



STORYCORPS RECORDS LIFE!

Once upon a time a young man from New Haven, David Isay, influenced by the oral history work of Studs Terkel and the Works Progress Administration recordings of the forties, set about documenting the stories of ordinary people...and found them to be extraordinary.

He became an award-winning radio producer, and in 2003 formed the not-for-profit StoryCorps (www.StoryCorps.org), which has been recording oral histories across America ever since.



Operating under the premise that everybody has a story to tell, StoryCorps erected recording booths in museums and transit terminals, and created mobile studios to scour the nation in search of story. The result: more than 25,000 audio interviews conducted by everyday people, in conversation with each other. Children recording grandparents, adults interviewing siblings, long-time coworkers chronicling their colleagues' lives. Stories of pain and anguish, joy and revelation, travail and transformation.

With a staff of 100 including trained facilitators throughout the country, StoryCorps records stories in its 9x9' booths. It is free of cost and open to the public. Among its initiatives: a September 11th Initiative to record stories of those touched by 9/11; The Griot Initiative, to record stories of African Americans; a Memory Loss Initiative, recording stories of people affected by memory loss; and StoryCorps Alaska, recording stories of

Alaskans. For every recording, interviewees and interviewers receive audio CDs, and for consenting participants, copies are archived with the Library of Congress to become part of an oral history of America.



Partnerships and sponsorships are key to StoryCorps. Collaborators include the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, National Public Radio, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Sponsors include numerous foundations and institutions; the organization also relies on donations from participants and listeners.

Stories go Multimedia

A compilation of fifty StoryCorps interviews has been edited into a book, *Listening is an Act of Love*. Organized into themes of home and family, work and dedication, journeys, history and struggle, and fire and water (which include stories of 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina), love permeates each interview. The edited versions in the book run several pages. Stories are alternately poignant, funny, sad, hopeful, and powerful; they embody the American and human spirits. A new story is aired each Friday on National Public Radio's Morning Edition.

A National Day of Listening

(www.nationaldayoflistening.org)
The day after Thanksgiving last year

inaugurated a National Day of Listening. StoryCorps encouraged Americans to spend an hour interviewing a loved one, using questions similar to those found in the book and on its website, www.StoryCorps.org. A do-it-yourself checklist, favorite StoryCorps questions, and recording tips help people conduct interviews with family members.



Partners in Story

Said Liz Nichols, storytelling director of Stagebridge, a San Francisco Bay Area community partner and Griot Project interviewer: "It was an honor to bring in and interview some of the seniors we work with, 'ordinary' people who are extraordinary. To see how honored and respected they felt was great, too. Plus, I got to know them better."

StoryCorps partners with community groups. Your local storytelling association or guild is encouraged to contact StoryCorps to bring them to your community.



Author Craig "Hackin' 'Boo" Harrison tells tales of humor and humanity. He recently interviewed his mother at StoryCorps in San Francisco in honor of the 20th anniversary of her 51st birthday. To contact Craig: 510/547-0664; Craig@HackinBoo.com