

# AN EDUCATORS GUIDE TO... **THE FRANZINI FAMILY**

## **Science and Astronomy Circus**

*This program is presented as part of the Arts in Education Program,  
which is funded and jointly sponsored by the Hillsborough County School District and the Arts Council of Hillsborough County.*

### **ABOUT THE SHOW!**

The FRANZINI FAMILY SCIENCE ASTRONOMYCIRCUS featuring Professor Franzini and Lippo the Clown leads the audience through an action packed demonstration of Gravity, Inertia, Circular Motion, Air Pressure and Balance. All these scientific elements are dynamically demonstrated through clowning, juggling, magic and other circus skills. This fun-filled, fast-paced program promotes an understanding of science in clear and simple terms. Hula Hoops, Umbrellas, Balls, Cigar Boxes, Balloons and more are transformed into objects of scientific concern and fascination. An introduction to astronomy is shown through Lippo's wild ride around the "rolling globe" Sun. Rosie, the scientifically trained Wonderdog, joins the Franzini's to stimulate thought, interest and a better understanding of science for grades K through 5.

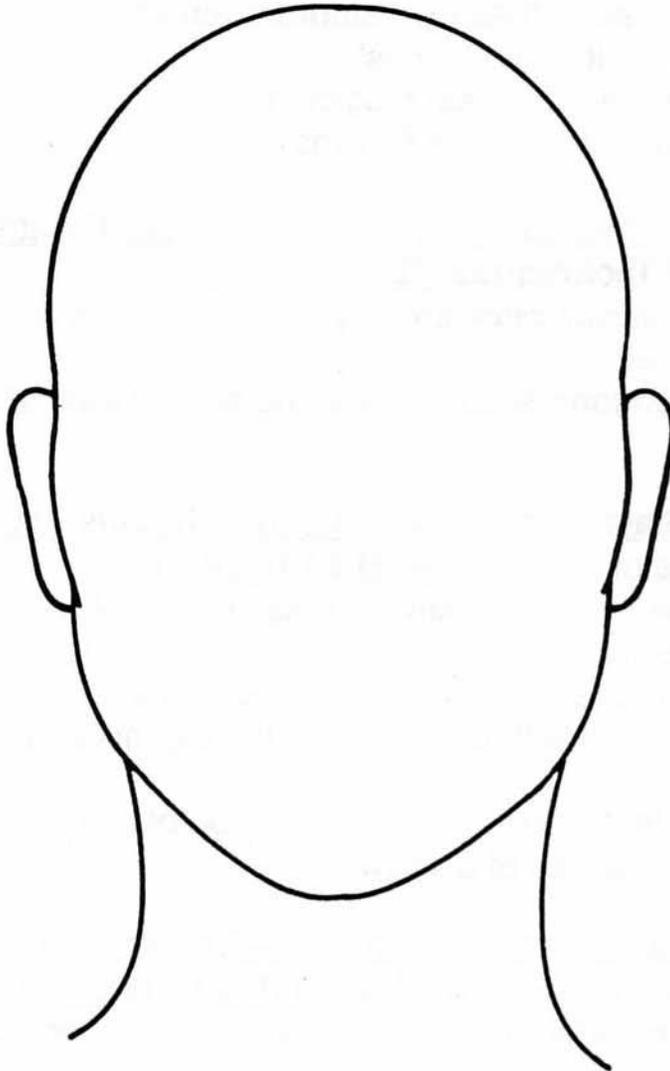
### **ABOUT THE ARTIST!**

The Franzini Family made their debut on April Fool's Day 1978. Since that ironic beginning they have performed all over continental North America at numerous colleges, festivals and fairs including The First Canadian Mime Festival, Festival of American Mimes, Milwaukee Clown Festival, Spoleto Festival and the Ringling Medieval Festival. The Franzini 1981 Pantomime and Circus Show appeared at 109 Air Force bases throughout the United States. With the Johnson & Johnson Company they performed and instructed motivational juggling workshops in Brazil. They toured Germany, Korea, Philippines and Australia with the USO. The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Thrill Circus featured the Franzini Sideshow at their St. Paul, Minnesota Riverfest in July of 1986. The Franzini Family was a featured act at the 1987 Circus Smirkus in Vermont and Lipi Franzini continued to help direct Circus Smirkus shows through their 1999 season. The Arts Council of Hillsborough County had been sponsoring the Franzini Family educational programs since 1983. They have performed for Princess Anne of England and a congressional reception in Washington, D.C.. The Franzinis delighted crowds at the 1994 and 1995 First Night Celebration in Tampa. In 1995, they received a Hillsborough County Grant to continue work on their Underwater Circus featuring juggling octopus, acrobatic starfish and other aquatic themed circus acts. The Franzini Family continues to perform throughout the United States with appearances in North & South Carolina. They appeared at the Smithsonian associated Discovery Theatre in Washington, DC for 8 sell-out show in July 2008.

