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NATIONAL HISPANIC CULTURAL CENTER FOUNDATION RECEIVES GRANT FROM BCBSNM TO SUPPORT CIRCO LATINO 2021

Albuquerque, N.M. (July 13, 2021) – The National Hispanic Cultural Center Foundation received a \$30,000 grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico (BCBSNM) through its Healthy Kids, Healthy Families[®] (HKKF) initiative. The National Hispanic Cultural Center’s commitment to its Circo Latino program aligns with the vision of BCBSNM’s Healthy Kids, Healthy Families grant program to help improve the health of children and their families in local communities.

Now in its 13th year, Circo Latino is dedicated to providing students ages 7-18 with basic, intermediate, and advanced circus arts instruction. Spanish-language and Latin American culture are taught alongside juggling, stilt-walking, clowning, movement, aerial, mask-making, leadership, environmental stewardship, compassion, empathy, community vibrancy, and healthy lifestyles.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic made this program nearly impossible to continue due to the nature of circus arts. Due to COVID-19 safety restrictions and Circo Latino’s deep commitment to the safety of its participants, in spring of 2020 the program was forced to move to an online format called Circo Digitalino. Circo Digitalino, a hyper-condensed version of Circo Latino, provided a three-week program in June 2020 exploring juggling, visual arts, movement, object manipulation, clowning, animation, puppetry and music.

This year, Circo Latino is thrilled to offer in-person programming. Circo Latino 2021 is two, two-week intensive camps that combine diverse offerings of unique and dynamic skill sets for young artists to learn from lead artists from the community. Students can choose from combination classes of stilting, acrobalance, juggling, and unicycling; aerials, movement, and devised creation; and clowning, music, and storytelling. The program is committed to providing a dynamic opportunity for young community members to train as emerging leaders through exploration of artistic skills, cultural identity, and one’s capacity to personally impact social transformation.

“A huge thank you to all the Circo Latino staff for the incredible amount of work, level of determination, ability to persevere and ‘pivot’ in the face of immense challenges, bringing critical issues to young people through art and conversation, and continue with the love, care, humor, passion, and creativity that is always the heart of Circo,” said Rachel Rodriguez, a Circo Latino parent. “You all continue to amaze me/us! We’re so very grateful.”

“We are proud to support the National Hispanic Cultural Center and the Circo Latino program, which makes a positive impact on children’s self-esteem, wellness and creativity,” said Janice Torrez, BCBSNM president.

“Through education about culture, community, art and safety, Circo Latino provides a positive atmosphere for children and artists to thrive in the community.”

Circo Latino 2021 is offered on a sliding-scale tuition to allow for a wide variety of students with differing economic backgrounds to participate. The HKHF grant from BCBSNM allows the program to provide scholarships for students who are unable to afford Circo Latino’s tuition, and allows Circo Latino to maintain and update equipment for the safety and success of students. Students who age out of the program often serve as mentors and teachers for beginning students enrolled in Circo Latino. With the HKHF grant, Circo Latino is able to pay these returning students, offering them fair compensation, and modeling that artists should be paid for their work.

Healthy Kids, Healthy Families is a signature program of BCBSNM. The initiative focuses on engaging children and their families in understanding the importance of nutritious food, raising the level of physical activity, better managing chronic conditions and promoting safe environments. Likewise, The National Hispanic Cultural Center and Circo Latino works to provide a welcoming, inclusive culture that teaches students about mental and physical health through practices of daily habits, community rituals and thoughtful collaboration.

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About The National Hispanic Cultural Center

The National Hispanic Cultural Center is dedicated to the preservation, promotion and advancement of Hispanic culture, arts and humanities. The Center presents exhibitions, lectures, book readings, performing arts and educational programming that are meaningful to the local community. It offers the Hispanic, Chicano and Latinx artist a place to present their work and bring it to the national stage. The NHCC is committed to making a cultural home for the diverse identities that shape the community.

About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico is one of the largest commercial health insurers in New Mexico with more than 680,000 New Mexicans carrying a Blue Cross and Blue Shield card. Since 1940, BCBSNM has been committed to promoting the health and wellness of its members and communities through accessible, cost-effective, quality health care. BCBSNM is a Division of Health Care Service Corporation, the country’s largest customer-owned health insurer and fourth largest health insurer overall. Health Care Service Corporation is a Mutual Legal Reserve Company and an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Patrick Rodriguez
patrick.rodriquez@state.nm.us

Circo Latino student Logan practices a juggling routine with Acrobalance Teacher Gina.

