

Students with Down Syndrome and Autism at Local Circus School

The Actors Gymnasium, a training school dedicated to teaching circus and aerial arts, physical theater, and multi-disciplinary performance to children and adults, announces a pilot program serving children and adults with disabilities. Initially, the program will offer two classes: children with autism aged 10-14 and adults with Down syndrome aged 16 years and older.

The pilot program will offer instruction in a variety of circus disciplines including aerial skills, tumbling, juggling, dance, and performance techniques in a safe and supportive environment. Students will enjoy individualized attention and be coached according to their ability.

Circus training provides children and adults the opportunity to explore their creativity, and build their confidence in a community of peers. Classes in circus arts can help foster the healthy physical, cognitive, and social development of individuals with disabilities.

An AG instructor supporting a student with special needs during a private lesson

Instructors for the classes, Kasumi Kato and Charlene Numrych, bring a wealth of expertise and experience. Kasumi has a long history of performing Circus Arts in Atlanta and Chicago and many years of experience teaching students from vastly diverse backgrounds. Charlene is a gymnast, aerialist, and performer with many years of teaching; she has also coached gymnasts for the Special Olympics. Members of the Actors Gymnasium Teen Ensemble will be student mentors for the classes.

The class for students with Down syndrome, ages 16 and older, will run for eight weeks on Fridays 6:00-7:00 p.m., starting Friday, September 18. Interested families are invited to attend an Open House for the class on Friday, September 11, 6:00-7:00 p.m. The fee for the class is \$240.00.

The class for students with autism ages 10-14 will run for seven weeks on Mondays 7:30-8:30 p.m., starting September 21. Interested families are invited to attend an Open House for the class on Monday, September 14, 7:30-8:30 p.m. The fee for the class is \$300.00.

Scholarships are available.

Enrollment is limited and classes are expected to fill to capacity. For more information, email specialneeds@actorsgymnasium.org. To register for Actors Gymnasium classes visit: www.actorsgymnasium.org.

Location:

The Actors Gymnasium is located at the Noyes Cultural Arts Center, 927 Noyes Street, Evanston, IL - just off of the Noyes purple line 'L' stop. The Noyes Cultural Arts Center is owned by the City of Evanston and home to over 20 artists and arts organizations offering music, theater, and visual arts programs and studios. The galleries exhibit local artists, with exhibitions changing every two months.

Actors Gymnasium classes are taught in a 3,000 sq/ft gymnasium space that features a 1,600 sq/ft sprung floor and a fully rigged 24 foot ceiling. All aerial equipment such as the Aerial Hoop, Spanish Web, aerial silks, static trapeze and more are provided, as well as the equipment for ground skills such as unicycling, juggling, tight wire and gymnastics. Starting Fall Session 2015 additionally classes will be taught in Studio 108, a 900 sq/ft classroom space that features a floating sprung White Oak dance floor, a fully rigged 14 foot ceiling, a handstand wall, conditioning

ladders, and room length 12 foot mirrors for aerial work.

About The Actors Gymnasium:

The Actors Gymnasium is dedicated to bringing a new physicality to the American Theatre. Encouraging ground-breaking theatrical exploration, The Actors Gymnasium teaches circus arts, physical theatre and multi-disciplinary performance to children and adults; produces original, daring works of circus-theatre; and serves as a talent resource, providing performance opportunities to our students and innovative professional event entertainment for a wider audience. At The Actors Gymnasium, people Learn To Fly - physically, emotionally, and creatively. For more information, please visit www.actorsgymnasium.org