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ONE BIG FAMILY, UNDER ONE BIG TENT

Is the entourage of a traveling circus really "one big, happy family," as legend holds, or does the coming together of sixty performers from a dozen different nations spell instant discord? Despite artistic temperaments and an occasional flare-up of "sibling" rivalry, the cast members of the Cole Bros. Circus really act "just like family," according to Ringmaster Chris Connors, "living in a small, very special environment."

We're there for each other in times of trouble, Chris states, as well as when it's time to get together and have fun. Performers gather under the Circus Big Top for birthday parties, to attend baby showers, and even celebrate weddings. "What the average circus-goer doesn't realize is that our circus family inhabits a community where the circus midway is Main Street, and the portable, football field-sized tent transforms itself according to the needs of our population." The tent provides a study hall for circus kids, a recreation center for all of our extended family, and even a church where Roman Catholic circus Chaplain Father Jerry Hogan can celebrate Mass on Sunday mornings before scheduled performances.

"The Big Top is definitely the heart of our mobile community," explains Connors, "and our circus family puts it on loan every day, giving performances so that people along the circus route can bring their families to visit our home and experience the magic of the circus. And we entertain them in first-class fashion!"

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