

When children visit Playland, Richard imagines that the children will enter the office building unaware of where they are or what they are doing at a bleak office in El Cerrito. Their adventure will begin when Richard greets them in his usual Disney sweatshirt and shorts. Leading the kids into the first room, Richard will tell them that they are going to help him clean. The kids will be disappointed for a moment and wonder why they came all this way to help a man clean. Then Richard will quickly open the door to the kitchen and the children will begin to smell the pizza, candy, and cake. The kids will become curious and Richard will show them the delicious sugary treats and surprise them with a personal tour of Playland, Not at the Beach. As they begin to explore the museum, smiles will spread across their faces as they receive pleasant fortunes from Esmeralda the Playland's fortune-teller and begin treasure hunts. They will ooh and aah at Lovely Lucy the Fiji Mermaid, a half mermaid-half woman side-show and gaze at the world's largest miniature circus.

The miniature circus is made up of 300,000 pieces of hand carved wooden circus figures. This circus fell into Richard's hands a few years ago when a woman called him and asked him to help her sick and depressed husband. Richard agreed to help, unaware of what he would be able to do. Richard met a man named Don Marcks who he would later call his best friend. The unique thing about Don was that he loved the circus. When Don was growing up he and his father hand-carved the 300,000 wooden piece circus and even published a magazine for circus performers. Richard soon became best friends with Don and before Don's death, Richard took Don to see every circus that came into town. The story of the miniature circus began when Don Marcks was a child with scarlet fever. He

and his family were quarantined. During the quarantine, Don's father wanted him to have a toy to play with. He chopped down a tree in their backyard, and carved a toy for Don. When Don got better, he and his father took up the hobby of carving the pieces to a miniature circus. Carving elephants, horses, and hundreds and hundreds of other circus figures took more than fifty years. When Don passed away, he gave the circus to Richard to put in his museum.

After seeing the beautiful circus, many of the guests will try their luck at the penny arcade, the County Fair Midway, and the Coney Island Pinball Museum. Everyone will win and receive prizes falling from the ceiling. The visitors may also get to meet the world's lightest ele-

phant carved by Don and his father. Some will be frightened in the Dark Mystery and the spooky Haunted Manor as they encounter creatures like Mort the Spook. They will visit Santa's Village and Limbo to see a small North Pole and miniature Halloween surprises. After they are done exploring the circus and seeing the amazing displays and rooms, they will be wished goodbye and return home. At this time, Richard will probably return to his extraordinary home in El Cerrito. When Richard purchased his home, he wanted it to be different from all of the other homes on the street, so he began putting his personal touches on the home— and some touches they were! Richard and his two friends and employees, Frank and Tim, enjoy their own arcade, home movie theater, stage for magic shows

and secret passageways spread throughout the house. But Richard doesn't just share his crazy home and 18,000 movie collection with just Frank and Tim. His home is visited by an average of 3,000 people each year. People flood into his home to share a meal, attend one of his famous parties, take a tour of his legendary house, or even crash on the couch for awhile.

For several months, Richard even had an entire cast of circus performers stay at his house! But this wasn't just any circus. It was Richard's very own circus, Circus Chimera. Richard attended the Circus Chimera and really enjoyed the production. During the intermission, Richard began talking to the director and telling him how much he enjoyed it. The director then told Richard that the circus was going to have to close. Richard was heartbroken and decided to buy the circus. Now Richard is the proud owner of the amazing Circus Chimera. Circus Chimera is made up entirely of people from third world countries. They perform tricks such as changing costumes in the blink-of-an-eye and riding motorcycles around and around in a large ball. Richard invited all of the performers to Thanksgiving dinner, and the 100-member cast

ended up staying until Valentine's Day! He spends a lot of time with the circus and they regularly have parties after every show. Taking them to one of his favorite places was also one of Richard's highlights with the performers. He surprised them by taking them to Disneyland. Out of the 100 performers, none had ever been to Disneyland, and only three of the performers had even heard of Disneyland!

We left PlayLand with smiles on our faces as we didn't know grown-ups could love the things we love so much— the circus, games, toys, candy and Disneyland. Richard Tuck really is a 12-year-old boy at heart — with a sense of adventure and caring for others like no one else!

