CONVERSATION GUIDE

OVERVIEW:

In honor of 150 years of Chautauqua, we’re partnering with national nonprofit StoryCorps to record and uplift stories of education, community, and the magic of the Chautauqua experience.

We invite you to share a 40-minute conversation with a loved one to talk about your Chautauqua experiences. With your permission, these conversations will be archived in the StoryCorps Online Archive and at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Chautauqua Institution will also receive a copy of your conversation for their collection.

CONVERSATION TIPS:

● Think of it as a conversation, not an interview. Be authentic and follow your curiosity.
● Breathe. Feel free to let pauses or silences linger.
● Keep in mind that future listeners may not be familiar with the people and places you mention. So, give a little context.
● Ask follow-up questions that encourage details —like “what was going through your mind when...” or “What did you see/hear/feel when...”

KEEP IN MIND:

Participants typically get through 5-6 questions in one recording session. The following questions can serve as a starting point for your conversation, but please remember that this time is for you.

None of these questions are required, and you are welcome to add and explore questions of your own.

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Suggested Questions

Warm Up Questions:

- Tell me about where you grew up?
- How would your friends/family describe you?
- What is your first memory of me?
- Why did you want to record this conversation together?

The Journey to Chautauqua:

- What did you know about Chautauqua before you first came here?
- How did you come to be a part of this community?
- What did you hope to find when you arrived here?
- Tell me about the first time you came to Chautauqua.
- How was Chautauqua different from what you expected?
- Was there a moment you felt that you “belonged” at Chautauqua?

Quintessentially Chautauqua:

- What is your favorite Chautauqua memory?
- Tell me about place or space at Chautauqua that you really connect with.
- Tell me about someone in the Chautauqua community who has had a big impact on you.
- How do you describe Chautauqua to people who have never been there?
- What do you wish more people knew about Chautauqua?
- What makes Chautauqua different from other places?
- What keeps you coming back?

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The Journey from Here:

- How are you different from when you first came to Chautauqua?
- How have you applied what you’ve learned at Chautauqua in the “real world?”
- Do you feel a connection to the legacy of Chautauqua? What impact do you want to leave behind?
- What does it mean to you to be a Chautauquan?
- What do you hope the future of Chautauqua will look like?
- For generations listening years from now, is there any wisdom you’d want to pass on to them? What would you want them to know?