

## **Cirkidz Skills Workshops in Port Augusta and Whyalla**

Kids love to visit the circus, but what about learning circus skills themselves? Most youngsters would jump at the opportunity to do so and why wouldn't they; it engages them completely, has mental and physical benefits that last a lifetime, but most of all it's fun!

More and more kids are taking advantage of circus classes after school, during the holidays or for birthday parties. Unfortunately many rural kids don't have access to these opportunities. Last year, Cirkidz created a project to try and change that, following a highly successful regional visit the year before.

In 2013, Cirkidz first visited the regional communities of Port Augusta and Whyalla to perform shows and run workshops. 120 young people participated in beginner circus skills workshops, igniting a great interest in circus right across the community. A dedicated group even continued to train at the Port Augusta Youth Centre under the guidance of local Sister of Mercy, Elizabeth Young, a trained circus artist.

Due to this sustained interest, a project was created to bring the Cirkidz back in 2014 to run a series of workshops over three days as part of the Arid Festival in October.

A series of 'come and try' sessions for beginners were held in both Port Augusta and Whyalla focussing on a range of age groups. Many kids had missed out on the previous visit as sessions had booked out so quickly, so demand was huge!

Cirkidz also worked with the Port Augusta Cultural Centre Yarta Purtli in collaboration with D'Faces (a performing arts group based in Whyalla) to provide advanced workshops to the group who had continued their training. Many kids who went to the beginner classes progressed on to this group.

These advanced students have continued to train with Sister Elizabeth and, alongside D'Faces, have been provided with another series of advanced workshops since then, and have the opportunity to attend further training in Adelaide.

They have now established themselves as a performing group called Saltbush Circus in Port Augusta, where they perform at community events.

Partners who provided support include Country Arts SA, Regional Arts Fund, Port Augusta Youth Focus Group, Port Augusta Youth Centre, Port Augusta City Council and D'Faces.

### **Testimonials:**

"When Cirkidz came I enjoyed acro, hula hooping and pyramids and lots more." Grace

"I loved how you got to choose what you wanted to improve and you got 1 on 1 with them to improve that skill." Zoe

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