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Spy Hop: Writing Our Future

Apr 25th 2014

By Linsy Hunsaker

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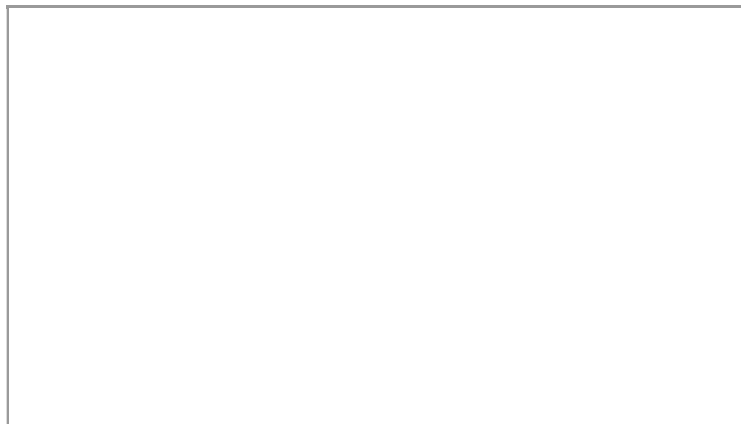


Executive Director Kasandra VerBruggen at Spy Hop, photo by Adam Finkle

Spy Hop (<http://spyhop.org>) blew the roof off the Infinity Center (<http://infinityeventcenter.com>) at their annual benefit on April 24, celebrating 15 years of awesomeness.

Spy Hop is an after school program for kids ages 7–19. They teach technical skills like video editing, game design and audio engineering, but also non-technical skills like responsibility and communication.

All proceeds from the benefit went to support their innovative programs.



Even Handed, by Spy Hop students

The night started with a silent auction of local goods and services, like a membership to Red Butte (<http://www2.redbuttegarden.org>) and tasting for two at Tony Caputo's (<http://www.caputosdeli.com>). There was even a raffle for a date with a roller derby girl (<http://www.wasatchrollerderby.com/>).

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The party was upbeat and swanky, with open bar and food provided by local restaurants like Red Iguana (<http://www.rediguana.com>). Attendees ate, mingled, bid, and had their tarot cards read while the Spy Hop band Alchemy (<https://soundcloud.com/spy-hop-production/sets/alchemy-2014-musical-ogy-band-1>) performed.

Following the silent auction, executive director Kasandra VerBruggen ushered in the live auction with an inspirational video. "It's more than giving a high five or words of encouragement," VerBruggen says, "It takes commitment, understanding, passion, and patience. It takes time."

And—not to be too sappy about it—that's what Spy Hop does. They inspire kids to follow their dreams and give them the tools to do it.



Guests raise their numbers to support SpyHop, photo by Katie Nielson

The live auction didn't have your run-of-the-mill competitive bidding. Everyone who raised their number donated to one of Spy Hop's programs (<http://spyhop.org/programs/general-info-2/>). Donations ranged from \$25 to well into the thousands.

The auction was interspersed with inspirational stories and upcoming projects, like new student films (<http://spyhop.org/4-new-pitchnic-films/>) funded by the event.

Louise Holbrook, Loud & Clear Youth Radio (<http://spyhop.org/student-work/?s=loud+%26+clear>) DJ, said that at Spy Hop she's learned to not let her past define her future. "I am no longer ashamed of who I am," she says, "whoever that person may be."

For more on Spy Hop (<http://spyhop.org>), check out our spotlight on Kasandra VerBruggen in the May issue of *SLMag*.

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