# Activity

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## BE A CLOWN



**What is your Clown name?** \_\_\_\_\_

Each clown face is special. Each clown is different. If you were a clown, how would you look? Draw your clown face.

# **Creativity**

## **Sunshine State Standards Addressed**

**Language Arts: LA.A.2.1 The student constructs meaning from a wide range of texts.**

1. Have your students read stories about the circus and about science.
2. Have your students bring in pictures of circus animals and performers.
3. Have your students create their own stories using themes such as: My visit to the circus, I am the greatest magician, or all my friends are clowns.

**Theatre Arts: TH.A.2.2 The student communicates directing choices to actors in improvised and scripted scenes.**

1. Have your students form small groups and act out their stories.

**Science: SC.H.1.1 The student knows in order to learn, it is important to observe the same things often and compare.**

1. Have your students repeat the “Big Gravity test” as seen in the show. Ask them to repeat with other objects and to compare the results.
2. Try the bottle test. See if a balloon can be blown up inside a bottle without the use of a straw.

**Theatre Arts: TH.A.3.2 The student understands the relationship among scenery, properties, lighting, sound, costumes and makeup in dramatic scenes and in formal play productions.**

1. Discuss the above Sunshine State Standard with the performance in mind. Compare the costumes and make-up of Professor Franzini and Lippo the Clown. Discuss the set, lighting and sound.

# BE A CLOWN!

Think of the circus and you think of clowns. Think of clowns and you think of colorful and bizarre costumes, wild hair, silly hats, exaggerated features, mirthful antics and laughter. But clowning is more than funny clothes and pranks. It is a respected art requiring training, skill, dedication and creativity with a long history in American culture.

## **Objective:**

The objective of the exercises is to learn more about the art of clowning, to learn how to develop a clown personality, and to learn about non-verbal communication.

**Dance: DA.B.1.2 The student knows the difference between pantomiming and abstracting a gesture.**

Modern clowns fall into three categories: Whiteface, Auguste and Character.

The Whiteface clown wears white base makeup with colored features, dresses in neat clothes (often a one piece jumpsuit), and acts as the straightman, setting up gags for the other clowns to complete

The Auguste clown is less skilled, less refined and inclined to make mistakes. The gags are broader, with more pratfalls and tumbling. The makeup and costumes of the Auguste clown reflects a more active role with loose fitting clothes that allow free movement. Base makeup is some light color with white around the eyes and mouth and features usually highlighted in red and black.

The Character or tramp clown is characterized by a white mouth and black beard. The Character Clown's personality and lifestyle is reflected in the costume.

Body language is an important part of clowning. Many clowns choose not to use verbal language at all so they must be able to communicate with their expressions, hands and their actions. They exaggerate everything to add to the humor.

## **Clowning routines are often based on:**

**SURPRISE** – the unexpected happens

**MIMICRY** – imitation

**TRICKERY** – magic

**SLAPSTICK** – slaps, falls, punches

**COMPARISONS** – right and wrong, large and small

**EXAGGERATION** – oversized objects, movements and reactions.

### **BE A CLOWN! Primary Activity**

Theatre Arts: TH.D.1.1 The student portrays imaginary sensory experiences through dramatic play.

A clown often uses body language and facial expressions rather than words – or in addition to words – to communicate. Think about the following list of feelings and take turns expressing them non-verbally.

Surprise

Anger

Joy

Despair

Determination

Sleepiness

Pain

Fear

**Remember, clowns exaggerate their actions.**

Every clown develops a distinct personality. A great deal of thought and creativity goes into this process because it becomes the clown's trademark for the rest of clown's career. Look at a variety of photographs of clowns. Encourage the children to notice similarities and differences. Look at each feature of the face and hair. Notice how the costume works with the makeup.

