

YOUTH INVOLVMENT IN STORYTELLING AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Compiled by Rachel Hedman

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Mark Quinlan, MN

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STATEMENT

All fifty states provide opportunities for youth to connect with storytelling, although some states are more intense in these endeavors than others.

Hundreds of organizations, yet to be determined with specific numbers, either directly or indirectly use stories to impact children. Elements of reading, listening, storytelling, and/or literacy can be found. Books are the most used sources for these stories.

Thousands of children, from elementary schools to high schools, are connected with formal and informal gatherings for storytelling. Even preschoolers and toddlers have programs presented to them, usually through local libraries.

Through Kevin Cordi's website, 102 youth storytelling clubs are registered. This is a small figure considering that Florida has 30 storytelling guilds that outreach to youth and most are not listed with the registry.

With about 750 storytelling festivals in the United States, many have incorporated youth tellers as tradition.

With the National Youth Storytelling Showcase, we have 36 state liaisons who search for talented youth and forward the top five tellers to Pigeon Forge, TN, the current headquarters. Some states have hundreds to thousands of entries while some states we have yet to receive any tapes. About 15 states actively pursued this event for 2005-2006. More will participate as the marketing is done, a possible direction for sponsorship.

Please realize that we have thousands of sources still to be uncovered and can be done through your support and sponsorship.

FOLLOWING AREAS WITH YOUTH STORYTELLING CLUBS/GROUPS:

- 1. Libraries**
- 2. Public and Private Schools and Home Schooling**
- 3. Media/Activities Specialists**
 - a. National Forensics League
 - b. 4H
 - c. Girl Scouts
 - d. Cub Scouts
 - e. National Youth Storytelling Olympics
 - f. Borders Bookstores
- 4. Park and Recreation Organizations**
- 5. Local Storytelling Guilds and Associations**

FLORIDA YOUTH INVOLVMENT IN STORYTELLING

Let us view how these areas reflect in Florida, one of our most active states in promoting youth storytelling, so as to see the potential in all the other states.

POTENTIAL TO REACH IN FLORIDA

- 7000 in media/activities specialist list
- 6500 in library list
- 700 in park and recreation list
- 30 storytelling clubs with outreach to youth

AREAS TO CONSIDER

1. Libraries

- *Contact Mary Ooten for info/listing
- Thousands of kids involved
- For confidentiality reasons, we can give numbers but not names

2. Public and Private Schools and Home Schooling

- Information in process to gather

3. Media/Activities Specialists

- *Contact Nancy Case for info/listing
- a. National Forensics League
- b. 4H
- c. Girl Scouts
 - Junior Girl Scouts have a storytelling patch
 - Ann Scroggie has been asked to provide workshops to the troops
- d. Cub Scouts
 - Bears have a Tall Tales section in manual
- e. National Youth Storytelling Showcase
 - Grand Torchbearer has been from Florida in 2002, 2004, and 2005
 - Three finalists in NYSS for 2006

Jeremy Evans, 2004 Grand Torchbearer, and his mother, Taryn, will set up a storytelling club through the library in Ocala. They plan to train tellers and then have them perform at the Ocala Storytelling Festival (spring 2006)

*see www.nationalyouthstorytellingshowcase.org and www.jeremyevansstoryteller.com

f. Borders Bookstores

Gainesville, FL location recently has professional storytellers perform

4. Park and Recreation Organizations

Information in process to gather

5. Local Storytelling Guilds and Associations

a. StoryCamp (organized through Florida Storytelling Association)

*Contact Roz Miller for info/listing

Every March

Reached over 20,000 children since started

Six Florida Youthful Voices are chosen from many youth to present a concert here

b. Storytelling Festivals

List of festivals involving youth is in process but a couple examples below

Tampa-Hillsborough County Storytelling Festival

Has online storytelling manual to teach/coach kids

Ocala Storytelling Festival

County buses youth from 3rd to 7th grade to four locations

Stories connect with teachers' curriculum

9th year and plans to reach 2,300 students in 2006

Miami Storytelling Festival

Provides camp for kids with storytelling training

c. StoryLab for mentors, coaches, and parents who work with youth

Co-sponsored by Santa Fe Community College and credit issued

About 70 people in attendance with 12 hours of training

All evaluations had positive comments, no negative comments

DVD created by five Youthful Voices and will be on sale at StoryCamp

d. Survey in June 2005 on Storytelling Programs

*Contact Shirley Bryce for info

General Response—Most people do their “own thing” simply because there was no one there to help them organize storytelling groups for youth.

