

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Strand Theater, Friends of the Park, Partner to Bring Chicago Youth Circus Act to Zelenople**

August 6, 2009

The Strand Theater Initiative announced today that it is working with Friends of the Park to present CircEsteem and The Chicago Youth Circus to Zelenople's Community Park on Monday, August 17th at 6:30pm. The circus performance will include gym wheel, juggling, clowning and acrobatic performances by children ages 8-20, including Edith Keme, the reigning U.S. Gym Wheel Junior Champion.

The performance is free to the public. Afterward, performers will host a circus workshop for children of all ages. A \$5 donation for the workshop will help fund CircEsteem's tour to the American Youth Circus Organization Festival in Starrucca, Pennsylvania. CircEsteem is a non-profit organization whose mission is to build self-esteem through circus arts and to unite youth from different cultural, racial, and economic backgrounds.

"I'm very happy to help welcome CircEsteem to town," said Ron Carter, President & Executive Director of the non-profit Strand Theater Initiative. The group recently completed the first phase of construction on Zelenople's historic theater after eight years of fundraising and renovations, "Originally, we had hoped to present the workshops in The Strand, but there just isn't enough room in this phase of construction," lamented Carter, "but it's an outstanding program and the community will really enjoy it. We're glad to support it."

"It sounds like a lot of fun for people of all ages," says Alecia Flood of the Friends of the Park group. "It's exciting to have CircEsteem come to town and give many families in and outside of Zelenople something to look forward to on a Monday evening. This is exactly why the Friends of the Park have been so diligent in raising funds for the park and pool. Our many events in the last six months have been wonderful fundraisers. It is our hope to continue to raise money and also bring in outside groups, such as CircEsteem, that would like to hold events here as well. We need to keep our treasured park alive, so we all can continue to create memories for our children and future generations."

"CircEsteem is excited about bringing this unique opportunity to Zelenople", said Maribeth Joy McManus, Program Director for CircEsteem and former Harmony resident, "giving children of all ages the chance to run away with the circus without having to run away! The interactive circus workshop after the performance will give kids the chance to walk on a tight wire, roll in a gym wheel, juggle scarves, spin plates, and be a clown."

The youth circus is stopping in Zelenople as part of a tour that starts in Erie, continues in Zelenople, then on to Starrucca, PA, where the group will participate in the American Youth Circus Organization Festival. The tour bows in Pittsburgh at the Children's Museum on August 23rd.

All funds received from the Zelenople performance will support CircEsteem's participation in the Youth Circus Festival.

For more information and interview opportunities:

CircEsteem & Chicago Youth Circus: Maribeth Joy McManus @ 312-731-HAHA (4242)

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