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Theatrical curtains frame the activity inside the Circus Cafe on Broadway in Saratoga Springs on Thursday. The restaurant is one of 44 area eateries that will be participating in 'Dining out for Life,' a fundraiser for the AIDS Council of Northeastern New York held Thursday.

'Dining Out' with flair

Circus Cafe marks six years of service, joins charity event

By **DOUG GRUSE**
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Most circuses pull into town, offer a few thrilling performances and then pack up the brightly colored big top as quickly as they arrived.

The Circus Cafe, however, is around for a permanent engagement of culinary thrills.

Celebrating its sixth anniversary on Saturday, the playful restaurant has become a popular attraction on Broadway, and its owners are as committed to Saratoga Springs as their diners are to the eatery's family-friendly fare.

"Part of our success I attribute to how we give back to the community," said Christel MacLean, who co-owns Circus Cafe with her husband, Colin.

The restaurant is one of several regional businesses taking part in

DINING OUT FOR LIFE

The seventh annual Dining Out for Life, a fundraiser for the AIDS Council of Northeastern New York, is Thursday at venues across the Capital District. For more information, go to www.aidsCouncil.org.

Local restaurants participating include:

Saratoga Springs

- ◆ Circus Cafe (lunch, dinner and cocktails)
- ◆ Hattie's Restaurant (dinner)
- ◆ Longfellow's Restaurant, Hotel & Conference Center (lunch and dinner)
- ◆ Mexican Connection (dinner)
- ◆ Olde Bryan Inn (lunch and dinner)
- ◆ One Caroline Street Bistro (dinner)
- ◆ The Stadium Cafe (lunch and dinner)

- ◆ Tiznow Restaurant (dinner and cocktails)

Glens Falls

- ◆ GG Mama's Restaurant and Catering (lunch and dinner)

Circus Cafe

Circus Cafe, 392 Broadway, is open for lunch and dinner seven days a week.

The restaurant will celebrate its sixth anniversary on Saturday, starting with a happy hour from 4 to 7 p.m. featuring drink specials, live music, giveaways and complimentary appetizers at the bar.

For more information, go to www.circuscafe.com or call 583-1106.

Dining Out for Life on Thursday. The fundraiser, a benefit for the AIDS Council of Northeastern New York, helps the nonprofit service organization assist clients in upstate

New York.

"This is one of our favorite events," MacLean said. "It's not just us giving — it's the community helping us give. It's everyone coming

together. The community is coming out and saying, 'We want to help you help this cause!'"

The restaurant will donate 25 percent of its take from the entire day, both lunch and dinner service, to the charity.

"Last year it was pretty packed. The event definitely brought in a ton of people," MacLean said. "Some of our regulars came, but also we had people who made the trip up from Albany or down from the north."

In addition to the AIDS Council, the restaurant also supports a number of other local organizations, including the Double H Hole in the Woods Ranch and SaratogaArtsFest.

"It's who we are, and we love it. It really works for us," MacLean said of the couple's involvement in the community.

Greatest show

Walking down Broadway, it's hard to miss the bright yellow-and-red awning that welcomes newcomers to the Circus Cafe.

A favorite downtown destination,