e. Tour of the Tellers

Allow kids to travel to give concerts starting summer 2006

Possible project for Borders to sponsor

f. South Florida Storytelling Project at Florida Atlantic University

*Contact Caren Neile for info

g. Ocala Storytelling Guild

Marion County had spring program where 5,000 children heard four featured tellers in concert

NATIONAL FORENSICS LEAGUE AND STORYTELLING—OTHER STATES

National Forensics League—High School—104 Districts/50 States

Storytelling Category

Although this category developed between 1960 and 1970, each district determines if this category will be available to the students. The NFL headquarters in Ripon, WI do not have the statistics of which districts offer it. They suggested I call each of the 104 districts and, as of yet, I have only reached nine. In another month, most if not all should be contacted. Besides local tournaments, storytelling is available as at the National Tournament but only as a supplemental/consolation for the finalists who do not get past the first round of judging.

**Upon talking with the nine district chairs, all were interested in the National Youth Storytelling Showcase and had not heard about it before except for Central Minnesota.*

National Junior Forensics League—Middle School

Storytelling Category

For the children, storytelling is one of the main categories recommended besides prose and poetry. Storytelling is also used for other events and tournaments associated with this group.

Alabama/Deep South (consists of one district)—no storytelling

Will host National Tournament in 2009, may become active in storytelling at that time
Storytelling not pursued now since no one feels familiar enough with the category but time will change this view

Hawaii (consists of one district)—active storytelling

Extremely popular category that's available in every single tournament
Small district of 8 teams and with 25 students involved with storytelling
Pick any story and re-tell in own words and much emphasis on gestures and movement
Honolulu event that involves a few hundred elementary students with storytelling as focus

Idaho (consists of one district)—active storytelling

Kansas (consists of six districts)—no storytelling

Kentucky (consists of one district)—active storytelling

Middle School Level, 4th to 9th grade—one of the top ten categories

About 40 students involved

57 Junior High Schools within the district and about 90% of schools involved

High School Level

About 60 students involved

79 High Schools within the district and about 90% of schools involved with storytelling

Rules consist of using a published story (most students use books as sources)

Minnesota (consists of three districts)

Southern Minnesota—no storytelling

Northern Lights—no storytelling

Central Minnesota—active storytelling

Very popular category but tends to skew to more girls involved

On national level, they have had many win the storytelling category

Rules consist of drawing three titles of stories from total 10-15 stories previously chosen by NFL and student has half hour to prepare one of the three titles

Sources of approved stories have come from the Anthology of Stories

from the National Storytelling Festival or from “Favorite Folktales from

Around the World” compiled by Jane Yolen

Tennessee (consists of one district)—active storytelling

Utah (consists of three districts)—no storytelling

However, the entire Alpine School District has a large storytelling contest with children of all grades and the top tellers are invited to perform for the Timpanogos Storytelling Festival (attendance of 16,000 people)

Wisconsin (consists of two districts)—active storytelling

Popular category with about 80 students involved

Rules consist of five types of stories to choose each year and each round has one of those stories told and cannot be repeated in the next round

REFERENCE (PERMISSION GRANTED):

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CONTACTS TO CONSIDER FOR YOUTH TELLABRATIONS AND/OR CLUBS:

Elise Krakower in NY

Club and Youth Tellabration

Nancy Fralieggh and Kathy Palermo in CA

Combine Voices of Illusion (Hanford High School) and The Lemoore Tellers (Lemoore High School) for Youth Tellabration

Marilyn Rudzik in CA

18 youth tellers (Kindergarten to 6th grade) told to 130 people at Youth Tellabration

Darlene Neumann in IL

60 students in club at one school

Sadarri Saskill in WI

Adopt-a-teller program to connect youth with adults in mentorship program

Mary Jo Huff in IN

Two youth groups (one from IN and one from KY) combined for Youth Tellabration