



## INTERNATIONAL STORYTELLING CENTER

*Connecting the World through the Power of Storytelling*

### **Niswonger Foundation Grant Close-Out Report: 2017**

The International Storytelling Center (ISC) greatly appreciates the 3-year grant support from the Niswonger Foundation on behalf of ISC's programming. In 2017, the grant provided support for: live streaming at the National Storytelling Festival; pro bono outreach to school-aged children through ISC's Teller-in-Residence (TIR) program; and a teacher workshop, also provided through ISC's TIR program.

#### **Summary**

ISC's 2017 programming has concluded and we are pleased to report that our objectives towards the goal of bringing live professional storytelling and diverse, excellent art into the lives of as many young people as possible were met for the year.

#### **Description of Activities and Documentation/Data Evaluating Success**

##### National Storytelling Festival Livestreaming

ISC provided a live-streaming feed from the National Storytelling Festival's Library (Family) Tent on Friday October 6.<sup>th</sup> Viewers were able to see the work of 13 of the Festival's 18 featured tellers in addition to the National Poetry Out Loud Champion. All programming was ASL interpreted.

Prior to the Festival, ISC reached out to organizations who might benefit from the stream, including area schools, universities and regional educational networks. The National Endowment for the Arts promoted the Festival livestream to all 50 state arts agencies. ISC also embedded social media promotions via twitter, Facebook and Instagram, enabling greater access to the Festival content.

ISC worked with interns from ETSU's communication department who assisted us in using social media and the live streaming content as a means of encouraging greater participation from the millennial generation.

Post-festival, we made the recorded video available via our website.

##### Outreach to School-aged Children through ISC's Teller-in-Residence program

ISC held three TIR Saturday morning on-site shows geared specifically to children ages 6 to 10. We also conducted eleven off-site and on-site pro-bono concerts for area school-aged children in Washington and Greene counties, and for the Johnson City and Kingsport City schools. This included performances for the Washington County Library system's Summer Reading Program and performances for underserved youth. Through

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these activities, young people were exposed to the work of eight Tellers-in-Residence. These storytellers are considered among the finest in the storytelling art and have all appeared at ISC's signature event, the renowned National Storytelling Festival. We are excited to report that the total number of youth served by these complimentary performances was 1,389, a growth of over 18% since this grant began.

In September, ISC offered a free teacher workshop called *Literacy and Storytelling*. This was led by Donna Washington, an educator, author and storyteller who has conducted this workshop around the world, and has received several Parents' Choice awards for her children's books. The workshop was geared to teachers of K-5<sup>th</sup> grades. Participating teachers came from schools in the Johnson City and Kingsport city school systems as well as several surrounding counties.

Some sample comments from the workshop evaluations included:

- *Excellent workshop! I learned how to use storytelling in the classroom to introduce content & build relationships with lower level learners.*
- *Thank you! It was a very stimulating morning!*
- *My take-away is using games to expand children's language skills for language development in children.*

#### **Budget and expenditure report – see attached**

#### **Plan for sustainability of project beyond grant**

After completing this three year grant term, we believe we will be able to continue our funded programs post-grant through ticket sales, advertising opportunities, and continued arts funding grants at the local, state, and federal level.

#### **Success/Challenge of Grant and Lessons learned**

We face marketing challenges for both our Teller-in-Residence teacher outreach and livestreaming of the National Storytelling Festival, but have learned valuable techniques over the course of the grant, particularly in social media, which we will put to good use in the coming year.

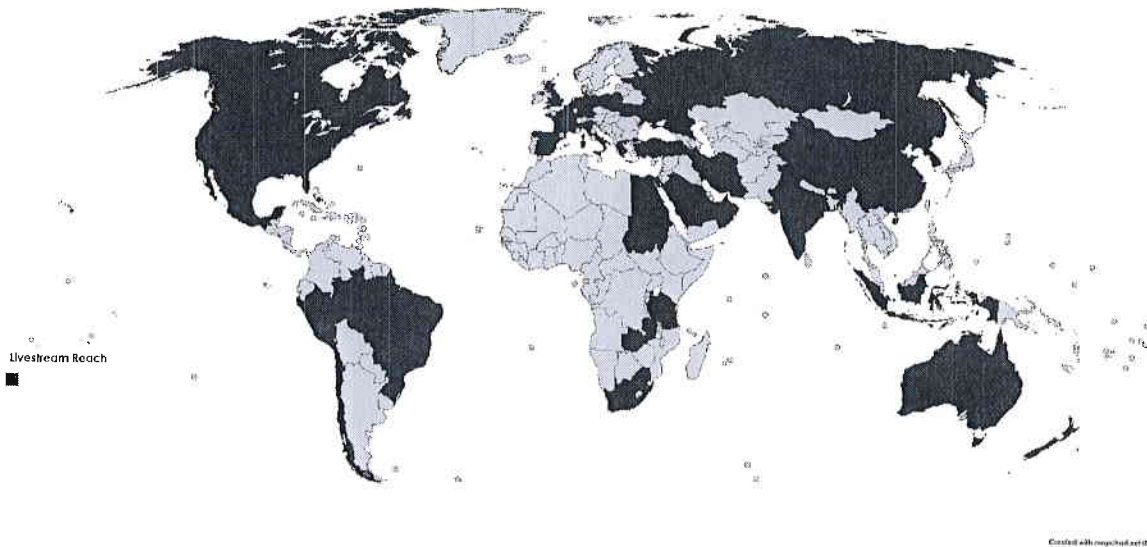
#### **National Storytelling Festival Livestream statistics highlighted in the 2017 ISC Media Report.**

