

THE SUN

Clown brings fun, fitness to Fontana kids

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FONTANA - Dean Kelley likes to clown around. Especially when it comes to fitness.

The 28-year-old clown with Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey circus keeps in big-top shape so he can perform 10 to 15 shows a week, 50 weeks a year for what he calls "the Cadillac of clowning."

"You've got to be in shape," Kelley said. "Otherwise, you'll be huffing and puffing with the elephants."

On Wednesday, Kelley led about 30 kids at the Boys & Girls Club in a 30-minute workout called CircusFit, an exercise routine that eschews squat-thrusts for silly dances, jumping-jacks for juggling scarves.

Lizeth Hernandez, 8, practiced for the event the day before, balancing a water bottle on her finger in preparation for balancing a peacock feather during Kelley's class.

"At the beginning it was hard," Lizeth said.

Having mastered the skill, Lizeth said she would try her hand at broom-balancing.

Terrie Schneider, director for the club, said the event kicked off a summer where staff is trying to motivate kids to get off the couch.

"This is great because it ties in to what we do at the club," Schneider said. "All of our curriculum goes into nutrition and fitness. This gets the kids up and moving."

The CircusFit program launched in 2005. In addition to circus performers leading live workouts while on tour, a downloadable program is available for kids, parents, schools and organizations, said Andy Perez, spokesman for the circus.

"We developed a whole curriculum as a way to teach physical fitness," he said.

The circus comes to town July 29 through Aug. 2 at Citizens Business Bank Arena in Ontario.

Visit online at www.circusfit.com