We delight in the joy of creative play, laughter, and having fun. Circus gives us opportunities to grow our minds, grow our bodies, and grow our hearts.

Respect: We believe mutual respect is the bedrock of a healthy community. We treat ourselves and others with integrity and compassion in our words and deeds.

Excellence: We hold ourselves and each other to the highest personal and safety standards. Understanding that failure and humility are integral to success and growth, we encourage persistence in the face of challenges.

Creativity: We create opportunities that ignite our imaginations and cultivate wonder in our community.

IN THE ARCADE

Fun Facts about SANCA Staff!

Everybody has their favorite circus coach, but what you might not know is many of our staff have amazing secret talents!

37% of SANCA staff speak two or more languages! Among us we can speak, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Japanese, Italian, Korean, German, English, and Pantomime!

55% of us play at least one musical instrument! Flute, piano, guitar, ocarina, wine glasses, Kashacas, ukulele, saxophone, violin, clarinet, harmonica, accordion, oboe, drums, bassoon, mandolin, or vocals.

We get around! 60% of us have lived in other countries — Mexico, Canada, the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, the Dominican Republic, Turkey, French Polynesia, Japan, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Germany, Italy, Ireland, England, Belgium, Switzerland, France Luxembourg, Finland, Norway, Croatia, Australia, New Zealand, Egypt, Spain, Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago.

We are kinda smart. 70% of us have advanced degrees, including 7 Masters Degrees and 2 PhDs.

Other fun facts include: One SANCA staffer spent 5 years working as a jet fuel chemist; another has a fulltime job as a kindergarten teacher. One has written novels and published poetry; another has been blessed by Pope John Paul III! We have a 5th degree black belt, and someone who memorized all 195 countries of the world, including capitals and flags, just for fun!



BARNSTORMERS' ROW

In October 2017 and February 2018, Social Circus trainers Blake Lanier and Julie Théberge from Cirque du Monde (a social involvement program of Cirque du Soleil) came to SANCA for two week-long workshops. Circus coaches from across North America participated in the workshops to learn Social Circus principles and techniques for working with youth. Several SANCA coaches and staff participated, including: Monte Britt, Alex Clifthorne, Nate Drackett, Mick Holsbeke, Ian Jagel, Shawn Kellogg, EJ Landsman, Sadie LeDonna, Jo Montgomery, Amber Parker, Paul Peterson, Audrey Spinazola, Iris Stokes, Faye Visintainer, Ivanna Wei, Melanie White, and Kristina Wickie.

Ian Jagel, SANCA's Social Circus Program Director, observed that "Each participant shared at least one exercise, contributing their own expertise, which is something that is also done with youth participants within a Social Circus program to promote a gestalt – everyone coming together to create something greater than the sum of its parts."

Participants shared their knowledge and learned from each other. SANCA also welcomed Deepa Bhandaru from Social Circus partner organization Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA), who led a section on intercultural relations and education. SANCA's co-founder, Jo Montgomery, led a segment about working with students who have physical disabilities. Alex Clifthorne shared her knowledge about working with kids impacted by trauma or developmental disabilities, and Amber Parker shared tech-

niques for working with adult women. Ian Jagel led a section about applying restorative justice principles.

"The training felt like the beginning of something incredible here at SANCA," said Alex. "We started to dive a little deeper into the world of Social Circus, asking ourselves questions that seem very important right now: *How do we include more people? How do we heal trauma? How do we create programs that change the world?* We all practiced creating Social Circus programs using the skills we learned from our great facilitators. It is an unusual and special thing to be able to take the time to devote our brains and bodies to this work. I am so grateful for these two weeks."

The workshop was designed so that coaches could play the same games and activities that they teach to youth participants. SANCA's Social Circus Director, Ian Jagel, believes this experience "built a sense of trust and solidarity with the group." The experience enabled many to see why Social Circus workshops are so successful in working with youth.

Thank you to Cirque du Monde and congratulations to everyone who put in the time for this training!

For more about Social Circus, including Cirque du Monde's Social Circus "resource box" and a link to a new national study about the success of Social Circus as a mode for developing social-emotional skills, check out our extended article on the SANCA Blog at www.sancaseattle.org/blog.



Coaches Ivanna, Audrey, Faye, EJ, and Program Director Melanie White work together during the Cirque du Monde Social Circus training.

ON THE MIDWAY

Cloudy, with a Chance of Circus!

— Alyssa Hellrung & Audrey Spinazola

You've seen them performing all throughout Rain City Seattle — the Amazing Circus 1-ders, the Magnificent 7, and SANCA's original Youth Performance Company, which rebranded to Cirrus Circus in 2014 in anticipation of their summer European tour. Now it's time for our two younger troupes — the 1-ders and Mag 7s — to join Cirrus in the realm of the clouds with new names!

