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Ute Mountain Ute Tribe Youth Present "ESCAPE"

Subhead: A Native American Youth Short Narrative Film in Partnership with FYI Films

Los Angeles, CA: Imagine you are a young person living in a community where the poverty rate is 40%, where alcoholism, tobacco use and juvenile crime are rampant, and your community is overwhelmed by many other health, social and economic issues. Just for a moment, put yourself in the shoes of that young person trying to grow up in such a community. You might feel hopeless or even depressed thinking about your future. But instead, the youth of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe decided to take a more positive approach by learning filmmaking to tell their stories of life on the reservation to help lift them up and inspire other youth to make different choices. Their first short film, called "Escape", is scheduled to premiere October 4 in Cortez at the Sunflower Theatre and October 6 in Durango at the Gaslight Theater. The film centers around two misfit teens who are tempted to end their lives in order to escape their harsh and oppressive circumstances. The youth's courage in telling the story is mind-blowing. They address critical issues that they deal with on a daily basis. "Escape" addresses extremely sensitive topics in a very engaging manner such as teen violence, poverty, substance abuse, bullying, homophobia, and domestic abuse.



Photo by Anthony Two Moons

During a two week period this summer, seventeen youth participated in a film workshop directed by award-winning filmmaker Alex Munoz, Founder and Creative Director of Films by Youth Inside. While his previous work has focused on incarcerated youth, Munoz agreed to customize the film production workshop for Native American youth on the Reservation and the results were amazing. "I'd put some of these young actors in a Hollywood film in a heartbeat", said Munoz after seeing their acting performances on the big screen. With no previous experience prior to the workshop, these youth learned to write scripts; perform the roles; design costumes, make-up and movie sets; record sound; photograph and film, and direct a motion picture film using state of the art professional equipment donated by Sony Pictures Entertainment and Seagate Technology. We are grateful for the support of the Sunflower Theatre for sponsoring the Cortez screening.



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Funding for the project was provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs/Office of Justice Services, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and Center for Rural Outreach & Public Services. Tickets are available by invitation only and can be obtained from the youth of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe or calling Beverly Santicola at 866-843-3493. For more info on FYI films visit www.filmsbyyouthinside.org.

