

Shriners International Headquarters
2900 Rocky Point Drive
Tampa, FL 33607

Attention: Media Relations

The Shriners organization has been synonymous with helping, healing, fund raising and its commitment to children's hospitals. Shriners are greeted enthusiastically at parades and enjoyed for the light hearted excitement they demonstrate at public events. The following quote from your website explains clearly your mission statement: - "Shriners are a brotherhood of men committed to family, engaged in ongoing personal growth, and dedicated to providing care for children and families in need. Our background and interests are diverse, but we are bound together by our shared values and a desire to have fun, do good and build relationships that can last a lifetime."

During the 140 years of the organization we are sure that there have been many changes within your brotherhood as it has grown and developed to meet new accepted standards. Recently a local Shriners group brought the circus to our city. There is no doubt that the arrival of a circus for many years was the cause for huge excitement. A chance to glimpse a life and excitement that we could only read about in books. However, it is no secret that the treatment of animals in circus environments has not always been what we would have hoped and there have been many demonstrated cruelty cases relating to animal handling. Reputable, caring organizations over the years have moved away from circus animal acts and have built enormously successful events showcasing the talents of their human performers. We were very distressed to see that the Shriners, known for their commitment to eliminate human suffering have continued to embrace the use of animal acts at your events.

In the spirit of "personal growth, caring, doing good and building relationships", we would like to respectfully ask that you eliminate all animal acts from your circus events. It is time for the Shriners to keep pace with the times and move away from a tradition that clearly has no place in today's world.

Yours truly

Mayor Frank Scarpitti