

# **A center for the teaching of Circus Arts**

## **At the Democratic-Community education House Givol In Givat Olga – Hadera, Israel.**

### **Vision**

Circus is a symbol of the ability to transcend circumstances and breakthrough the boundaries of what seems possible and imaginable.

Social circus has become a powerful educational tool, for numerous communities in various countries around the world.

In big cities in Brazil, India, Australia, China, France or Canada, Circus schools attract children and provide an environment that pulls them forward, to evolve as human beings and to improve their various skills. This activity gives them confidence in themselves and in their ability to break through boundaries be they of their own capacities or of their everyday life circumstances.

The circus project in Givol (a democratic school in the underprivileged neighborhood of Givat Olga in Hadera, Israel), enables children of all backgrounds (those with difficulties in their studies and those from the whole community) to break through the circumstances of their lives and gives them, tools and hope for a different and better future.

A future they can create with their own powers, mental, emotional and physical.

On all levels, this project teaches them that “They can” and that the sky is the limit.



## Background

In the democratic-community school Givol at Givat Olga, circus arts classes take place since 3 years,(as part of the school curriculum). These are juggling, balance and acro-balance classes. They have great success among the students who choose their own classes, as a part of the democratic educational system.

- Students from the age of 5 to the age of 18, come to these classes and discover abilities they were not aware of previously.
- Students who had difficulties in fitting into the existing school system, found their place in the circus classes and they see in these classes a home.
- Since the school's mission is to make a difference for the community in which it is situated, it enables close collaboration between the school and the community. Circus is known to be a connecting element, unifying, inspiring hope, courage and confidence, communication, team work and creativity at various and diverse levels. (Many models around the world can serve as an example and source of inspiration and study for the way to establish a unique educational, cultural, communal project in Givat Olga).

The social, economical, cultural and environmental repercussions of such a project, beyond the evident educational benefits, will be a long term investment for all partners and related contributors to this project. Those in Givat Olga itself, but also those from far beyond.

## Project Summary

The development of a unique circus project within the Givol School which will include:

- The development and scale of the teaching already taking place in circus arts
- The combination of this subject with professional creative activity in the field at the highest levels, within international collaborative projects
- The devising, writing and presentation of a pedagogic program for Matriculation in circus arts to the ministry of Education

## Target audiences

- Students 5-18 years old at Givol, within the school curriculum
- The inhabitants of Givat Olga and the region during the afternoon
- Professional circus artists in Israel and abroad who wish to take part in a communal educational/cultural project of this kind
- The wide public who may wish to come to Givat Olga from all around the country to participate and enjoy the activities

## Goals

1. The improvement of teaching facilities and conditions within the school framework
2. The extension of activities beyond the school and into the community – recreational activities for students and members of the community in the afternoons. Educating the public for a fresh concept of contemporary circus, by bringing shows and workshops of artists from Israel and abroad.
3. The development of a 3 years pedagogic program for the teaching of circus arts at the matriculation level, and presenting it to the ministry of Education.
4. The creation of collaborations within Israel and around the world in the context of the project, in order to further the activity beyond its local boundaries

## Objectives

1.
  - The acquisition of professional equipment according to the school needs, for the upcoming study year
  - Expansion of the staff and disciplines taught, as well as setting the foundation for cooperation with other subjects in the school, such as theater and gymnastics
  - Effective treatment of security measures and insurance for the disciplines that require it according to accepted standards
2.
  - Afternoon classes for students and members of the community
  - Performances and workshops for students and community members

3. Writing and presentation of a pedagogic plan for 3 Years of study for matriculation in circus Arts to the Ministry of education.
4. Creating national and International collaborations in the Context of the project

### Plan for reaching the objectives:

- The acquisition of professional equipment according to needs, for the upcoming study year: Juggling equipment, balance, security rigging for a wire, stilts and unicycles, an Olympic trampoline – subject to employing a professional instructor, trapeze, vertical rope and silks – subject to employing a professional teacher.
  - Expansion of staff and disciplines studied: Tight rope walking, unicycle, aerial acrobatics, and trampoline, subject to acquisition. Employment of two expert teachers, in these areas and assistants in classes where the number of students exceeds 15. Close cooperation between the teaching of physical education, theater and dance in the school, and circus arts classes. The addition of circus teaching hours in the school timetable
  - Thorough care and treatment of safety and insurance for the disciplines that require it: Purchasing enough mattresses for various activities that require them, number of instructors, for the appropriate number of students, in Acro-balance, aerial acrobatics and trampoline. Expansion of the above disciplines and professional insurance
- 2.
- Educating and deepening of the current understanding of what circus is, among the students and the community.
  - Collaboration between circus activities in the afternoon and the communal library and music center, for the promotion of a general, up to date, education for circus.
  - Time table preparation for afternoon classes
  - Preparation of a time table for workshops and performances in the afternoon
  - Maintenance of the location - cleaning, security

3.

