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'REEL STORIES' INTRODUCES LOCAL YOUTH TO DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE AND SPY HOP PRODUCTIONS ANNOUNCE THIS YEAR'S YOUTH DOCUMENTARY WORKSHOP

Salt Lake City, UT – Sundance Institute and Spy Hop Productions have announced this year's **REEL STORIES: SUNDANCE INSTITUTE'S YOUTH DOCUMENTARY WORKSHOP AT SPY HOP PRODUCTIONS**. REEL STORIES is an intensive three-week program for 11 young Utah filmmakers. During the program, participants will work with award-winning documentary filmmakers and media professionals to create their own short documentary films. REEL STORIES will be held June 17 – July 11 at Spy Hop's modern youth media facilities in Salt Lake City's historic ArtSpace District. The resulting short films will be featured in a special free screening on July 14 at The Auditorium at the City Library (210 S 400 E) at 6:30 pm. REEL STORIES is part of Sundance Institute's **Arts & Audiences Utah Initiative**.

REEL STORIES introduces 11 students to the world of non-fiction filmmaking in a professional and encouraging environment. Using digital cameras and computer editing systems provided by Spy Hop, each participant will plan, write, shoot, edit, and produce a short documentary film. Topics that will be covered during the workshop include how to pitch story ideas, camera and sound basics, interview tips, ethics in documentary filmmaking, editing with a point of view, story development, and media literacy. Under the mentorship of award-winning documentary filmmakers and media professionals, participants will explore the boundaries of their creativity, take artistic risks, and experience the different challenges and aspects of documentary filmmaking. The program emphasizes the importance of documentary filmmaking as an art form, and as a vehicle for self-expression.

This year's 11 REEL STORIES participants are: Nefi Alarcon, Highland High School; Isabella Bravo, Hillcrest High School; Erika Cohn, Skyline High School; Matt Cunliffe, Bingham High School; Marc Hunter, Riverton High School; Diana Montero, Hillcrest High School; Shanalee Otanez, Granger High School; Wendy Pousima, Horizonte High School; Rebecca Robertson, Provo High School; Veronica Sanchez, Ogden High School; and Marcela Torres, Murray High School.

"REEL STORIES is celebrating its fifth year and has grown substantially since its inception. This year we have expanded the program's reach beyond the borders of Salt Lake County to include participants from surrounding counties," Meredith Lavitt, Associate Director, Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program, who oversees the REEL STORIES workshop. "REEL STORIES is a unique program that allows us to share our resources with young, local filmmakers as they explore the power of documentary filmmaking. We're looking forward to working with this diverse group as they develop and tell their stories."

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"This program is an amazing opportunity for local youth. Combining Sundance Institute's great resources with Spy Hop's dynamic youth media studio always results in the production of compelling stories," Rick Wray, Co-Executive Director, Spy Hop Productions explained. "The Reel Stories experience is such an empowering process, the students are able to experience every aspect of creating a film, from production to storytelling to watching their finished documentaries on the big screen."

This year, filmmakers Sam Green, director of Academy Award-nominated *The Weather Underground*, which screened in Documentary Competition at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival and Megan Mylan, co-director of the critically acclaimed *The Lost Boys of Sudan*, which was supported in part by the Sundance Institute Documentary Fund and received the "Truer than Fiction Award" at this year's Independent Spirit Awards will each conduct one-day workshops on story development and the language of editing, respectively. Following each workshop, the filmmaker will conduct a one-on-one session with each of the participants, providing critical feedback on their individual films. Films from past workshops have gone on to screen on HBO Family, as part of PBS' "Listen Up!" series, and at numerous film festivals including: Museum of Television and Radio Docu-Jam, MNN Youth Channel National Series, and the IFP Los Angeles Film Festival. Instructors for this year's workshop are Matt Bradley, Documentary Program Director at Spy Hop Productions, who has been instructing documentary workshops for the past 4 years, and Jesse Epstein, a New York based documentary filmmaker with extensive experience teaching documentary and media workshops for youth.

REEL STORIES is made possible through the generous support of the Salt Lake County Zoo, Arts and Parks Program, National Endowment for the Arts, and George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation.

Spy Hop Productions is a not-for-profit youth media and educational enrichment center founded in 1999. Located in the historic ArtSpace district of downtown Salt Lake City, the agency is one of the leading youth media centers in the country and offers quality after-school education and mentor-based training in digital media production including film and video, sound engineering, and web technology. Through hands-on and project-based programs, youth participants gain measurable improvements in media literacy, problem solving, communication, and critical thinking. The agency's mission is to cultivate the visions and voices of an emerging generation via the big screen, the airwaves, and the world-wide-web and committed to providing unparalleled opportunities for youth to explore career options, gain sense of community, and learn to communicate ideas and experiences in a creative and constructive manner. Spy Hop Productions gratefully acknowledges the generous assistance provided by Anonymous Foundation, the Catalyst Foundation, Citigroup Foundation, Salt Lake City Arts Council, Sam Viersen Family Foundation, Sherman Family Foundation, SJ and Jessie E. Quinney Foundation, and Stephen & Susan Denkers Family Foundation. Spy Hop Productions also recognizes the generous support provided by its Board of Trustees and by contributors to the Spy Hop Annual Giving Campaign Fund.

Sundance Institute's **Arts & Audiences Utah Initiative** focuses on year-round community outreach with the goal of sharing the Institute's national and international resources with the residents of Utah. Arts & Audiences Utah provides diverse opportunities for citizens to engage in the creative work supported by the Institute. These initiatives are designed not only to continue to enhance the cultural life of the local community, but to also promote a greater understanding and appreciation for the arts and the role of artists; encourage dialogue on challenging issues such as freedom of expression, race, ethnicity, and civil liberties; and infuse the creative process into daily life. The Arts & Audiences Utah Initiative is made up of many programs, including: Reel Stories: Sundance Institute's Youth Documentary Workshop at Spy Hop Productions, Exposure Documentary Film Series, Sundance Outdoor Film Festival, Community and High School Screenings at the Festival, Best of Festival, The Sundance Institute Producer's Conference, and year-round volunteer opportunities.

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Founded by Robert Redford in 1981, Sundance Institute is dedicated to the development of artists of independent vision and the exhibition of their new work. Since its inception, the Institute has grown into an internationally recognized resource for filmmakers and other artists. Sundance Institute conducts national and international labs for filmmakers, screenwriters, composers, writers, and theater artists. The annual Sundance Film Festival, a major program of Sundance Institute, is held each January and is considered the premier showcase for American and international independent film. The Institute supports non-fiction filmmakers through the Documentary Film Program by providing year-round support through the Sundance Documentary Fund and a series of programs, which nurture their growth, encourage the exploration of innovative nonfiction storytelling, and promote the exhibition of documentary films to a broader audience. Through the Sundance Institute Theatre Program, the Institute is committed to invigorating the national theater movement with original and creative work and to nurturing the diversity of artistic expression among theater artists. The Institute also maintains The Sundance Collection at UCLA, a unique archive of independent film.

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