



Press Release

Contact: Jennifer Mitchell  
Circus Sarasota Marketing Director  
(941) 355-9335 ext 306  
Email: [JMitchell@CircusSarasota.org](mailto:JMitchell@CircusSarasota.org)

Circus Sarasota inherits Sailor Circus Program

Sarasota, Florida; October 4, 2011 – The Sarasota County School Board gave its unanimous approval today for Circus Sarasota to assume full control of the legendary Sailor Circus, a move “that will prove beneficial for the students who participate in Sailor Circus, the longest-running youth circus in America, while steering Circus Sarasota down the course that we originally envisioned,” commented Pedro Reis, co-founder and CEO of Circus Sarasota. The transfer of Sailor Circus to Circus Sarasota is effective immediately.

When Circus Sarasota was originally founded as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in 1997, it was chartered as a performing arts school, with the mission of “enriching, educating and entertaining audiences of all ages.” Indeed, after more than fourteen years, Circus Sarasota continues to fulfill that mission while helping to elevate the circus arts and preserve the circus legacy in a community recognized as “the Circus Capital of the World”. From the very beginning, Circus Sarasota founders Pedro Reis and Dolly Jacobs endeavored to make “education” a cornerstone of the organization. Consequently, when Sarasota Sheriff Tom Knight recently announced that the Police Athletic League (PAL) would relinquish the reins of Sailor Circus and hand stewardship of the legendary school program to Circus Sarasota, the move was hailed as a way for “Sailor Circus to maintain its rich history and singular identity, while ensuring its future” financially, culturally, academically and artistically.

Founded in 1949 as a gymnastics class at Sarasota High School, the Sailor Circus has become the longest-running youth circus in America, now serving Sarasota County students from the 4<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Over 10,000 students have participated in the program, and more than a million people have attended performances of “The Greatest *Little Show on Earth!*” (Not coincidentally, Dolly Jacobs is herself an alumna of Sarasota’s Sailor Circus.)

With the transfer of Sailor Circus from PAL, all financial, fund-raising, marketing, creative and organizational direction will be under the auspices of Circus Sarasota, in concert with the existing Sailor Circus staff.

“No single organization better exemplifies the living, breathing circus in our community than Circus Sarasota,” explains Dolly Jacobs. “Our annual performances have been praised for world-class artistry and entertainment.” She continues, “We are pleased that Sailor Circus now represents another of our highly-acclaimed community programs: programs that also include *Laughter Unlimited* and *Big Top Education*.” *Laughter Unlimited* is a program in which performers provide entertainment for, and meaningful one-on-one interaction with, residents and patients of assisted living facilities, nursing homes, hospitals, cancer support communities and more. For school-aged students, *Big Top Education* offers a stimulating and enjoyable circus-themed curriculum to enhance math, science, and reading.

“We recognize that managing and operating Sailor Circus is both a momentous opportunity, and also a significant responsibility,” notes Pedro Reis. “We are up to that challenge, and look forward to maintaining and enhancing the six-decade Sailor Circus tradition in Sarasota. In fact, our goal is to further enhance and elevate the Sailor Circus program to be recognized internationally as one of the most outstanding circus arts programs in the world”.

For more information about Circus Sarasota and Sailor Circus, please visit [www.CircusSarasota.org](http://www.CircusSarasota.org)

Press / Media are invited to a meeting with Sailor Circus students and families on Friday October 7, 2011 6:30pm at the Sailor Circus Big Top on Bahia Vista. Circus Sarasota management will be introducing staff and announcing this exciting news!