

# THE CIRCUS WHERE THE KIDS ARE THE STARS

**Using interactive theater to bring imagination back**



Inside a colorful circus tent is where imaginations run wild. Ringmaster Caton Raintree-Hegwer and wife, costume coordinator Carolina Raintree-Hegwer, handpick kids from the audience to take part in an interactive spontaneous theater. Designed to get children to be active and use their imaginations by dressing up and performing in front of their families.

**Circus Imagination** is a family owned and operated business. It all started in 1983 when Greg Hegwer and Criss Raintree decided to run away and join the circus and travel around the U.S. bringing the joy of impromptu theater & circus to children of all ages. When the couple retired from the traveling circus life, their son, Caton, took on the ringmaster hat, keeping the family tradition alive. In 2010 he married Carolina, who fell in love with the circus right away. She became a seamstress and has been adding new elements to the show ever since.

The main concept of the participatory circus is helping kids use their imaginations and find their creativity. First the Ringmaster tells the children an amusing story of an old time circus, then they learn about their acts, as the Costumier helps dress them up with custom-made costumes that go right over their clothes. Now they are ready to perform under their own Big Top.

*"No resource person or any assembly has been as outstanding as Circus Imagination, several of our students are now selling tickets for their own backyard circuses. In education, success is often measured by emulation."* - quote from a Santa Cruz County School Principal.

The circus starts with Tina the Tightrope Walker who climbs a make-believe ladder 100 feet in the air, followed by Sandow The Strongman, Clarissa the Clown, Marco the Animal Trainer and his Ferocious Lions, Tigers & Bears, Believe It Or Not, The Butterfly Ballet and Bobo the Clown, The Champagne Sisters, Dead Eye McBang, Calamity Oakley the Cowgirl, the Flying Circus and finishes up with Zazelle, The Human Cannonball: who is shot out of our special circus cannon, "The Kid Blaster."

The show can last up to thirty minutes and take from four to forty kids, selected right out of the audience, so no rehearsal is necessary. They are invited to explore their sense of imagination, resourcefulness and creativity on the stage. The Ringmaster explains the acts to the audience as the children perform, they're rewarded with applause and positive affirmation.

*"This kid has the best imagination," said Teya Baker, whose daughter jumped enthusiastically into her role as Tina the Tightrope Walker, reaching her arms high above her head one after another as she pretended to climb a 100-foot ladder. "I add new things to my imagination a lot," said Lillian Baker, 8. "I think I want to do this at home." - quote from Appeal-Democrat*

The children are not the only ones captured by the show's magic: the whole audience is moved by this charismatic little circus, cheering for the kids and applauding with enthusiasm on every single cue. "Now I know how to make my own circus in my own backyard," a 7 year old girl said.

Parents state being more than pleased with the idea of some face-to-face fun that generates the notion of educational and safe enjoyment away from screens and remote controls. Aiming to maximize their full creative potential by strengthening their confidence the major triumph of Circus Imagination is still the fact that it does not end when the show is over. Its inspiration to play outside and use your inventiveness is taken home by every child.

*"Circus Imagination - Kids can join the circus using their imagination with props and costumes that are provided. The Ringmaster guides them through a fantasy adventure and before they know it, they have created their own world - something they can take home with them for many hours of backyard adventures." - quote from Sacramento Today.*



### **Circus Links:**

Website: <http://www.circusimagination.com/>

Youtube Videos: <http://www.youtube.com/CircusImagination>

Blog: <http://circusimagination.wordpress.com>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/CircusImagination>

Instagram Pictures: <http://www.instagram.com/CircusImagination>

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#imaginationcircus