- The writing and submission of a full three years pedagogical program for the study and matriculation in Circus arts. With all it entails: a team of teachers, equipment, disciplines taught, entry requirements into the program, costs etc.
- Submission to the Ministry of Education of the program and promoting the issue with the research and development it entails, meetings, consultations, budget allocation, professional recommendations etc.

4.

- Start international creative collaborations in the field, together with Orit Nevo and ON-CCCC
- Study trip of the project team engaged in the development, to the "Tohu" in Montreal - Canada between April and July 2011
- Planning, organization and the institutionalization of an international contemporary circus festival in Givat Olga annually with the artistic direction of ON

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## Our experience

### Why in Givol?

- The activity taking place in Givol today, already has, great potential to promote students' abilities to high professional levels on an international level.
- The high demand of students for circus classes with the school management's will to promote the development of circus arts teaching, are the most fertile grounds for the Maturity exams circus program, to be developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

## **The professional team promoting and implementing the project:**

### Ronny Shalev - teacher and coordinator of all circus activities in Givol in the past two years:

Ronny is trained and graduated in education and implements her knowledge in teaching circus skills to her educational work. She managed to create great interest in lessons and instill discipline and freedom alike. The students thus take responsibility for the equipment, the activity itself and any person engaged in the circus activities. This atmosphere had not existed prior to Ronny's presence in the school as the main coordinator of the circus arts classes.

### Orit Nevo, Director of ON- Contemporary Circus Creation Center :

- Orit Nevo is a creative artist, writing, directing, consulting and an international thought leader in contemporary circus.
- Established and directed "The Free Dome Project" known in Israel as "The Circus in Binyamina" 2000-2005.
- By participating in international projects, Orit has created close ties with influential people in contemporary world circus.
- Orit was, amongst other things, a member of the board of the Israeli Circus School from 2005 to 2007 and teacher of circus skills in many different schools, workshops and educational projects in Israel and abroad. She is well familiar with the current level of teaching in Israel-This will enable an ongoing accompaniment for Ronny Shalev in the selection and direction of the best teachers in the field to work with her, as a part of a team teaching in the educational context and spirit of Givol.

### Yariv Yaari, director of the School:

- BA in physics, teaching certificate in science and an MA in Education Administration.
- 20 years experience in education.
- Founder and director of Givol in all its four years.
- Among the founders of the school A.D.A.M and Environment and its director for eight years.
- A great believer in emotional empowerment with an emphasis on positive experience. An avid supporter of significant learning through experience and custom personal learning.
- Therefore, supports the incorporation of circus arts teaching in the school curriculum and its community activities and tries accordingly to improve his own personal achievements in the field...

Anastasia Shmueli - Mother to 2 children in Givol and appointed Fund raiser:

- Volunteer in the school since its establishment, thus very familiar with the needs of students and the community
- Established 3 years ago the company Ecoplates (ecological disposable dishes and products) she made a big difference in increasing awareness to this type of ecological products in Israel.
- A painter and a great believer in pluralism and the proverb "Beauty will save the world"
- She is responsible for fund-raising for the "Givol Circus Project".
- Sees the "Givol Circus Project" as a tremendous opportunity for change and improvement, not only in education, but also in the neighborhood Givat Olga itself.

Students:

"I attend classes three hours a day, this year. I participate in circus classes since two years; my favorite is juggling four balls. I initiated and put up, a stand in which students have created their own juggling balls, it was during the community book carnival. I like it because I'm good at it. In the Hanukkah show, I had to be disciplined and avoid any kind of violence for two weeks in order to be allowed to perform, it was important for me because I love performing, it's stressful, but fun. I mentioned this to anyone I know and invited everyone.