- A total of 45 Facebook posts, specific to Festival, were made from June 14 –October 11. These 45 posts had a total reach of 105,667 viewers. The number of total social media views for Festival Facebook posts increased by 37% over last year's efforts.
- A separate event page was created for the National Storytelling Festival. The event site contained 14 event posts by ISC, and had a total reach of 67,437.
- ISC reached out to several national and international organizations that would benefit from the stream, including schools, universities, hospitals, and arts organizations. The link was also shared through ISC's internal e-blast database of over 11,000.

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- Nationally, the Endowment of the Arts was given the livestream link in advance of the event to share with all fifty United States arts agencies. The link was also shared by the National Poetry Foundation and the National Poetry Out Loud program. United States Embassies were also given access to the Livestream feed.
- Locally, the link was shared with Mountain States Health Alliance to livestream the performances into patients' rooms at Johnson City Medical Center and Niswonger Children's Hospital. Additionally, regional sponsor Dollywood DreamMore Resort and Spa sent an e-blast of the livestream link to its entire database of more than 500,000 people.
- In total, nearly 6,000 viewers from all over the world were able to tune in to the programming. Post-Festival, the live footage was segmented, and is now on YouTube for continued access.



#### **Goals and Enhancements for the 2018 LiveStream effort.**

- Increased marketing efforts regarding LiveStream feed:
  - Utilizing Smithsonian Affiliation
  - Contacting airports
  - Educational outreach to more youth organizations
  - Reaching underserved communities/regions locally, nationally, and internationally
- Enhance LiveStream experience:
  - Dedicated high speed internet access inside the tent vs. an extension from the library. The extension is close to the maximum length for this type of cable. This

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results in slow bandwidth which also effects the quality of the video being sent out or streamed.

- Stage lighting focused on the teller
- A darker color backdrop. The storytellers are almost backlit with the white tent
- Closer camera placement
- 2-3 cameras with the possibility of doing PIP with the sign language interpreter being on the screen in the lower left corner of the screen.
- Making sure there is a mic that runs through the sound board that is dedicated to audience reaction i.e. clapping and laughing
- Video projection screens aka. Image magnification inside the tent for the audience to see better. This is just a matter of sending the existing live video feed to the projectors inside the tent

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**Niswonger Foundation Grant  
Budget and Expenditure Report  
2017**

**Budget**

|   |           |                 |
|---|-----------|-----------------|
| Live Streaming the National Storytelling Festival     | \$        | 3,500.00        |
| Underwriting Support for ISC's Children's Programming | \$        | 2,000.00        |
| Elementary School Teacher Workshop                    | \$        | 500.00          |
| <b>Total Budget</b>                                   | <b>\$</b> | <b>6,000.00</b> |

**Allocated Expenditures**

|   |           |                 |
|---|-----------|-----------------|
| Live Streaming the National Storytelling Festival     |           |                 |
| Digital Fridge - Technical Streaming Services         | \$        | 1,900.00        |
| Artists Fees  | \$        | 1,600.00        |
| Underwriting Support for ISC's Children's Programming |           |                 |
| Artists Fees  | \$        | 500.00          |
| Artists Travel/Lodging                                | \$        | 500.00          |
| Children's Ticket Subsidy                             | \$        | 1,000.00        |
| Elementary School Teacher Workshop                    |           |                 |
| Teacher Workshop Subsidy                              | \$        | 500.00          |
| <b>Total Allocated Expenditures</b>                   | <b>\$</b> | <b>6,000.00</b> |