2016 marked a dramatic shifting of the tides.

By any measure, 2016 was an extraordinary year. Felt in the political sphere with the change in national leadership, in the field of circus through the demise of traditional companies, and by many of us personally—2016 marked a dramatic shifting of the tides. Yet in chaos, circus thrives. The brink of unraveling is the precipice at which our most creative solutions arise.

Circus prides itself on defying perceived limitations, pushing the boundaries of both the physical body and the social constructs that frame our reality. The evolution of contemporary circus thus inevitably demands the deconstruction of its own form, stretching the confines of the craft itself to become increasingly relevant and accessible to larger audiences. As social tensions continue to mount and the gap between factions expands, so too does the need for art forms that embrace our inner and outer diversity, empower individual expression, and inspire community.

This growing hunger for meaningful engagement, coupled with the outpouring of energy and support from our community, coalesced to propel the Circus Project’s 2016 growth beyond that of our remarkable progress in 2015. We doubled our classes and tripled our student body while increasing student satisfaction. We expanded our Social Circus program to serve three additional agencies. We produced two original shows, two Community Showcases, co-directed a national touring show, and performed at a variety of festivals and events. We doubled earned income and increased overall revenue by 28%.

Representative Margaret Doherty, Commissioner Nick Fish, and philanthropists Ann Edlen and Linda McGeady joined the ranks of our Resource Council. We launched a Diversity & Inclusion Committee and a Homeless Advocacy Committee, both chaired by graduates of our Intensive Training Program for Homeless & At-Risk Youth. We published a five-year strategic plan to map the trajectory of our programs.

To keep pace with our rapid growth, we brought on two dedicated Program Directors and our first Managing Director. This personnel expansion could not be more timely. It has allowed us to grow in both breadth and depth to ensure we have the artistic and therapeutic expertise to carry out our vision with integrity, and to respond appropriately to the present call.

But as the need increases, so too must our response. As circus artists and aficionados, we have a responsibility to uphold our tradition of inclusion. As citizens of a polarized nation, we have a responsibility to prepare the next generation for the increasingly complex world they will inherit.

We’ve done well, remarkably so. We need to do better. We must continually strive to become more relevant, more responsive, more accessible. As we teach, so too must we model: being open to feedback, creative in our approach, and relentless in our perseverance. We must seek out areas for growth to continue to be a force for constructive change. On stage and behind the scenes, the Circus Project is a highly collaborative, ever-evolving work-in-progress.

The accomplishments described herein are as much a celebration as they are a calling, as much a demonstration of gratitude as an invocation. They are a tribute to our ability to come together to create meaningful change and significantly alter the trajectory of individuals and the community at large. Our past, made possible by your efforts, is a testament that together, we can meet the coming challenges with determination, creativity, and grace.

Jenn Cohen
Founder | Artistic Director
transcends social barriers + inspires personal transformation through contemporary circus instruction + performance.

“The Circus Project was founded on a simple yet innovative idea: that the unique appeal of circus arts can benefit marginalized youth in unprecedented ways—and that in turn, their unique perspectives will propel the growing field of circus arts to new heights.

What began in 2008 as a pioneering experiment to empower homeless youth through the development of original, skilled circus productions, has grown organically into a thriving arts organization that serves a diverse community through a public Academy, professional performances, and a spectrum of Social Circus programs that utilize circus arts to facilitate individual and community transformation.

Each of these programs support and enhance the others, working on multiple levels to promote personal development, artistry, and social justice.

"Circus has the potential to transform suffering into beauty, to transform individuals from the inside out, and to transform communities from the ground up."

JENN COHEN
FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Jenn Cohen
FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

transcends social barriers + inspires personal transformation through contemporary circus instruction + performance.
The Circus Project’s award-winning Social Circus program utilizes circus arts as a vehicle to teach self-care, discipline, accountability, and teamwork to vulnerable youth. Social Circus workshops take place in partnership with social service agencies and after school programs. Social Circus participants may continue training through scholarships in our Academy.

Our program has been recognized by the American Circus Educators Association, a national network of Social Circus programs that offer cost-effective, evidence-based approaches to help young people overcome barriers. In 2016, we added three new social service partners and served 283 homeless youth and others at risk of homelessness, 64% of which were youth of color, and worked with three new social service partners.

