



Prescott Circus Theatre

1675 7th St. #24925 , Oakland, CA 94615

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Prescott Circus Theatre 2024-2025 Report and Updates – September 2025

Last year, from September 2024 – July 2025, Prescott Circus Theatre engaged 315 students in grades TK – 12 at ten Oakland public schools, a new site in San Pablo, over the summer, and in our community based older youth program. We also conducted weekly circus workshops for 18 young adults with disabilities through OUSD's Young Adult Program.

School Residencies

- Ten Oakland public school residencies across all seven Oakland Council Districts and one pilot in West Contra Costa County.
 - Eight 1-2 semester afterschool programs: Prescott, Allendale, Bella Vista, East Oakland Pride, Horace Mann, La Escuelita, Piedmont Ave., and Sankofa United
 - o One, 6-week pilot at Downer Elementary and San Pablo, our first school-year partnership with WWCU.
 - o Two school day residencies at Esperanza Elementary for all 4-5th grade students and K – 5th grade Special Education students and Montera Elementary for two special education classrooms and a lunchtime circus club.
- Prescott, Sankofa, REACH, and Esperanza students all conducted November demonstrations and December assembly performances, fulfilling one of our goals to coordinate more performing opportunities in the schools.
- Mid-year, December students survey results affirm the positive youth development outcomes that we witnessed in class and on the stages.
 - o 74% reported that circus helped them get better at teamwork and working with others
 - o 68% reported being happier at school since joining the circus
 - o 79% report that in the circus program, they have a chance to learn from their mistakes
 - o 77% reported that the circus program helped them to be more active

Pathways for Older Youth

The Pathways program continued to evolve with a consistent group of ten 6th – 11th graders. Weekly sessions focused on skill building, act creation and rehearsal for community events, and leadership training. The annual West Oakland Youth Circus Collaborative with Kinetic Arts continued Oct. – Dec. with a collaborative show and reciprocal, student led skills exchange workshops. High school students participated summer planning sessions April – May. All continued in the summer program with one student hired as an employee and five serving as paid apprentices.

2025 Summer Circus and Academic Program

The 2025 Summer Circus and Academic program welcomed 31 students in grade 3 – 10 from 11 different Oakland public schools. 80% of the students were continuing from the school year or returning from last summer. The program was co-led by a team of four apprentice “junior coaches” and two youth leaders, ages 14 – 17 who helped teach, create and direct acts, and manage day to day logistics. The program culminated in four performances at the Malonga Theater and DeFremery Park that welcomed 800 audience members including eight community groups and summer programs. Our advancing students also performed at 11 community events including Mayor Barbara Lee's Inauguration and a special Juneteenth performance for the families at St. Vincent Day Home.

Community Engagement and Performances, October 2024 – May 2025

- Program wide Showcase, *One Big Family*, on April 26 at the Santa Fe School Campus in partnership with the Oakland Spirit Orchestra and OUSD's Young Adult Program Choir serving young adults with disabilities. 41 young artists from four school programs and Pathways performed for over 150 adults and children
- Pathways and advancing Prescott Elem. Students performed at 20 public events Highlights included performing a stilt dance for the annual Collage des Cultures Africaines, a show for the CA Retired Teachers Association's April meeting, a two shows and a circus learning zone for the de Young Museum's "de Youngsters Day Out."
- Black Joy Parade on February 23 featured 39 students and 14 family members from three schools and our Pathways program. The group represented as stilt walkers, jugglers, dancers, and supporters.

Staffing Updates

In August, Performing Company Manager / Leading Teaching Artist, Carolina "Coicoi" Duncan Page transitioned from her leadership role to a program Teaching Artist as she pursues personal endeavors. Carolina joined PCT's leadership team in 2021 and led our Prescott Elementary, Pathways, and summer programs. During her time, she developed our curriculum that supported students through the challenging transitions back to in-person programs and helped PCT's Pathways programs grow. She was very instrumental in facilitating this past summer's youth driven programming structures for leadership sharing. We are very glad she is continuing with our school programs!

We are excited to welcome long-time PCT teaching artist, Tristan Cunningham, as in a new position as Program and Engagement Director. Tristan has over 14 years of experience working with Prescott Circus as a teaching artist, consultant, and director of our Showcases. She grew up attending Circus Smirkus, a youth circus in Vermont, and went on to develop a very active career in circus, theater, tv, and film. Tristan is taking the lead on program oversight and development. Ella Rochelle Lawton continues to support program management, marketing, and general administration. This new role is exciting as it opens space for David to focus more fully on fundraising and organizational development.

What's ahead

The fall, we are conducting programs with seven Oakland public schools and running our weekly Pathways for Older Youth classes. Six of the seven schools are continuing partners, and we are piloting a new program with Fruitvale Elementary. Programs are just now beginning and will put on culminating assemblies in December before the winter recess. We are in the planning stages to resume and add additional programs in January. We anticipate working with 200 students this fall and an additional 75 in the winter – spring semester.



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2024-2025 School-Year Programs

"We had some highlights with the development of technique but also with social-emotional learning. In this short period of time, some students were able to overcome their shyness about speaking in public or interacting with other students, we could see them becoming more engaged in the activities after feeling more confident with the group."

Flavio Domeni, Teaching Artist, Downer Elementary, April - May 2025

"On the last day of the program, Montana got on stilts and walked by herself, but she fell. We checked in and she said, "Actually I feel pretty good!", got back up, and proceeded to cross the auditorium on stilts another five times. I recognized her resilience & how proud of herself she felt, and it was a joy to witness."

Aileen Lawlor, Teaching Artist, Sankofa Elementary, September - December 2025

"Ya'll been great! The girls in particular are really into [circus]. I heard the girls share after walking on stilts - "I didn't think I could do this, but I can!" - Congrats - this is exactly why we do what we do."

Ms Coney, After School Program Director, Horace Mann Elementary



Left to right

Sankofa Elementary training; April 23 Showcase company photo; Horace Mann stilt training

East Oakland Pride show preparation; Jan. 20 MLK Jr. Day at MOAD SF; Prescott Elementary make up day

Prescott Circus Theatre Summer 2025



Top row: "True Colors" performance at the Malonga Theater. July 17. credit: Tom Holub

Center row: Circus training, academic time, Junior Coach mentorship

Bottom row: St. Vincent Day Home performance, Circus Bella opening Stilt Dance, Children's Fairyland show