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Palm Springs High School Graduate to Produce Film in Palm Springs

*Cindy Uken, Palm Springs Public Information Coordinator
Reader Submitted*

The City of Palm Springs Skate Park and Palm Springs High School will take center stage today, serving as the backdrop for a feature-length film that will include such stars as newcomer Jillian Murray; Aubrey O'Day of La Quinta who recently won the "Making the Band" competition; Trini Lopez, who is most famous for his rendition of "La Bamba;" and Talen Torriero, who stars in "Laguna Beach."

But the name that could trump every star's name - at least locally - is that of the producer, Kris Cvijetic, one of Palm Springs' native sons and a 2000 Palm Springs High School graduate. The 25-year-old is one of the masterminds behind, "American High School," which begins filming in Beverly Hills on Saturday and Sunday before the movie crew moves into Palm Springs. His goal is to have the film wrapped in time to premiere at the Palm Springs International Film Festival in January.

"Coming back to the place where I grew up, and receiving the support of Palm Springs, means a lot to me," Cvijetic said. "It's amazing to me to see how the City of Palm Springs is opening its doors to me. I want Palm Springs to be recognized for giving back to a local guy, to someone who grew up in the desert."

Cvijetic, who now lives in Sherman Oaks, graduated in September 2006 from the American Film Institute Conservatory with a Master's Degree in producing. Cvijetic's friend, Sean Cannon, 25, of New Jersey, is writing and directing the film. It's not the first project on which the two have cooperated; the pair worked in tandem on a project while attending the American Film Institute Conservancy.

"It was really important that I went out and made a film within a year of graduating to meet my own personal goals," Cvijetic said. "Both Sean and I have the mindset that we will make this movie no matter what, even if we have to do it with credit cards."

"American High School," a romantic comedy, is centered on two people who marry young and contend with the consequences of "bad" actions. Moreover, it is a story about a young, frightened girl who tries to break away from her father, find peace with her husband, and find peace within. In a world that expects everything from her, being herself was the last thing on her mind. When pushed to the breaking point, she discovers her own self-worth. But is it too late?

A native of the desert, Cvijetic knows firsthand that activity in this tourist-driven City is vital to its economic vitality and took that into account when deciding to film here. He wanted to do what he could to contribute financially to the City.

"It makes Palm Springs exciting in summer," Cvijetic said with a smile. "As soon as Mayor Ron Oden heard about us making the movie, he extended us the courtesy of a meeting. So many people dream about making a film - we have an opportunity not many people have."

In addition to the City's Skate Park and the High School, the crew will also film in Cvijetic's parents' homes in Palm Springs and Desert Hot Springs.

Cvijetic attended Katherine Finchy Elementary School and Raymond Cree Middle School. He graduated from College of the Desert in 2002 with an Associate's Degree in Liberal Arts. He graduated from California State University, Northridge in 2004 with a Bachelor's Degree in Cinema, Television and Visual Arts.

Cvijetic's parents are Ratomir, who is one of the executive producers, and Christine Cvijetic. Christine Cvijetic has taught in the Palm Springs Unified School District for nearly 20 years.

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