## **Mystery of the Falling Bodies**

Fog hid the river and dimmed the bridge lights. It made everything dull – everything but the sounds of the night. The fog sharpened them.

The voices of two men who were arguing carried clearly. The boy could not see them, but he knew they were standing at the rail, near the center of the bridge. As he approached his footsteps seemed very loud.

Suddenly the voices stopped. Then came the sound of a splash. Something heavy had been thrown into the river.

“That was quick,” said one of the men.

“A body falls fast,” the other said.

“What body – whose body?” the boy wondered. Then he heard the word “evidence.” So that was it = the men were trying to get rid of the evidence! They would try to get rid of him too if they caught him.

Should he run? No, the fog was his ally. Listening carefully, the boy heard that two bodies had been thrown from the bridge. Two bodies? How strange. There had only been one splash.

The men went on talking. The bodies had different shapes, they said. One was heavier than the other – about ten times heavier.

“Ten times heavier,” the boy repeated. Now he had it! What a fool he was.

And do you know why?

# WEIGHTY PROBLEMS ~ LOADED QUESTIONS

## **The Old Rubber Tire**

**Q.** A man is fishing in a lake. He hooks an old rubber tire that has been lying at the lake bottom and hauls it into the canoe. What happens to the level of the water in the lake?

**A.** When the tire was on the lake bottom, the weight of the water it displaced was less than its own weight. That's why it sank. But in the canoe the tire became a floating object. The weight of the water it displaced was increased and it became equal to the tire's weight. That made the lake rise.

## **A Ton of Feathers and a Ton of Iron**

**Q.** When placed on the same scale, a load of feathers and a load of iron each weigh one ton. But are their weights actually the same?

**A.** According to Archimedes' Principle, when anything displaces air, air pushes up on it, making it lose weight. The loss always equals the weight of the air displaced. For most things this loss does not come to much since air is lightweight stuff. But if you want the true weight of an object, you add its loss in weight to the amount it registers on a scale.

Suppose the iron is in a compact mass and the feathers have a hundred times greater volume. The iron displaces only 5 1/2 ounces of air while the feathers displace a hundred times as much – 550 ounces or 34 pounds. The true weight of the iron is therefore one ton plus 5 1/2 ounces and that of the feathers, one ton plus 34 pounds.

So the ton of feathers is heavier than the ton of iron!

## **Moon Swim**

**Q.** On the Moon everything weighs about one sixth as much as on the Earth. Suppose at some future time spacemen find a body of water there. Could they float in the lightweight water?

