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## Splash of Color Hopes to Spark Change with Firecracker Foundation Fundraiser <sup>[1]</sup>

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**By:**

Sarah Spohn



*Photo courtesy of Splash of Color Tattoo & Piercing Studio.*

East Lansing's Splash of Color Tattoo & Piercing Studio may be known for inflicting pain on its guests via intricate tattoos and piercing needles, but this Sunday the atmosphere will be all about recovery.

Sunday, Oct. 21 from noon to 7 p.m., Splash of Color is hosting SPARK CHANGE: a flash tattoo and piercing event to benefit The Firecracker Foundation [2]. The organization provides holistic services to survivors of sexual trauma, aiming to heal the mind and the body through therapy and exercise.

Splash Social Media Marketer Anne Lux first heard about The Firecracker Foundation in 2016. When she decided to plan a local fundraiser, after attending a "Still Not Asking for It" event in Ferndale, Lux knew where she wanted the proceeds to go.

"I knew I wanted it to benefit a local/mid-Michigan organization that not only worked with victims of sexual trauma, but also provided tons of education and outreach for the community," Lux said.

The event is first come, first serve, and cash-only. Pre-drawn arm and leg flash designs will focus on themes of empowerment, light, and knowledge, ranging from \$80 to \$250. 100% of the tattoo proceeds will go to The Firecracker Foundation, along with all piercing fees.

While Splash of Color has been a mainstay in the downtown East Lansing landscape for over 22 years, Lux said it was time to do more in the community.

"There was no hesitation with (owner) Kris Lachance donating the space and supplies for the event," Lux said. "Everyone involved – tattoo artists, piercers, apprentices, counter and support staff – is volunteering their time for free."

The Firecracker Foundation is grateful to be recognized by the local East Lansing tattoo studio, in what will hopefully become an annual event.

"Splash of Color organized this benefit on our behalf, which we greatly appreciate," Firecracker Foundation Board Member Liz Abdnour said. "Tattooing and piercing are expressive arts that a number of survivors of sexual trauma have found to be an empowering way to memorialize and honor their own traumatic experiences and healing process."

Though the event is to benefit and support The Firecracker Foundation's recovery efforts, Splash of Color describes their customers as the most loyal kind of support they could imagine.

"People trust us every single day," Lux said, "that's huge."

Whether a tattoo is designed for a grieving customer, a mother/daughter tattoo, or a young child is piercing their ears, Lux describes the amount of trust as amazing.

"We are so very appreciative and honored that the East Lansing and MSU communities choose us time and again for their body modification needs," Lux said. "It's also a joy to be part of the East Lansing and the greater mid-Michigan creative community. Everyone seems to know everyone, recommends each other, and genuinely tries to develop and maintain strong connections with one another."

Nonprofits and local organizations like Firecracker Foundation have gained momentum with the increased awareness, and social platforms like the worldwide #metoo movement. The Firecracker Foundation has expanded, since it was founded in 2013 by Tashmica Torok [3].

“We have experienced a significant increase in the number of families seeking our services, as well as in the number of volunteers and donors who have connected with us,” Abdnour said. “In just a little over a year, our staff size has tripled, and we moved from a small, one-room office to a suite with two private therapy rooms, a conference room, a lounge area, two yoga studio spaces, and a kitchen. We are so excited about the growth in our ability to serve the families in our community who are impacted by childhood sexual trauma, and know that our families feel empowered and strengthened by the local and national movements on this issue.”

Lux describes the work ethic of Torok and the Firecracker Foundation as tireless, and non-stop. “They’re speaking on panels, giving interviews, spending every breath educating others about consent, teaching empathy, and helping to heal wounds that often feel like they will never go away. Belonging to a group like The Firecracker Foundation and/or raising funds for them allows us to share in that power, that feeling like we’re making a difference.”

The event is open to all – even those with an aversion to needles.

“Even if you aren’t interested in getting a tattoo or piercing, we encourage everyone to come by, buy a few raffle tickets, learn more about The Firecracker Foundation, and spend their Sunday at Splash,” Lux said.

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