



Prescott Circus Theatre

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PRESS RELEASE

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Prescott Circus Theatre Receives California Arts Council “Artists in Schools” Grant

Prescott Circus Theatre is among 119 arts education organizations funded statewide.

[Oakland, CA]—The California Arts Council announced its plans to award \$10,680.00 to the Prescott Circus Theatre as part of its Artists in Schools program. This award will support arts education programs in West Oakland at PLACE@Prescott Elementary and Lafayette Elementary Schools.

Artists in Schools is the California Arts Council's largest core grant program, supporting professional teaching artists in classroom and after-school settings. The 2014-15 Artists in Schools program will provide funding for 119 arts organizations to help bring instruction in music, theater, dance, visual arts, and other art forms to children statewide during the school year.

The grant will support after school artists’ residencies with theater and circus artists Derique McGee, Tristan Cunningham, and Audrey Spinazola at PLACE@Prescott and Lafayette Elementary Schools in West Oakland. Students in grades 3-5 will work directly with these artists along with other guest artists to learn unique physical and performance skills, develop original routines, make historical & cultural connections, and learn to critique themselves & others as performers. Students from the program at Prescott School will gain performing experience at over 40 events including a culminating 1-hour show that will be performed at other Bay Area schools.

“Circus is unique in that it provides a place for each student to find her/his own place where they can shine physically, emotionally, and creatively through a variety of disciplines,” said David Hunt, former teaching artist and current Director of the Prescott Circus Theatre. “Some may become strong jugglers, others acrobats, another very adept at clowning or stilt dancing. When our students present themselves through their inspiring performances, we believe they transform attitudes about Oakland youth and give our community something more in which to have pride. This is where the arts and arts education is a powerful change making force in our lives and city. We are incredibly honored and appreciative that the California Arts Council recognizes our Circus Arts Education program among the many quality arts education programs in theatre, dance, music, and visual arts in the Bay Area.”

“Arts education leads to higher graduation rates, increased creativity, and greater aspirations,” said Craig Watson, Director of the California Arts Council. “Through our Artist in Schools program, the California Arts Council strives to improve K-12 education for thousands of our state's young people – many of whom might not have access to arts education without the high-quality teaching artist residencies made possible by these grants.”

Prescott Circus Theatre is among the organizations that will receive funding to bring professional teaching artists for in-school and after-school programs. Other Oakland grantees include: **Contare Con Vivo, Destiny Arts, Composing Together, Purple Silk Music Education Foundation, Oakland Youth Chorus, Oakland Children’s Community Choir, and Dimensions Dance Theatre.** These arts education experiences will provide a creative

space and learning environment where K-12 students will be able to foster their own creativity and work together as innovative thinkers. The total amount awarded through the 2014-15 Artists in Schools program is \$1,055,688.

Funding for this program comes in part from the sale of the Arts Plate, the iconic license plate with a sunset and palm tree motif designed by California artist Wayne Thiebaud. The Arts Plate generates approximately \$3 million per year for arts programs benefiting children and communities throughout California. More information is available at <http://www.artsplate.org/>.

Arts organizations or school administrators interested in information about the Artists in Schools program, including details and application deadlines, may contact California Arts Council Program Officers Wayne Cook at 916-322-6344 and wayne.cook@arts.ca.gov or Shelly Gilbride at 916-324-0075 and shelly.gilbride@arts.ca.gov.

ABOUT PRESCOTT CIRCUS THEATRE: Now in its 31st year, the Prescott Circus Theatre (PCT) is a nationally recognized after school performing arts education program serving Oakland's most under-resourced youth. Each year, over 220 Oakland youth ages 7 - 13 receive direct training from professional artists to learn circus and theater skills including juggling, acrobatics, clowning/acting, hip hop dance, hambone body percussion, stilt dancing, and theater production. The heart of our program is the Prescott Circus Performing Company, a troupe of over 25 3rd-5th-grade students at Prescott Elementary in West Oakland who train 3x weekly and perform at over 50 community events each year. We also provide after school programs at as many as 5 additional public elementary school sites. In each program, students receive a minimum of 48 hours of instruction and create an original show that is performed for their families and school communities. In the creating and learning process, students also study the cultural and historic connections of these skills (such as the African roots of stilt dancing), receive leadership training, attend live productions, and perform at community events. In addition to our after-school programs, we also conduct a Saturday Advanced Training and Leadership Program, and a Transitional Kindergarten Program, all using circus arts to provide Oakland youth with the skills and tools to support school and life success. Our culturally-conscious curriculum adheres to best practices in youth circus training and to the California State Standards for Performing Arts.

MISSION: Through circus and theatre arts education, the Prescott Circus Theatre's mission is to empower and engage youth as they develop confidence, teamwork, perseverance, artistic talent, and a dedication to working for success. By providing professional training, unique curriculum, and a safe environment for under-served youth, our Oakland-based non-profit youth development organization promotes skill mastery, physical activity, positive relationships with peers and adults, and opportunities to shine for the community.

School administrators, community members, or other arts organizations interested in learning more about Prescott Circus Theatre's programs and performances may contact the organization directly at 510-967-0355 and [info\(at\)prescottcircus.org](mailto:info(at)prescottcircus.org)