

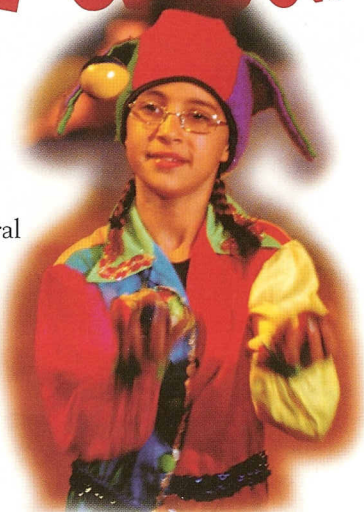
THE GREAT Y CIRCUS

by Melanie Ramiro

The theme for this year's Great All-American Youth Circus has taken its inspiration from the Circus' own rich history. *Circus Through the Ages!* will pay tribute to the unique tradition that the Circus has become for the town of Redlands and the changing face of circus arts over the past several decades.

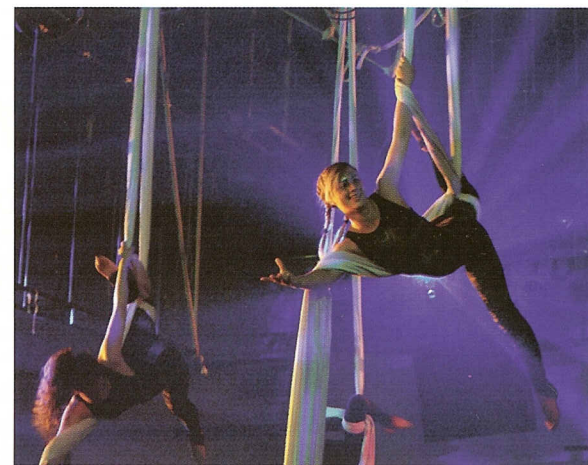
Founded in 1929 by then-YMCA Director Roy Coble, a former Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey performer, The Great All-American Youth Circus (aka "The Great Y Circus") is a magnificent community tradition in Redlands. It is the longest-running community circus in the world and one of only a handful of programs like it in the United States. The Circus program is funded through performances, fund-raisers, class fees, and YMCA memberships.

Roy Coble's own grandchildren and great-grandchildren are still a part of the Circus program today. Many other Redlands residents who grew up in the Circus have returned to enroll their children in this fantastic and unique program. Some participants are the fourth generation of their family to take part in the Circus! For many, the Circus has become a family tradition. Some Circus alumni who have gone on to become professional acrobats or stunt performers have returned to help the next generation learn circus skills.



Sierra Peek

In professional circuses, the performers come already equipped with their skills. However, each year at The Great Y Circus, children of all ages learn their circus skills from square one, in classes held at the YMCA. The classes run from September through April, and the annual performances are presented over the first three weekends in May. Returning students work their way up through the



Olivia Brown, along with fellow acrobats, performs in the Aerial Ribbon act in the 2006 show "Circus Odyssey."

ranks year after year, from the beginner level up to the advanced level acts. Circus classes emphasize teamwork, dedication, trust, showmanship, and fun for both the participant and the observer. The Circus teaches young people specialized skills as well as important character values such as respect, honesty, responsibility, self-confidence, and self-discipline.

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Y CIRCUS *Continued from page 11*

The Great Y Circus is non-competitive and focuses on individual and group skills presented in an entertaining and artistic theatrical performance, complete with choreography, costumes, and music. Circus shows are no ordinary recital—the YMCA hires professional sound and lighting technicians and constructs bleachers to transform Coble Gym into a professional theatre that can accommodate over 600 audience members. Most patrons leave the show saying that the performance quality far exceeded their expectations of an amateur youth circus.

Performances are Fridays, May 2, 9, and 16 at 7:00 PM; Saturdays, May 3, 10, and 17 at 5:00 PM; and Sundays, May 4, 11, and 18 at 3:00 PM.

Tickets will go on sale Monday, April 21, at the Redlands YMCA, located at 500 East Citrus Avenue. Lobby ticket sales will be open Monday through Thursday from 4:30-7:30 PM. Call 909/798-9622, ext. 360.



Unicyclists Jeremy Alfor, Will Ritner, Jesse Alford, and Zach Miller in the 2004 show "Y Circus Rocks."



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