...Circus gives me something good, fun; I come to the circus to relax. At first when I could not do an exercise I'd get angry, get up and go, today I do not get angry, I continue. I learned to concentrate, to control myself.

...I really want there to be unicycles in school, more new balls, I want there to be other professional shows and that we will do more shows.  
"

**Snir**

"I started on a unicycle (before Ronny came) and then Erez Kaplan came and taught us aerial acrobatics. That's what I came to school for, I went more into classes. I enjoyed it, so it was even better. With Ronny I started juggling. I want there to be more aerial acrobatics. Together with a friend - Yogi, we want to open air acrobatics trainings, buy a silk, hang it and practice. It's fun, it's in my soul, though it is difficult physically, being in the air, doing exercises, it is a strong effort for the body. I enjoy watching professionals, it's inspiring

but I'm also a bit jealous. I wish there was also a trampoline - it will bring many more students to the hall. "

## **Ziv**

### Parents:

First of all regardless of circus arts in particular - the importance is in people - Ronny as a person was able to create and build confidence - could pick up children who need support and be there for them.

I would love if there were more people like that, they teach circus to this effect. Ronny, for me, as a person is a model, she deciphers what the children need, my son for example, in circus classes - he was given the responsibility he should take, given the opportunity he did not get elsewhere.

Circus is colorful – I like that there are lots of options, lots of hand-eye coordination and contact, inventions and development of creativity, the possibility of more tools and materials for children with the message: “do, create, perform with this”. Circus attracts children and allows the dialogue - something wonderful is happening at the same time of the study itself. There is also the possibility of integrating more arts - especially the connection between people in circus, which for me, symbolizes a way to peace.

## **Einat Geva**

Circus activity gave my son pleasure, fun, strengthened him, empowered and refined his coarse and fine motor skills, gave him confidence in standing in front of an audience and on stage. This is a praiseworthy activity, I believe it helps every child that may have a physical organization problem, children with difficulty in concentration and other attention disorders, it undoubtedly strengthens motor skills and eye- hand contact . Support for the circus activity in givol, (which is very dear to me) can give it a professional domain and mark of its own. I hope more young people, will be able to enjoy this activity as my older son did.

## **Orly Yaish**

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## Evaluation

Metrics to evaluate the success of the project:

1. Number of students participating in classes on a regular basis.
2. High level of concentration / attention / achievements of the students participating in circus classes in other school classes.
3. Documentation and monitoring of activities - events such as events in which students participate. The lessons themselves, combined with community activity of the school, how many events are there per year? How many people from the community participate as audience? Monitoring the number of people in the audience and where they come from? The evolution between a former event and the one following it...
4. Determining Criteria for evaluation that combine the educational principles of the school and circus arts, for example:
  - Level of cooperation, assistance and support in circus classes and beyond in other school classes
  - Defining a metrics for success or progress during the year in various circus skills or others relating to learning skills in general, such as: concentration, performance, attention span, the ability to get feedback, the ability to understand and implement feedback etc.
  - Monitoring the percentage of selection of challenging skills or competencies related choices - for each student separately and for each group in different age groups ...
5. Create two external teams to monitor the development of students in classes, according to the criteria of educational and professional circus criteria and in accordance with the classe's intentions. These teams can also be composed of: social workers, representatives of the Ministry of Education, representatives of the school pedagogical team for the educational aspects we would like to assess.  
In terms of circus: elected director of one of the circus schools in the country, teachers with experience in various circus skills, creative professional artists, professionals from around the world. These committees could follow the development

of students during the year - go to class once every one or two months and document the evolution of students throughout an entire school year - to see actual progress.

6. Another measure of great importance to success is the amount of money we will raise, which is the key to assessing the appointed team's capability of creating results. As donations increase - it can be concluded that there is greater chances of the project succeeding. Also the number of organizations / institutions/funds and / or private donors who support the project is an important measure for success.
7. Recognition of the importance of the project by institutions: Municipality of Hadera, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of labor and Social Affairs, Ministry of Finance, ministry of foreign affairs and so on.
8. Middle course goals and objectives we set for ourselves and reach are of course the best measure for success.

There are of course a thousand ways to measure success in this kind of project, these are just some ideas that would promote the proper research and development for the future, mostly for the ones doing the work themselves.