



"Empowering Youth Through Multimedia"

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SPY HOP STUDENT FILM ACCEPTED INTO 2007 SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

Salt Lake City, UT – The Sundance Film Festival announced *Mother Superior* as an Official Selection. *Mother Superior*, a short film exploring the impact of methamphetamine use among women with children in Utah, was produced and directed by two emerging filmmakers Alex Mack (19 years old) and Diana Montero (20 years old) through Spy Hop Productions' Pitch-Nic Young Writer/Director program. This film competed with 4,445 other submissions for one of the 71 coveted short film spots that will screen during the annual festival, slated to run January 18-28, 2007 in Park City, Salt Lake City, Ogden, and the Sundance Resort.

Mother Superior is the first Spy Hop student-produced film to be selected for Sundance and introduces the youngest filmmakers in the 2007 festival. The film was created during Spy Hop's year long Pitch-Nic Young Writer/Director Program in 2004 and 2005. The program was conceived in 2002 as an innovative way to unite talented passionate, young filmmakers with supporters of independent filmmaking. Alex and Diana underwent the intensive year-long workshop with the guidance of professional mentor Jack Allred. At the time of production, Alex Mack and Diana Montero were only 17 and 19 years of age, respectively. Diana was equipped with some production experience having just concluded Reel Stories: Sundance Institute's youth documentary workshop at Spy Hop Productions. Alex, on the other hand, had very limited experience; *Mother Superior* was to be her film debut. Both young women are Salt Lake valley natives. During the making of the film, Alex was finishing up her senior year at West High School and Diana had just graduated from Hillcrest High and was enrolled in Salt Lake Community College.

The young filmmakers took on a challenging subject but one pertinent to their community. Utah has the third highest rate of meth use in the nation, the majority of users being women with children. *Mother Superior* explores the impact of meth on mothers in Utah, investigating both the factors that initially push women to use, as well as the long-term effects it has on them as individuals, their families, and the larger community. The film has definitely struck a nerve. Since its first screening at the 2005 Pitch-Nic Premiere, *Mother Superior* has been invited to show at half a dozen rehab clinics across the West, the Salt Lake County Jail, local community gatherings, and film festivals coast to coast. These festivals include the Los Angeles Film Festival 2006; T Tauri Film Festival 2006; Ojai Film Festival 2006; and Hamptons International Film Festival 2006. This August, Alex and Diana were personally thanked by Governor Huntsman for the positive impact their film has had in educating the community about the growing meth epidemic. Upon learning that the film had been accepted into the 2007 Sundance Film Festival, a flustered and excited Alex Mack could only really say, "I can't even believe that this is happening to me. And it's exciting. And I'm glad." Jack Allred, the Spy Hop mentor who coached Alex and Diana through the making of their film, commented, "Filmmaker's spend their entire careers trying to get into Sundance. Someone please explain to me how a 17 year old's first film got accepted. As excited as Alex is for this news, I don't know if she has yet comprehended the scope of this achievement." Being accepted into the

2007 Sundance Film Festival is a true triumph for these young women and a real testament to the talent, creativity, and thoughtfulness alive on our local youth community.

Spy Hop Productions is a not-for-profit youth media arts and educational enrichment center located in the historic Art Space district of downtown Salt Lake City. Its mission is to cultivate the visions and voices of an emerging generation via the big screen, the airwaves, and the world-wide-web. Spy Hop offers programs in filmmaking, web and graphic design, and audio production. Since its inception in 1999, Spy Hop has served more than 10,000 young people from all backgrounds in the Wasatch community and with the help of professional mentors, the work produced by Spy Hop's young artists has reached a national audience in the millions.

To view a trailer of the film please visit <http://www.spyhop.org/programs/pitchnic2005.html>.

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