



HISTORY

- 1949** - Sailor Circus began as part of the Sarasota High School gymnastics program.
- 1952** - **Warner Bros. Pictures** featured Sailor Circus in a 30-minute “short subject” film which was shown throughout the country. This began the international fame of Sailor Circus.
- 1954** - Sailor Circus is featured in the **Saturday Evening Post** and on “**The Gary Moore Show.**”
- 1964** – Sailor Circus performers appear as guests of the “**Ted Mack’s Amateur Hour.**”
- 1967** - Sailor Circus gets its permanent home on Bahia Vista Street. Five circus acts are featured on “**The Mike Douglas Show.**”
- 1973** - Sailor Circus travels to Fairbanks, Alaska, for a six-week performance tour.
- 1976** - Sailor Circus appears on the “**Today Show**” and performs in the **Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade** in New York.
- 1985** - Sailor Circus spends 43 days performing at Mitsui Greenland Park near Fukuoka, Japan.
- 1992** - Sailor Circus goes to Lima, Peru for a five-week performance tour.
- 1999** - Sailor Circus celebrates its 50th anniversary!!!
- 2000** – The “**Holiday Spectacular**” presentation inspires an annual winter season of performances.
- 2004** - 55th Anniversary. Sailor Circus is no longer a subsidiary of the Sarasota County School Board, and now falls under the operations of the Police Athletic League of Sarasota County, Inc.
- 2005** – PAL Sailor Circus experiences record-breaking enrollment and attendance.
- 2007** – Internationally acclaimed Japanese artist Shingo Saotome donates five original paintings to Sailor Circus that he created based on the 2006 Holiday Shows.



FACT SHEET

- Sailor Circus began in Sarasota in 1949 and is the longest running youth circus in the United States.
- Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus has given permission for the Sailor Circus to be officially known as the Greatest “Little” Show on Earth.
- More than 10,000 students have performed before more than 1,000,000 attendees in Sarasota-based performances.
- PAL Sailor Circus performers have appeared in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade, on Good Morning America, Big Blue Marble, a Barbra Walter’s Special, and Ted Mack’s Original Amateur Hour.
- PAL Sailor Circus has performed for six weeks in Alaska, seven weeks in Japan and five weeks in Lima, Peru.
- PAL Sailor Circus has performed in 26 states and more than 50 Florida cities.
- Each year more than 150 local volunteers donate more than 23,000 hours of their time to PAL Sailor Circus.
- PAL Sailor Circus is a tourist attraction for Florida’s Gulf Coast. More than 60% of the audience comes from out of town or out of state.
- More than 25,000 fans attend performances in the Sailor Circus Arena each year.



BACKGROUND

The Sailor Circus in Sarasota is the oldest youth circus in the United States, training local youth in the art of circus for nearly 60 years. Sailor Circus began as a program of Sarasota High School but was taken over in 2004 by the Police Athletic League of Sarasota County. Now, with PAL's leadership and strong backing, children from 4th grade through high school seniors in both Sarasota and Manatee Counties are discovering this phenomenal after-school program.

Located under the big blue and white tent near the corner of Bahia Vista and the Tamiami Trail in Sarasota, the Sailor Circus has trained more than 10,000 students to perform such exotic acts as flying trapeze, high wire, juggling, unicycle, and the more modern tissues, made popular by Cirque du Soleil. This well structured program covers all aspects of the circus, including rigging, concessions, costume design, and props. Since the performers are also required to participate in "work call", which includes cleaning the arena and helping to maintain the equipment, they learn the value of property and hard work. Parents, grandparents, and friends donate more than 20,000 volunteer hours each season to make the program happen. They help rig the equipment, sell concessions, make costumes, sell tickets, usher, and build props. Most of the coaches are retired circus performers from the Ringling Circus, the Hanneford Shows, Sailor Circus or other circus programs. All are volunteers who love the circus and donate their time to help young people learn this exciting art form and carry on the circus tradition in Sarasota.

Since 1949 people from all over the nation have been traveling to Sarasota to watch the amazing kids of the Sailor Circus give performances that rival their professional counterparts. The most remarkable thing is that these are not children of circus performers or gymnasts; they are just normal kids who learn the circus arts through hard work and dedication to excellence. In the beginning, performers are taught the basics of unicycle, tumbling, and clowning. As they mature and their strength and skill level grows, the coaches move them into the more difficult acts until they are ready to perform at the highest levels. It is not uncommon for their loyal fans to watch them progress through the years and even join the performers and their families in the tears of joy that come with their graduation ceremony after the final show of their senior year in high school.

www.sailorcircus.org

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CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Our Vision for the Future

PAL Sailor Circus is conducting a Capital Campaign to raise money for the complete transformation of their property into a multi-function community facility. The facility will serve as the permanent home of the PAL Sailor Circus youth program and the headquarters for the Police Athletic League in Sarasota County. The Capital Campaign is being conducted in three phases, and is currently halfway towards meeting the goal of the first phase.

- Phase one of the campaign is aimed at raising \$3.1 million for the renovations of the current arena.
- Phase two of the campaign has a goal of raising \$2.9 million to replace all of the old outbuildings with a new Educational/Activity Center, which will house a gymnasium, the Sailor Circus Museum, new restroom facilities, and administrative offices.
- The final phase of the campaign will be the creation of an endowment fund, to ensure the long term future of the PAL Sailor Circus in Sarasota.

With the renovation of the existing PAL Sailor Circus facility, the community will have a climate controlled, 31,000 square foot arena located in a prime midtown location that will be able to host concerts, artistic performances, trade shows, community fairs, galas, and other revenue generating events. Additionally, the gymnasium facility, located in the new Educational/Activity center, will be available as a 7,800 square foot meeting or events hall that can be rented to the business community for meetings, parties, or other revenue generating events. PAL Sailor Circus's goal is to increase the usage of the facility for special events from its' current 14 days per year, to between 60 and 70 days a year for events that will serve the community and generate revenue that will be placed into the PAL Sailor Circus Foundation Endowment. PAL Sailor Circus's ultimate goal is to generate enough revenue through renting and hosting community events in the new arena that PAL Sailor Circus will be able to become self-sustaining; freeing up grant money and other community resources for other area nonprofits.

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KEY CIRCUS STAFF



Patricia McIntyre Campbell, Director, Sailor Circus

Patty is the Director of the PAL Sailor Circus and handles the fiscal business of PAL. Patty is a Sailor Circus alumna, having participated in the program from 1969 to 1976. She became a Coach/Rigger in 1991, and in 1993, began serving as the Assistant to the Director of Sailor Circus. She is also the mother of four Sailor Circus Alumni and has one child still in the program.



Susan Loeffler, Artistic Director, Sailor Circus

Susan is a Sailor Circus alumna who performed from 1978 to 1988 doing side-by-side trapeze, tumbling, adagio, swinging trapeze, web and flying trapeze and more. She went on to perform at Flying High circus while attending school at FSU. Like many alumni, Susan returned to Sailor Circus to help coach. Additionally, she served as circus director for three years, organized the alumni show of 1999, and choreographs Sailor Circus's dance numbers.



Jeff Voyles, Arena Manager, Sailor Circus

Jeff has been a major part of Sailor Circus for 35 years. Better known as "coach," he is in charge of rigging and all of the safety aspects of the show. Jeff also coaches several specialty acts and assists his daughter Susan (Loeffler) with the Flying Trapeze.



Willey Edelston, Volunteer Coach, Sailor Circus

Willey has been a Volunteer Coach with the Sailor Circus since 1961. He coaches the students in several areas including hand-balancing. Willey is a former performer with the Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus.

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