"THUNDER-ROLL...."

Please welcome **Stratus Circus** and **Nimbus Circus**!

The 1-ders are taking on the new name of Stratus Circus, while the Mag 7s will assume the name Nimbus Cirrus. These new names will provide our youth performing troupes with an umbrella of symbolic unity via an overall cloud motif that represents the cohesiveness and independence of troupes that perform both together and separately.

Why clouds you ask?

CIRRUS

C!RRUS

Cirrus clouds are some of the highest clouds we find in our atmosphere. They are long, thin, wispy, and made of ice crystals. Meteorologically, they signify that change is coming. This name is appropriate for our oldest Youth Performance Troupe as part of a new generation of circus performers who will, potentially, bring a fresh new current of air to the world of circus!

NIMBUS

C!RRUS

A nimbus cloud is any type of cloud that already has rain or snow falling from it. It is most often combined with other cloud types ("nimbostratus" or "cumulonimbus").

This name is appropriate for our middle group of students because they often combine with our older or younger students for gigs, and because the name "Nimbus" is reminiscent of the word "nimble," a word that can certainly be used to describe our 8- to 12-year-old performers!

STRATUS

C!RRUS

Stratus clouds are some of the lowest-lying clouds. They are often described as a blanket of clouds or fog that does not touch the ground. Stratus Circus is

a great name for our youngest group of performers because they occupy the first level of altitude in the "atmosphere" of SANCA's Youth Performance Program — a place where they have so much room to grow! Their talents are very broad at this age — so their skills cover a wide area just as these clouds cover the whole sky.

This common motif for SANCA's Youth Performance Troupes helps to provide cohesion for the troupes. They are all part of



Nimbus Circus performs at Up, with a Twist Photo: John Cornicello

the same community and often train, work, and perform together with the common program goal of fostering pre-professional circus. Many students have been part of two, if not all three, of the performance troupes during their careers at SANCA. These are not three separate troupes — they are three different phases of the same weather front that is blowing circus into town!

This renaming helps to create a unified brand identity for organizations seeking to book the troupes at their events, and provides a more professional, cohesive, and clever presentation of our performing youth to our community and audiences.

We're really excited about the new opportunities these name changes bring to our youth troupes. While we will all look back on their former names with occasional wistful nostalgia, we also know that circus is an ever-changing cloudscape of amazing and imaginative possibility!



Stratus Circus performs at SASS Photo: Warren Woo

ROUSTABOUTS' CORNER

Welcome (Back) Mick Holsbeke!

We are delighted to announce the recent return of Mick Holsbeke to SANCA as our new Performance Programs Director!

Mick was one of SANCA's first adult students and coaches — teaching camps and outreach groups from 2004 to 2006. From 2006 to 2009 Mick specialized in Clown at the National Circus School of Canada.

His unique style of clowning, exuberant physical acting, and circus expertise has been entertaining audiences in various international projects ever since.



As an award-winning clown and performer, Mick worked with companies such as 7 Fingers, G.O.P. Variete Shows, Circle of Eleven, Palazzo Colombino of Freiburg, Circus Monti, and Cirque Plume. He also appeared in the 2016 French biopic "Chocolat." In 2016, Mick premiered his solo theater production "Moby Mick" and performed a 60-show tour in French theaters.

Mick returned to SANCA in 2018 and dove right in, appearing as a clown in SANCA's gala, "Up, with a Twist!" He is taking on a new role as SANCA's Performance Programs Director, shepherding the Youth Performance Program and Professional Preparatory Program, as well as bringing forward new inspirations for workshops and the Artist in Residency program, and eventually teachingClown!

"My life was forever changed the day I walked through SANCA's big yellow door in 2004. SANCA gave me the circus skills and the community support necessary to confidently blaze my own trail as a Clown on the international stage. My nearly 15 years in circus since leaving SANCA has shaped me in ways I could never have imagined, and I've chosen to return to SANCA as the school's Performance Programs Director to share my experiences and create opportunities for the next generation of circus artists to lead us into the future of circus. One Circus with Balloons for All!" – Mick

If you see Mick at SANCA please give him a Warm Welcome!

Upcoming Events!

May 11 & 12, 2018

Professional Preparatory Program final show

Submerged:

A Soggy Circus Saga

June 1 & 2, 2018

SANCA's Spring Flying Trapeze Show

GLAM ROCK

October 21, 2018

SANCATHON

Fundraiser, Performances
& Fall Flying Trapeze Show

Good Luck Eve!