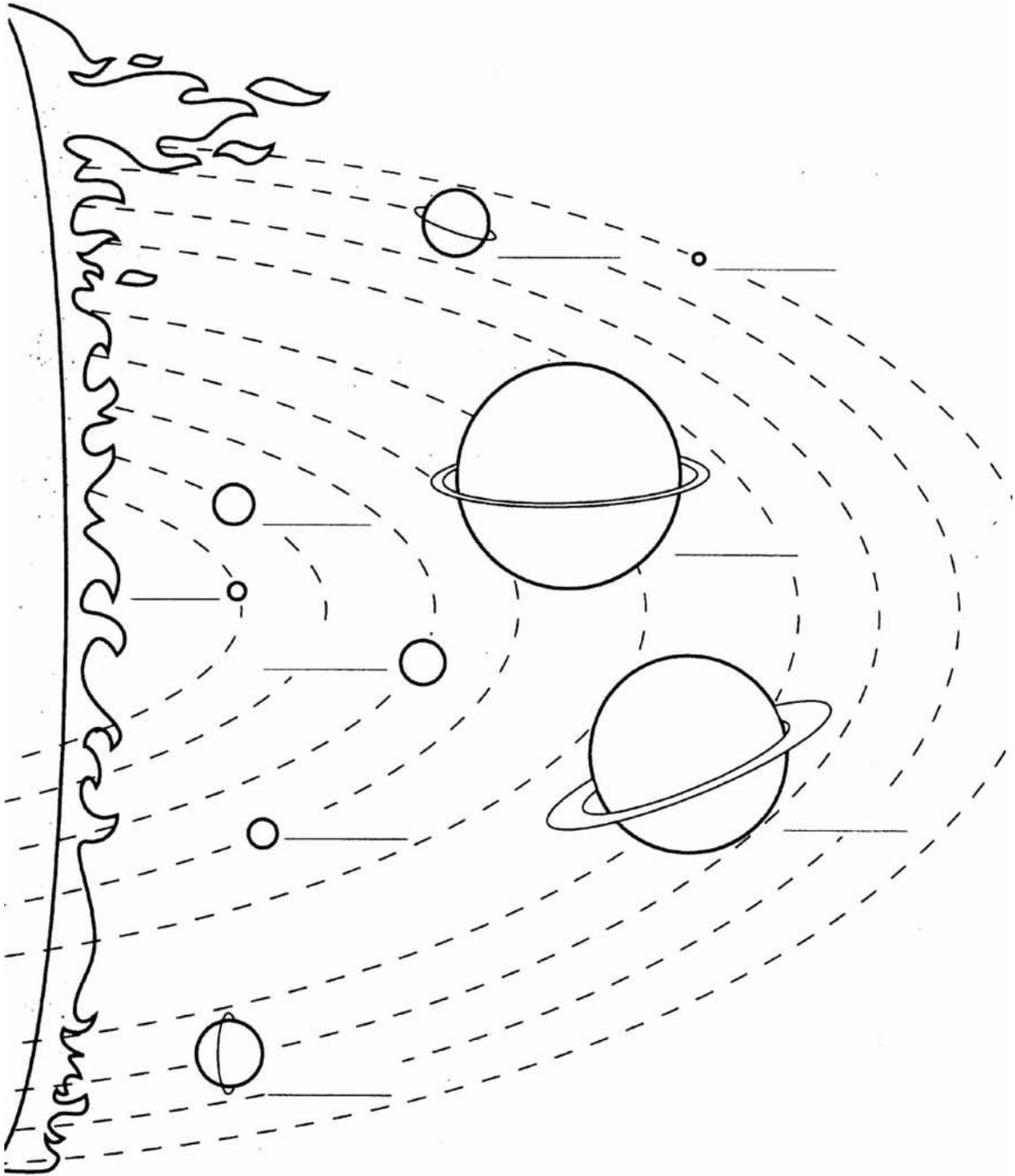
**A.** Floating in Moon water would be possible. A spaceman would displace his own weight in it, for both he and the water would be one sixth as heavy as on Earth.

## **The Pretty Girl Problem**

**Q.** When is a pretty girl like a barge loaded with onions? Give up?

**A.** The girl and the barge are alike when they float, for both lose all their weight.

# Name the Planets



# Astronomy

**BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE, discuss the following vocabulary:**

Axis – an imaginary line that passes through Earth’s center and its’ North & South poles

Eclipse – the passing of one object in space through the shadow of another

Gravitation – the force that pulls all objects in the universe toward one another

Orbit – the path one body in space takes as it revolves around another body

Reflection – the light energy that bounces off objects

Revolve – to travel in a closed path around an object

Rotate – the spinning of the Earth on its’ axis, the moon also spins or rotates on its’ axis

Revolve – to travel in a closed path around an object

Rotate – the spinning of the Earth on its’ axis, the moon also spins or rotates on its’ axis

Universe – everything that exists – planets, stars, dust, gases and energy

**AFTER THE PERFORMANCE...**

**Science: SC.E.1.1 The student knows that the light reflected by the moon looks a little different everyday but looks the same again about every 28 days.**

1. Take a look at a moon calendar and discuss the different phases of the moon.
2. Have students describe Lippo’s amazing solar adventure.
3. Have the students draw pictures of Lippo’s ride around the sun.
4. Create your own planet or star – design, name and color it.

**Science: SC.E.1.2 The student knows that the combination of the Earth’s movement and the moon’s own orbit around the Earth results in the appearance of cyclical phases of the moon. The student understands that our sun is one of many stars in our galaxy.**

1. Have students discuss what facts they remember from the Franzini Family’s Astronomy Act, such as “the speed of light”.
2. The moon has given many people ideas for songs. Work as a group to write new songs about the moon using a tune that is familiar to the students.
3. Make up stories and myths to explain eclipses. For example, a myth might say that a dragon, alligator or wolf ate the moon and spit it out again.
4. Discuss the phases of the moon and their relationship to math and science.
5. Make up your own star and draw a picture showing its’ color and type.

