

Pointers For Parents

Working Out With Ringling Bros.® Circus

(NAPSA)—If your kids are overweight, they may not be able to simply run away from health problems—but they can join the circus. A new and exciting national fitness program, *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey® CircusFitSM*, encourages America's youth to lead healthy, active lifestyles by combining the fun of circus skills with stretching, strength building and aerobic exercise. *Ringling Bros.* has partnered with the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports in introducing the CircusFit program, an action-packed approach to fitness that motivates kids to get a-movin' and a-groovin', whether in the classroom, after school or at home. Schools and after-school programs are invited to participate in CircusFit as part of their involvement in the annual President's Challenge.

With school budgets shrinking and physical education and after-school programs being eliminated, the educational curriculum is absolutely free, part of a long-term commitment to improving the lives of America's young people.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the percentage of children and adolescents who are defined as overweight has more than doubled in the past 20 years. CircusFit is a step closer to reversing this trend and getting children excited about exercise, healthy living and daily activity. The benefits of such a program extend beyond physical fitness, though.

Lessons Learned

Tyrece Haines, *Ringling Bros.* performer and member of the *Ringling Bros. Windy City Acrobats*, says tumbling taught him responsibility, teamwork and dedication.



Kids can be encouraged to exercise if it's fun and exciting.

Pictured: Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey® Windy City Acrobats

"My personal goal was to be the best that I can be and do whatever it takes to help my team succeed in our dream. I promised myself I would give 100 percent at the practice and the performance and I would always encourage my friends to do the same," Haines explains. It is a dedication that has paid off.

Each member of Haines' team got his start the same way—at age 5 or 6, he saw someone "doing flips" and he wanted to learn how. Practicing on discarded mattresses, Haines and his friends honed their skills at block parties and at impromptu (and unpaid) performances outside Chicago sporting events. Just 10 years after the group formed, they got their big break with *Ringling Bros.*

Today, the nine-member Windy City Acrobats team ranges in age from 13-year-old fraternal twins Manuel and Emmanuel (whose mother travels with the show) to 21-year-old Tyrece. Several of the team members are attending school while they travel with *Ringling Bros.*, while others plan to work toward college credits—but all agree that tumbling has helped change their lives for the better.

For more information, visit www.Ringling.com.