“Historically, African American males are automatically placed in the athletic category, and are not provided with opportunities outside of football, basketball, and baseball. The Circus Project has given my son the exposure he needed to think outside of social norms.”

LATASHA BRUMFIELD
98% of students acquired fundamental circus skills

86% of students self-reported positive changes in personal relationships, academic performance, and self-esteem

100% of goals outlined by partner organizations met

5% of Social Circus students continued training in Academy

“The Circus Project classes encouraged me to learn more about my body and health. I discovered I could overcome obstacles and take on challenges I might never have undertaken otherwise.”

ZED JONES

Social Circus Highlights
The Circus Project’s Academy offers recreational through professional programming for children and adults from all walks of life. A continuum of training opportunities advance the field by fashioning a new generation of innovative artists, while tuition fees support our Social Circus programs.

In 2016, our Academy achieved the American Circus Educator Association’s Safety Recognition and expanded our Training Company and Youth Company to year-long programs. Our Youth Performance Troupe traveled to the School of Acrobatics and New Circus Arts in Seattle, and was featured on PBS’s Oregon Art Beat.

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS OVER YEARS**

*New facility

- 2008: 23
- 2009: 54
- 2010: 56
- 2011: 69
- 2012: 174
- 2013: 152
- 2014: 422*
- 2015: 1245*
- 2016: 1245*

*Homeless youth only*

In 2016, our Academy achieved the American Circus Educator Association’s Safety Recognition and expanded our Training Company and Youth Company to year-long programs. Our Youth Performance Troupe traveled to the School of Acrobatics and New Circus Arts in Seattle, and was featured on PBS’s Oregon Art Beat.
Performances

Performances are critical to our mission, utilizing artistic excellence to promote social change.

Inspired

Attendance of 3500+ audience members

Premiered original show, S7nners as part of Fertile Ground Festival, directed by Russ Stark & Alicia Cutizia with a cast of over 20

Premiered original show, RAW, featured on Oregon Art Beat, produced by Alysia Marie Colón

Produced two Community Showcases

Hosted residency with Seattle's Acrobatic Conundrum to workshop "Love & Gravity," a highly acclaimed touring show co-directed by Circus Project Artistic Director, Jenn Cohen

Featured in Galaxy Dance Festival, with performances directed by Kari Jay Hunter

Featured at OMSI's Gala with Storm Large

“The Circus Project breaks the rules that says that performance art can’t be part of how we solve our most challenging problems.”

COMMISSIONER JULES BAILEY
Our financial performance in 2016 surpassed the remarkable strides made in 2015. We met a donor-advised match to establish a $100,000 Board-Designated Cash Reserve Fund, which will provide an internal line of credit for the organization. We also established a Maintenance Fund for future facility repairs and improvements.

## INCOME

- **Individuals**: $148,868
- **Corporations**: $3,167
- **Foundations**: $184,833
- **Government**: $9,950
- **Earned Income**: $291,222

## EXPENSES

- **Academy**: $39,078
- **Performances**: $44,788
- **Social Circus**: $70,328
- **General**: $83,422
- **Maintenance Fund**: $25,000
- **Cash Reserve Fund**: $50,000
Recognition

District Administration
A nationwide publication for K-12 district-level public school leaders:

Buzzfeed, 17 Circuses Changing the World

Oregon Art Beat
http://www.opb.org/television/programs/artbeat/segment/the-circus-project/

Voted Best Summer Camp, NW Kids Magazine

Ninety-Nine Girlfriends Finalist
http://ninetyninegirlfriends.com/our-2016-finalists/

Featured in Willamette Week’s Give! Guide for 6th year
https://giveguide.org/#/section:nonprofits,category:creative-expression/org/circusproject
In Honor of
Carey Booth
Ralph Chilberg
Jann Doller
The Cavano Family
Kirsten Collins
Kelp & Josh Lavine
Tamara Horton
Dennis O’Donnell
Sidra Quinn