## SCIENCE CIRCUS - VOCABULARY

1. **Circus** - a big show put on by acrobats, clowns, jugglers and trained animals, usually performed under a tent.
2. **Clown** - a comic performer in a circus who tells jokes, does tricks or humorous stunts and usually wears a red nose.
3. **Juggler** - a person who keeps two or more objects in the air by alternately tossing and catching them.
4. **Mime** - to act out or play a part with movements of the face and body, with out speaking.
5. **Magic** - the use of sleight of hand and other tricks to produce entertaining and baffling effects
6. **Magician** - an entertainer who performs tricks of magic.
7. **Galileo** - a 16<sup>th</sup> century Italian who defined gravity as a force that pulls objects to the earth.
8. **Newton** - a 17th century Englishman who put the laws of gravity into mathematical terms.
9. **Einstein** - a 20th century scientist who talked about gravity as the 4th dimension of time & space.
10. **Gravity** - is a force, the mutual attraction between two objects of mass.
11. **Dynamics** - the study of the ways in which objects react to force.
12. **Equilibrium** - when an object is at rest or static.
13. **Force** - a power, an influence, a strength
14. **Inertia** - the tendency of an object at rest to stay at rest & an object of motion to keep moving.
15. **Circular Motion** - movement produced when an object is acted on by a force that starts in the center of the object.
16. **Unicycle** - a one-wheeled vehicle propelled by pedals.

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**Meet Lipi and Lizi Franzini**

**Lipi Franzini** (Stewart Lippe) graduated from Florida State University with his B.A. in Art History and M.A. in Photography. Stewart extended his studies of art History in Florence, Italy. He attended the San Francisco Art Institute receiving an M.F.A. in Cinematography. Stewart has produced and directed award winning education films, recognized by three grants from the Fine Arts Council of Florida. He has continued his film interested with the famed Florida director, Victor Nunez and was involved with the production of the award winning film, "Ulee's Gold" starring Peter Fonda. Stewart toured throughout the southeast with The Arabian Nightclub Revue. He has performed for Busch Gardens, Epcot Center and is currently performing as ropewalker and juggler in the Key West Pavilion at the Orlando Sea World and juggler at the St. Petersburg Pier. Stewart is the founder of the Society for the Preservation of Vaudeville, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the narrative and archival histories of Vaudeville and Circus Arts. He has been the Assistant Director of Circus Smirkus, a youth touring tent show in New England since 1987. In 1990, Stewart was invited to train with the Moscow Circus, performing at circus arenas in Russia and the Ukraine. In 1992, he juggled in a national television commercial for Ace Hardware Stores. He has also been featured as a fire-eater in a Disney Studios promotional for the film, Aladdin.

**Lizi Franzini** (Pat Fenda) received her B.S. Ed. from Ohio University and a M.A. in dance from Florida State University, where she began her study of mime. Pat toured the southeast with the Mad Mountain Mime troupe in 1974-75. In 1976-77, Pat taught and performed for the Magic Mountain Mime School and directed the Homemade Mime Troupe of South Carolina. She was awarded a grant to continue her study of mime from the Fine Arts Council of Florida in 1978. In 1990, Pat toured with Dr. Tom & Seus Mime Theatre in South Carolina and New Jersey. She has taught dance or mime at Ohio University, Florida State University, St. Leo College and Eckerd College. She has choreographed numerous productions including "Jesus Christ Superstar", "Our Town", "Stop the World I Want to Get Off", "Little Shop of Horrors" and "X Cheerleaders Wanted". She attended the 1989 Movement Theatre International Festival and the 1991 International Clown Theatre Congress in Philadelphia. Pat was a featured belly dancer at Busch Gardens from 1982-85. She has appeared statewide at corporate events, malls and private parties. Pat received critical acclaims for her co-starring role in "The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe" in 1994 and "The Heidi Chronicles" in 1995. Pat is the president of Strictly Entertainment, Inc. a Florida licensed talent agency founded in 1984. In 1999, Pat juggled at the Tampa Bay Devil Ray Family Fun Days. She continues to perform many different theatrical characters and is seen regularly at the St. Petersburg Pier.