Cirrus Circus coach, Eve Diamond, is hitting the road this summer with Circus Monti in Switzerland.

Eve has coached Cirrus at SANCA since the spring of 2016 while developing her professional performance career. Her specialties of cloud swing and aerial rope have opened new learning opportunities for our Cirrus aerial performers, and it's been a great experience for them to work with her. Eve follows a growing tradition of SANCA staff and performers who have received some of their first big pro breaks with



Circus Monti – Duo Madrona, Terry Crane, and Mick Holsbeke among them.

It's Eve's first experience touring and working in Europe. She's hopeful it will lead to even more professional opportunities. She's also excited at the prospect of bringing back her knowledge and experience to share with the future generation of circus artists in the Youth Performance Program.

Good Luck Eve!

SOCIAL RING

Every Body's Circus (EBC) coach Amber Parker is doing pioneering work at the intersection of circus and Drama Therapy. Amber, a Master's degree candidate at Antioch University, is integrating her experience in mental health practice, circus, and her academic focus on Drama Therapy to launch the new Transformational Women's Circus (TWC) program at SANCA. TWC utilizes the power of body-based therapy via circus as a means of recovering from trauma, anxiety, and depression.

"My ultimate goal for this program, beyond exploring how Drama Therapy can be applied in a circus context, is for the women of TWC to attain a greater level of self-awareness, self-efficacy, and self-acceptance," says Amber. "So far, this is what I am seeing happening within each student. Their growth, as a group and as individuals, has been incredible."

Meeting every week at SANCA for three hours, and completing homework assignments in their own time, the women of TWC come together to share their stories, learn circus skills, and engage in creative process, all within a supportive group therapy setting. Amber's work is supported with the oversight of EBC Manager, Alex Clifthorne, MSW, and supervisors at the Antioch Drama Therapy program.

Each class includes checking in verbally or warming up with games and activities; engaging physically and learning circus skills; and then cooling down and discussing what feelings, thoughts, and is-

sues surfaced during the session. Drama Therapy and circus are unique in that spontaneity and body awareness are key to the therapeutic process. Phones and other distractions aren't allowed; priority is placed on staying focused on the present moment and physically engaging the body and the mind.



Photo: Amber Parker

Participants in the Transformational Women's Circus build a human pyramid.

"Even though TWC will perform at the end of their program, drama therapy isn't about theatre, set design, or acting. It is about externalizing the internal, bringing it out through role play, improv, and emotional group processing," Amber explains. "The mind-body connection is injured by trauma and the experience of depression and anxiety, and it can be healed by moving the body and learning how to relate together in a new way. By leaving time in our sessions for the women in the group to make meaning of their experience of circus and being a group member, I hope to collapse the distance between their minds and their bodies, as well as increase their awareness of how buried feelings inform their relationships with others and their self-concept."

TWC has guest presenters attending certain sessions to help the women learn new skills, explore their ideas, and support their group work. SANCA's Founder, Jo Montgomery, contributes regularly, assisting with partner acrobatics. Coach Faye Visintainer shared her experience of how circus has improved her mental health, and Cirrus coach Eve Diamond offered her experience as a professional performer to discuss how to build acts for the stage.

TWC is planning a cumulative performance in June. The group is workshopping new acts using partner acrobatics, Lyra, tight wire, juggling, and single point trapeze to tell their stories of strength, challenge, and recovery. Amber says, "Creating a show, especially one that focuses on very personal themes, is a huge challenge. The women of TWC are working incredibly hard, particularly in that they are challenging themselves. From my perspective, learning to be self-loving and self-accepting is the hardest work there is, far above any physical skill. Self-acceptance is a life's work, and the women of TWC are doing that work, here at SANCA."

THE BALLYHOO!

CIRCUS for ALL! - GiveBIG Wednesday May 9th

This May 9th is SANCA's final GiveBIG Spring Campaign – let's make it our best ever! The Seattle Foundation is sunsetting the countywide giving day that has been SANCA's Spring Annual Fund Campaign for eight years. In these eight years, your generosity to SANCA has been phenomenal! Your support has made CIRCUS for ALL a reality and has helped support our youth programs, purchase needed equipment, expand our space, and provide scholarships for youth. **THANK YOU!**

Join us for our final GiveBIG at www.sancaseattle.org/givebig on May 9th – or give us a head start – early giving online starts Wednesday, April 25th!



SANCA's Board of Directors has put up a **\$5,500 Challenge Match** – meeting this challenge will put us more than half-way to our spring fund drive goal of \$20,000!