Jennifer Bouman-Steagall
Jim & Evelyn Deer
Jenn Cohen
Transformation Studios,
Tamara Horton
The Cavano Family
Isometric Studio
Mick West
Annie Young
John Bradley

$50,000+
Mi Murdock Charitable Trust
Schwab Charitable Fund

$25,000+
Anonymous Foundation
Anonymous Foundation
McLeary Foundation
Myriad Clark Reimbursement Fund
Muller Family Foundation
Oregon Arts Commission
Oregon Cultural Trust
Porter & Pudwill Foundation
Rose Annual Fund
Richard M. Smith Foundation
Rick Eisner

$10,000+
The Collins Foundation
McLeary Family Foundation
Myriad Clark Reimbursement Fund
Muller Family Foundation
Oregon Arts Commission
Oregon Cultural Trust
Porter & Pudwill Foundation
Ruth & Jane Stegall Foundation
Stuart & Christine Cohen

Up to $99
Erika Fajardo
Brot Bishop
Curly Top Cohen

Jennifer Bouman-Steagall
Earl Hines
PlayDate PDX
Nike, Inc.

Supporters
James F. & Marion L. Miller
Schwab Charitable Fund
CARE Foundation
Community Foundation
Community Foundation
Fund of The Oregon Community Foundation
Anonymous Foundation
Anonymous Foundation
Ronni Lacroute
Panama Foundation

$15,000+
Roy and Diane Marvin
Fond of The Oregon Community Foundation
Nike Employee Grant
Fond of The Oregon Community Foundation

$7500+
Charlotte Martin Foundation
Robert D. & Maria H. Randall Charitable Trust
Hoover Family Foundation

$5000+
All Real Estate
Bloomfield Family Foundation
James Winkler
Regional Arts & Culture Council

$2500+
The Autzen Foundation
John Braden
Joe & Deke Stegall
Kay Richman & Daniel Kaplan
Rooney-Nine Partners
Patrick Simpson
The Standard
Rose E. Tucker Charitable Trust

$1000+
Christine and John Bakalar Charitable Fund
Jennifer Bryan
Gun & Tom Stapleton Family Foundation
Representative Margaret Doherty
Ann Hodur
The Jackson Foundation
Frederick Payne
Sue Richman & Peter Ramsay
Kate Sokoloff
Shonna Stroud

$100+
Ruth Abbott & Patrick Fitzgerald
Ida Arne Cardone
Theresa & David Cavano
Michael Davidson & Patricia Anderson
Patricia Johnson
Sallie & Dan Soukup
Wayne Englander & Susan Kasw
Robert Feller & Kathleen Kabbo
Fred Mayer Community Awards
Melody Chinley & Kyle Grover
Sarah Hamilton
Jeffrey Johans
Bastian (Paul) Loyet
Jennifer Marriott
Christine McCullough
Muse & Musser
Gary Owen
Deborah Ross
Erica Schubert K.B. Clay Bifolows AO Turner

Up to $99
Vanessa Abhashten
Marlene Abrams
Steven Abrams
Amazon Smile
Katherine & Vladimir Belyi
Karla Booth
Rebecca Burrell & Kevin Noonan
Sweetheart Corner & Michael Weaver
Gary Clark & Meredith Dunn
Heidi Salibel & James Wilcox
Elina & Gary vom Brock
Karen Mouser & Darr & Iman Mouser
Douglas Staben
Gary Donnell
Rich Eichen & Saretta Geller
Laurie Emerick
Ruth Eccleston
Robert Fascin
Ricard & JudithVan Felt
Robin Friedman
Marisol & David Greenberg
Michelle & Carl Hall,
Kees library
Andrew Hays
Sallie & Robert McIlhatten
William & Elizabeth Hathaway
Sherry Horwitz & Larry Krueger
Joni Marie Johnson
Michael & Diane Johnson
Christy & Rick Jordan

Mick West & Sherrie Katz
Nicole Kaufman
Linda & Steven Keast
Beck Kidder
Terese Koberstein
Jacob Landau
Samuel Nathan Landau
Caryl Landan
&
George Paschalovski

