

《全球小丑协会举办一年一度大会》

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Children compete as more than 230 clowns from around the world join the World Clowning Association annual convention in Northbrook, Illinois.

These children don a red nose, make-up and a pair of oversized shoes. But this is an art pursued more as a labour of love of laughs these days than for a living.

"There's a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow if you want to be on TV or in the movies, maybe in theatre or on Broadway, but there never, ever, will be a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow for a clown or someone who is in the circus. So you have to do it because it's from your heart. So to instil that in a young person right now, to inspire them, I think it's our job," said Barry Lubin, Int'l Clown Hall of Fame Recipient.



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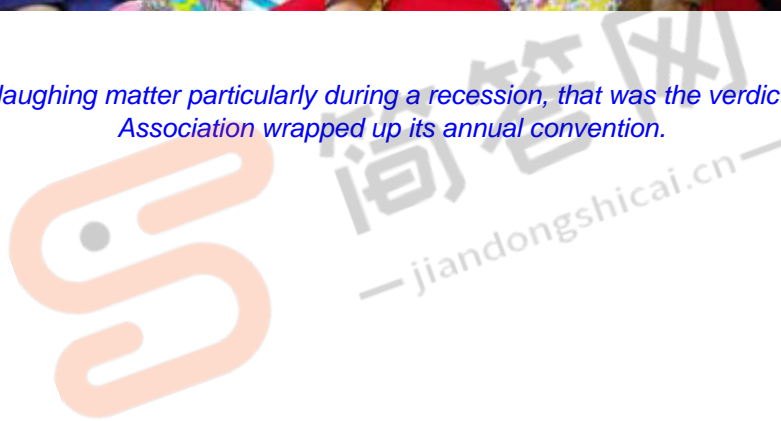
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There are very few clowns who work full time anymore, according to the World Clown Association. The organization touts 2,500 members worldwide, a nearly 30 percent decline since 2004. Most are over 40. But the good news is the younger generation are joining in. 12 year-old Garron Chalmers has been clowning since the age of 3.

"My favourite thing about clowning is being able to do the puppets and I really like spinning plates and practically any other juggling thing that involves spinning. It's a thing that you can do with your family to, well, get a better connection, because there may not be an object that your entire family is interested in. But clowning there are so many different parts to it, that everybody can find something they enjoy about it," said Garron Chalmers.



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Many people believe laughter really is the best medicine. And for Laura Green, who has five children involved in clowning, the skill also has other benefits.

"They're learning a very unique skill set. It does, it brings us closer as a family. It's fun, it's work too, it really is work. But it's fun!" said Laura Green, parent.

The convention helps keep clowns in touch with one another at a time when many cannot practice their craft full-time. Many are volunteers or use the clown skills they've accrued for other professions, such as public speaking or

stand-up comedy.

There are also seminars on a wide variety of clowning skills here, face painting, magic, juggling, handling props, and developing skits.

