

Secret City Improv Festival
September 30 & October 1, 2022
The Grove Theater
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For Immediate Release

High School Troupes to learn and perform during “Slayden Intensives” at the Secret City Improv Festival

East Tennessee’s only improv festival debuts new initiative for young performers

An innovative program for high-school students to hone their creativity, leadership potential, and problem-solving skills in a fun, funny, dynamic, and supportive manner will debut at the second annual Secret City Improv Festival in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, on October 1, 2022. The program, called the Slayden Intensives, will be led by professional improv instructors. High-school students will have one day to prepare and perform their own comedy improv show in front of a live audience at the Festival.

Slayden Intensives are named in honor of the late William “Bill” M. Slayden III. Bill was a founding member of Einstein Simplified, a staple of the Knoxville area improv scene since 1994. Bill Slayden was generous, noted for his sharp wit and wisdom, and a proud family man. He died of neuroendocrine cancer in October 2020. Bill’s spirit and enthusiasm will inspire the next generation of improvisers by way of the Slayden Intensives.

Five area high schools, including Bearden, Farragut, and Oak Ridge, will participate in the inaugural program. Professional improv instructors will be hand-selected by festival organizers to lead each high school team in their intensive workshops. The instructors will be charged with providing a quality educational experience for the students through fostering participation in a supportive team-building environment.

Three guiding principles keep the learning experience fun and meaningful: *Learn-by-Doing* (experiential learning), *Huddle-no-Lecture* (inspired by Agile methodology), and *Reflection-is-Key* (using reflection practices where students own their learning and feel responsible when they do). Various proven learning theories and methods are scaffolded within the experience so that high school students continue to build the 21st-century skills and mindsets most needed for tomorrow’s economy and workforce. The intensive and capstone performances are designed for general audiences, making it possible for the entire family to attend, laugh, and support these talented Tennessee high school students.

The intensives will lead the students through different aspects of creating a live improvised performance. This includes learning fundamentals of improv, trust-building, active listening, learning a performance form, and practice with reflection and improvement as goals. A guided reflection period will allow the students to provide feedback on their learning and will provide the participating schools with valuable information that they can use to further their student’s learning.

The students’ performances will be held on October 1st during the 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. shows at the Grove Theater in Oak Ridge. The 5:00 p.m. show will include Bearden and Farragut and two other schools. Oak Ridge High School’s Atomic Acts troupe will be featured in the 7:00 p.m. show. Both shows will be suitable for all ages.

Students will be provided with breakfast provided by the festival organizers and a catered lunch donated by Dos Bros Fresh Mexican Grill. The intensives are being offered to the participating schools at no cost. This program is a first of its kind and is unique to the Secret City Improv Festival.

The driving mission of the Secret City Improv Festival is to create an environment that makes collaboration, professional development, and creative expression possible by bringing people together through the art of improvisational theater.

The Secret City Improv Festival seeks donations and sponsorships to help fund this program for the participating schools. To donate visit www.secretcityimprovfest.com/donate. To sponsor the Slayden Intensives or the Secret City Improv Festival visit, www.secretcityimprovfest.com/sponsorship.

About Secret City Improv Festival: The Secret City Improv Festival is a production of Southern Fried Events. The festival is East Tennessee's only improv festival and aims to bring together a diverse cross-section of improv styles and troupes from all over the country. The festival will play host to multiple shows and workshops over two days at the Historic Grove Theatre in Oak Ridge, TN. More information can be found at www.secretcityimprovfest.com, and on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

For More Information

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