Brian Lee
Kathy Lombardi
Joseph Marcus
Thomas Mattison
Robin McCaffrey
Doug & Cary McKay
Donna Mullen
Erin & Ken McGonigle
Renee McLaughlin
&
Philip Graham
Metropolitan Group
John Murphy
Linda Nelson
Robert Nelson
Jennifer Newsom
Amaru Naveen
Nathalia O’Donnell
Jacob Plemel
Julie Ocken
Eleanor Parker
Aaron Prosky & Fasin Khabou
E.A. Randal
Linda Robinson
Dena Ross
Rita Sale
Linda Sheehy
Helene Silberstein
Rick Davis
Diane Solomon
Cassel Scott
Sightglass Coffee Canada
Eve Stern
Thank you,
Inc.
Nicole Topping
Dana Tyner
Amy Valliant-Ellis-Sala
Thomas Van Raalte
Ruth Stake
Annie Jost
Debby Kelman & Jacob Sennett
Lisa Weber
Chris & Scott Williamson
Aviva & Andrew Zigman
Rosalie Zigman

The Circus Project receive funded by the state of Oregon
The Circus Project receive
commission a state agency
funded by the state of Oregon
Board of Directors

Jenn Cohen, Founder & Director, the Circus Project

Linda McGeadey, RACC Board, Randall Children’s Hospital Art Committee

Caroline Petrich, Principal, CKP & Associates

Nelda Reyes, Principal, AB Cultural Drivers & Performer

Hertsel Shadian, Attorney at Law

Resource Council

Pippa Arend, pear

Jennifer Bouman, Red Kite Employment Law

Representative Margaret Doherty, Oregon State Legislature

Ann Edlen, philanthropist

Commissioner Nick Fish, City of Portland

Lisa Lovullo, Travelers Insurance

Phelim McDermott, Improbable Theatre

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Nel Taylor, Homeless Advocacy Committee Chair, Program Graduate

George Thorn, Arts Action Research

Julie Vigeland, Oregon Arts Commission, Jackson Foundation

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Nathan Landau, Salient Supply

Amy Meyer, AvantHuit

Jen Newlin, Metropolitan Group

Laurie O’Brien, Foote Cone & Belding Chicago

Erica Rubinstein, Academy Director

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Joe DeJager, Kidder Mathews

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Emily Nichols, Classic Wines Auction, Inc.

Greg Warner, Hines Warner Wealth Management

Homeless Advocacy Committee

Nel Taylor, Chair, Homeless Training Company Graduate, PSU Student

Ramsay Everingham, Social Circus Director

Caroline Petrich, CKP & Associates

Access & Inclusivity Committee

Nelda Reyes, Chair, AB Cultural Drivers & Performer

Jenn Cohen, Founder & Artistic Director

Ramsay Everingham, Social Circus Director

Erica Rubinstein, Academy Director

Staff

Jenn Cohen, Artistic Director

Kirsten Collins, Managing Director

Aimee Diaz, Front Desk/Executive Assistant

Ramsay Everingham, Social Circus Director

Kari Jay Hunter, Booking Manager

Erica Rubinstein, Academy Director

Linda Sheeley, Office Manager

Sola Toshima, Student Services & Studio Manager

Coaches

Kelsey Aicher
Diana Berkowitz
Venetia Bouronikou
Sadie Brown
Nick Carter
Alisya Marie Colón
Alicia Cutaia
Rena Dimes
Ciara D’Orofrio
Uys Du Buison
EJ Etherington
Josiah Elkins
Noah Fassell
Stefan Furst
Kate Hoflich
Nate Hughes
Kari Jay Hunter
Marina Karadjieva
Alison Lockfeld
Skyler Macadamia
London Mahina
Josie Marks-McQuade
Kraig Mead
Libby Mikoleit
Rhen Miles
Ashley Oakley
Gwen O’Brien
Michael O’Neill
Keri Padon
Elsa Penello
Ari Rapkin
Meg Russell
Larke Schuldberg
Anna Sell
Russ Stark
Jack Stock

Guest Artists

Alex Allen
Terry Crane
Erica Rubinstein
Rachel Strickland
Cory Sylvester
Jacki Ward

SPECIAL THANKS

Monica Brenner, 2016 Interim Operations Manager & Amelia Bear, 2016 Studio Manager