

# Social Enterprise Launch Pad Program



## Rachel Peters and Andy Long, Roundabout Circus

Social Enterprise Launch Pad program participants

### **Achieving the impossible**

Teaching juggling and acrobatics to impoverished children in Nicaragua isn't your everyday job. But for Andy Long and Rachel Peters it was an eye-opening experience as to how circus skills can help transform the lives of those in need.

Less than three months after returning to the Central Coast, the enigmatic duo had started up their own circus skills workshop, Roundabout Circus. Designed for all ages from 3 years to 60+, the social enterprise runs weekly classes, school holiday workshops, community performances and open circus jams where anyone can come along and get involved or try a new skill.

### **Benefits for those in need**

Having seen the huge impact the program can have on underprivileged children while traveling with Performers Without Borders in Nicaragua, Andy and Rachel also run numerous programs for disadvantaged groups throughout the central coast.

"We use the revenue from our regular operations, to help subsidise classes for those with special needs," said Rachel.

*"The key benefit of our circus skills is to show how something that seems impossible becomes achievable when it's broken up into smaller steps."*

"This message is true for all our participants, but especially true for those who live with a disability or other difficulties," said Rachel.

The inspirational couple also run dedicated workshops for other worthwhile organisations around the Coast, including Life Without Barriers and Central Coast Occupational Therapy. They offer discounted rates for these workshops to make the circus program as accessible to as many people as possible.

"For those who may feel undervalued or outcast from society, showing their new skills to the community can transform perceptions, held by both themselves and others, of what these amazing people can accomplish," said Rachel.

*"There are so many benefits. Even just the performing itself is a confidence booster."*



### **Spreading the Circus Experience**

Less than two years after the first class started in February 2017, Roundabout Circus now runs more than 1,000 classes throughout the year, alongside dozens of other workshops, programs and events.

A recent primetime circus workshop at Brentwood village helped teach circus skills to those in their 70s!

One of our core focuses is on keeping it a "Social Circus," said Rachel. "The emphasis and benefits are all about participating, not on who is the best performer."

"We also try to keep the classes as affordable as we can, including concession prices and payment plans."

Rachel and Andy said that the Central Coast Council's Launch Pad Program really helped them progress their joint hobby into a full time sustainable business. The couple admit that it was quite the journey to get where they are now, but with eight part time teachers and more than 5,000 people experiencing their brand of circus every year, it's become an undeniable success.

*"We've have a beautiful community here," said Rachel, "who are really supporting of socially aware groups, and there's so much connectivity between all the different groups and communities within the Central Coast."*

Andy, a former radiation therapist, and Rachel, a former dietitian, both feel they have found their calling in life. For anyone else who is thinking of starting a social enterprise, their advice is simple: "If you're passionate about it you can make anything work!"