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## **StoryCorps Announces Special Programming and Gala to Celebrate the Organization's 20th Anniversary**

**Having Created a First-Person Archive of American History and Human Wisdom—and the Largest Collection of Human Voices Ever Gathered—StoryCorps Shares Highlights of Its First 20 Years and Invites the Public to Be Part of Its Future**

**Best-Selling Author and Former StoryCorps Facilitator Jason Reynolds to Host 20th Anniversary Gala on October 17 at the Brooklyn Museum**

July 17, 2023 (Brooklyn, NY) – **StoryCorps**, the national nonprofit organization dedicated to helping us believe in each other by illuminating the humanity and possibility in us all, one story at a time, today announces 20th anniversary-themed programming and a gala fundraiser. The organization will revisit and update classic StoryCorps stories on NPR's *Morning Edition*, in a new slate of animations, and in a new season of the StoryCorps podcast. **Jason Reynolds**, one of the country's most beloved young adult fiction writers and a former StoryCorps facilitator, hosts the 20th anniversary gala on October 17 at the Brooklyn Museum. Over the course of the year, the organization is offering numerous opportunities for the public to record StoryCorps conversations, including the **2023 StoryCorps Mobile Tour**, the **2023 Military Voices Initiative Tour**, StoryCorps' groundbreaking **One Small Step** initiative, and the 2023 edition of the **Great Thanksgiving Listen**.

Highlights of StoryCorps' 20th anniversary year include:

- A series of special broadcasts on NPR's *Morning Edition* in September, revisiting and updating five classic StoryCorps stories previously aired on the show.

- A collection of five new animations that reflect the breadth of meaningful conversations that everyday people have shared in StoryCorps booths over the last 20 years, as they pass on wisdom they've gained along their paths.
- A new season of the StoryCorps podcast consisting of 10 episodes that revisit notable recordings and landmark moments from StoryCorps' first 20 years, including new interviews with the participants. The season premieres in September.
- StoryCorps' 20th Anniversary Gala, hosted by Jason Reynolds, best-selling author, StoryCorps Board member, and former National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, on October 17 at the Brooklyn Museum.
- The 2023 StoryCorps Mobile Tour, which visits 10 locations nationwide, giving participants the opportunity to record in-person or virtually. For the StoryCorps MobileBooth's 2023 itinerary, please visit [storycorps.org/mobile-tour](https://storycorps.org/mobile-tour).
- The 2023 Military Voices Initiative tour, which records the voices of active duty service members, veterans, family members, and other military voices in locations across the country. For more information, please visit [storycorps.org/discover/military-voices](https://storycorps.org/discover/military-voices).
- The growth of StoryCorps' One Small Step initiative, which pairs strangers with opposing political views for a facilitated conversation—not about politics—but about who they are as people. One Small Step is designed to remind us of the humanity in all of us, even those with whom we disagree. The organization is anchoring its recording efforts in three communities: Fresno/Central Valley, CA; Richmond, VA, and Wichita, KS, and partners with public media hub stations nationwide. For more information, please visit [takeonesmallstep.org](https://takeonesmallstep.org).
- One Small Step Congress, which fosters conversation and connection between Congressional members and senior staff from opposing parties.
- The 2023 edition of the Great Thanksgiving Listen, which invites people nationwide to use the organization's free mobile app or its remote recording platform, StoryCorps Connect, to record a conversation with an elder, mentor, friend, or someone they admire over the holiday weekend.

**Dave Isay**, StoryCorps' founder and president, conceived StoryCorps as a simple idea to capture humanity and help create a more just and compassionate world: open a recording booth in New York's Grand Central Terminal, invite the public to record a facilitated conversation with a loved one, and preserve the recording for posterity in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Since that booth opened, on October 23, 2003, the organization has expanded its service and reach dramatically. StoryCorps MobileBooths—Airstream trailers transformed into traveling recording booths—crisscross the country year-round to cities and rural communities, and the

StoryCorps App, initially developed with the \$1M TED Prize awarded to Isay in 2015, makes it possible for anyone, anywhere, anytime to record a StoryCorps conversation and upload it to the StoryCorps archive and the Library of Congress. The organization has given over 640,000 people, in all 50 states, the chance to record interviews, with select stories shared with the public weekly on NPR's *Morning Edition*, as well as through animated shorts on PBS, YouTube, and other digital platforms, in best-selling books, and on StoryCorps.org.

There is an urgency to StoryCorps' mission that no one could have anticipated 20 years ago. The organization's work to engage the country in meaningful in-person conversations engenders connection and empathy, counteracting the division and isolation caused in recent years by social media, political polarization, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Isay said, "In this anniversary year, we're excited to share some of the most beloved StoryCorps stories to date—stories that show the grace, beauty, and poetry in the words of everyday people living all around us—and to give Americans nationwide the chance to add their voices. StoryCorps is an antidote to the many forces driving us apart, reminding us of who we really are and what we care about as Americans."

StoryCorps CEO **Sandra Clark** said, "What's remarkable about StoryCorps' first 20 years is not just the number of recordings the organization has gathered, but the extraordinary range of voices and perspectives we've preserved for future generations. Engaging the voices least likely to be captured in history books or covered by the media is ongoing work with limitless potential. As we move into StoryCorps' next decade, we are committed to finding new ways for people across the U.S. to participate. No goal could be more worthy when it comes to building a truly reflective archive of the human experience, and nothing could excite us more."

"StoryCorps preserves the stories and experiences of individual Americans, creating a unique and powerful archive of American voices for all time at the Library of Congress. This collection serves as an important resource that reflects our humanity now and for generations to come," said Librarian of Congress **Carla Hayden**. "We're proud to continue collaborating with StoryCorps as this collection continues to grow into its third decade."

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