

Professionals share advice with locals

Park Record (Park City, UT) - Friday, August 29, 2008

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Many kids who grow up with Park City in their backyard aren't content sitting in the audience, watching this year's latest snowboard movie premiere; their ideas are bigger than that. Many young kids have launched successful athletic careers from the mountains that surround Park City, and even more kids have dreams of becoming professional athletes. Not all kids in Park City want to be athletes though. The annual Sundance Film Festival and film production programs at local schools also inspire many students who want to become filmmakers, explained Jake Topkis, filmmaker and Park City High School (PCHS) graduate.

Local kids and adults were treated to a free snowboard movie premiere under the stars at the Town Lift Plaza on Tuesday night. Without a doubt, some of the youngsters in the audience left dreaming about starring in or producing a similar film someday.

Before the movie premiere, film producer Jim Mangan and many of the riders featured in the film were on hand, signing autographs and talking with kids. A few of them had some advice to share about getting through school, being an athlete, and how to make a successful movie.

Erin Comstock, a professional snowboarder, emphasized the importance of an education. "Injury can happen at anytime," she explained. Comstock said that kids really need to take their reading and writing classes seriously because in a lot of interviews of young athletes she reads, "they just sound stupid." Comstock explained that she thinks students need to learn how to read and write in school, then learning about subjects such as history and geography will come outside of school when kids travel and have real-life experiences. Stevie Bell, a professional snowboarder who grew up in Salt Lake City said that kids, "just have to graduate, there's no way around it."

Aaron Bittner, a professional snowboarder from Salt Lake City, offered his advice to kids and teachers who are working to balance classes and sports during the school year. Bittner thinks that kids should be able to work out a class schedule that allows them to take advantage of the recreation opportunities in Park City, but only if they keep their grades up. Comstock said that kids who have a hard time juggling school and sports should look into taking classes online during the winter.

Bittner offered advice to those who look up to his status as a professional athlete. He said, "Don't ever think of it that way [trying to get paid], you just have to have

fun, then the success and sponsorships will come." He said that young people should be grateful for any support that shops or companies offer them, but getting sponsored or going pro shouldn't be the focus.

Bell offered advice to local kids on both sides of the camera, "Get a crew together, work hard, make a name for yourself, find a good filmer, then be persistent talking to shops who might sell your movie." Bell said the cameraman often becomes the motivator, they have to be prepared to get their subjects outside and excited everyday.

Jim Mangan, Director of Action Sports Marketing at Park City Mountain Resort (PCMR) and "I Ride Park City" producer also spoke to aspiring young filmmakers. Mangan produced his first film, "City. Park City" in 2006, then went to film school before returning with his sophomore effort, "I Ride Park City."

Mangan says that it's all about being creative. He tells kids to get together with friends, share ideas, watch the other films that are out there, and don't forget that everyone has a different approach to filmmaking. He said that after you have the camera and editing software, everything comes alive. "Don't forget about the lifestyle shots," he points out, adding that you have to capture the moment and make it interesting by showing every aspect of what you're doing, not just the action shot.

Also, he said that he watches a lot of films, snowboarding, skiing, Hollywood, and independently produced. He said he tries to absorb the film by paying attention to everything from general concept to camera angles.

According to Paula Altschuler at Park City Mountain Resort, more than 1,000 people attended the premiere of "I Ride Park City," a snowboard movie that was filmed entirely in Park City, and stars Olympic gold medalist Shaun White. Mangan said that he got into filming snowboard films to do something that hadn't been done, by bringing a stronger production element into his films.

The audience was treated to a lot of local flavor. After viewing the film, 1995 Park City High School (PCHS) graduate Scott Verone said that it was great to see the mountain he skied his entire life captured on film.

Mangan said that he wanted to showcase Park City and illustrate the town and mountain together as a single entity by including shots of well-known landmarks such as the Egyptian Theater and the famous white barn. The film can be purchased at www.pcrider.com/winter.