

Filmmakers encourage dreams

Founders of The Dream Share Project visit Truman State

BY EMILY BATTMER

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Two recent college graduates are coming to Truman State to share a movie with a simple, yet powerful message — chase your dream.

When Dream Share Project cofounder Alexis Irvin and her partner Chip Hiden graduated from college during 2009, they both found desk jobs in their home state of Maryland. But after a few months of working, Irvin said neither of them felt excited nor passionate about the work they were doing. So the couple developed what Irvin said some considered a risky plan: they quit their jobs, hopped in the car and traveled across the country to discover what they were passionate about.

"It all just kind of snowballed together," Irvin said. "Working day in and day out, getting stuck in traffic for 45 minutes every morning, not doing too much at work that was exciting or interesting ... it all culminated and we knew we had to do something, shake things up and get out of here."

The couple spent three months during 2010 on the road, traveling from Maryland to Ohio and Illinois, then to South Dakota, Utah and California, creating a loop and returning back to Maryland from the south through Florida and the Carolinas. They interviewed 30 people for the film about the dreams they were chasing, from an Olympic skier to the CEO of a sustainable flip-flop company.

Throughout the trip, Irvin said many of the people they interviewed had similar pieces of advice. The first was identifying a passion, she said, and knowing what it is that inspires and interests you.

"I think that people who are passionate about their work are a lot happier and more productive, and people that love their work and look forward to it every day are going to make changes and make the world a better place," she said.

Irvin said they also learned



Submitted photo

Dream Share Project cofounders Chip Hiden and Alexis Irvin pose to promote their documentary. The couple spent three months traveling the country to create the film, which will be screened at Truman State from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Monday in the SUB Alumni Room.

it's OK to make mistakes. Many of the people they met during their trip emphasized the importance of learning from mistakes to improve a product or service and keep going.

Most importantly, Irvin said the experience taught her she didn't have to wait for permission to start chasing her dream.

"No one told us to quit our jobs and take this trip and make a movie," Irvin said. "We just decided to do it. It's a really empowering experience ... if you want to do something, just go try it. It doesn't have to be perfect."

Despite the spontaneous nature of their trip, Hiden said there were a few challenges to consider before they began. First, they had to work for about a year at their day jobs to save enough money to afford a cross-country road trip. He said it was risky to take off without a steady job they could return to following the trip.

He said it also was challenging to overcome the fear of failure and disappointing others. It took some time to get friends and family "on board" with the project, he said.

"You could definitely get the sense that our parents were

sometimes thinking we were a little crazy for doing this," Hiden said. "When you have people doubting you, it's a little hard to commit, but it was something we both really wanted to do and we knew it wasn't going to get any easier as we got older."

Taking the risk to chase their dream was something Hiden said the couple had in common with many of the people they interviewed. He said the trip showed him that the end product of someone's dream is the result of years of hard work, self doubt and rejection.

He said that idea reflected an interesting parallel between the filmmakers and the people they interviewed. All the people they talked to had taken a risk to pursue their dreams, Hiden said, just as he and Irvin were taking a risk to pursue their dream and make the film.

"One person we talked to told us it takes 99 rejections for every one great moment in life," he said. "People get knocked down over and over again, but they keep getting up and that's why they're able to hang in there and finally find their success."

Senior Shelby Sims, Career Center communication intern,

has been working to coordinate and promote the film's showing. She said she thinks the event will be important for all students, but especially for first and second year Truman students.

Sims said she thinks it's easy for Truman students to get involved with their college career and campus activities and not think about life beyond graduation.

"Senior year comes and you reach this roadblock where you have a year to figure out what you want to do with your life," she said. "I hope this motivates students to start thinking about graduation and what they want to do with their lives."

Sims said she has talked to many students who have an idea of what they want to do in the future, but don't know how to pursue their dream. She said she thinks the documentary and workshop will benefit students by showing them there are many options after graduation to do something about which they are passionate.

During the event, Irvin said she and Hiden will give a brief introduction of the project, then screen the hour-long movie. Following the film, they will

conduct a 30 minute workshop that guides students through individual and group exercises to help students identify their passions and deal with mental road blocks. They currently have appeared at more than 80 colleges throughout the country, and by the end of the spring semester, they will have reached more than 100, Irvin said.

As Irvin and Hiden help students throughout the country chase their dreams, the couple plans to continue chasing theirs. They currently are working on a book that will be published this July called "Build Your Dreams: How to Make a Living Doing What You Love." Irvin said they hope to continue visiting with students throughout the country and might eventually make another movie or write more books.

"I think [Hiden] and I both love working with college students and opening up this conversation about what you're passionate about and helping people figure that out," she said. "We want to continue doing this, spreading our message and helping as many people as we can."

The Dream Share Project will screen from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Monday in the SUB Alumni Room.



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