



INTERNATIONAL STORYTELLING CENTER

Connecting the World through the Power of Storytelling

Niswonger Foundation Grant Close-Out Report: July 2022 – June 2023

The [International Storytelling Center](#) (ISC) is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization and the premiere educational, arts, and cultural institution dedicated to building a better world through the power of storytelling. Our work falls broadly into three categories: performance, preservation, and practice.

ISC is grateful for grant support from the Niswonger Foundation on behalf of its programming in FY 2022-2023. The funds were used to support the recording and distribution of content from select venues at the 2022 National Storytelling Festival; underwriting performing arts opportunities for school-aged youth through ISC's Teller-in-Residence (TIR) program; and the delivery of an online teacher workshop with storyteller Tim Lowry titled, *Bringing History to Life! Story Strategies for Integrating ELA and Social Studies*.

Description of Activities and Documentation/Data Evaluating Success

2022 National Storytelling Festival in Hybrid Format

As part of ISC's return to live programming in 2022, ISC staged the 50th anniversary of the National Storytelling Festival as both an in-person and a virtual event. For the virtual component, we partnered with [Big Slate Media](#) of Knoxville, Tennessee to record live concerts from the Library (Family) Tent and the Mary B. Martin Storytelling Hall which were uploaded into an online platform for viewing.

The Festival roster showcased a diverse line-up of 28 storytelling artists that included a cowboy poet, a deaf artist, and cultural perspectives from African, Latino, Asian, Native American, Middle Eastern, Indian, and Northern European traditions. In addition to featured tellers, we offered "[StoryFaces](#)" with Agostino Arts as a special feature for school-aged kids that combines stories and interactive face painting. We also continued our Legacy Series, with "[Equity's Smallest Soldiers](#)" featuring three of the four Black six-year-olds who first integrated the elementary school systems in New Orleans.

Over 500 households tuned in for the virtual festival, with an estimated attendance of 1,395 viewers representing 41 states and 3 other countries (New Zealand, Canada, and England) who purchased virtual tickets. Recorded content was released post-event on October 28, 2022, and was available for viewing through Thanksgiving weekend.

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In May 2023, ISC sent a [link](#) to qualifying K-12 schools in the Niswonger Foundation's School Partnership Program which allowed teachers to access curated content from the festival via a shared YouTube playlist. Each selection was accompanied by the artist's bio and made available to teachers until October 10, 2023.

2022 National Storytelling Virtual Festival/Social Media Statistics

- In 2022, we posted 289 posts on Facebook with a reach of 207,175 for the year. We have 16,122 followers on Facebook which is our largest platform.
- In 2022, we posted 279 times on Instagram with a reach of 2,730 for the year. We have 2,193 followers on Instagram.
- In 2022, our YouTube channel had 74,887 views on our videos, 722k impressions, and a total of 12k hours of watch time. We had 3,794 subscribers.
- In 2022, ISC's website welcomed 74k users who had 104k sessions. The site's most popular pages were Festival Main, Festival Schedule, Festival Virtual, Storytelling Live Main, About Us, Festival Featured Tellers, Freedom Stories, and Our Story.
- In 2022, ISC's Google Ads had 21.3k impressions across all campaigns with 2.82k clicks to our website.
- The virtual Festival was available for viewing from October 27 - November 27, 2022, and hosted 558 unique attendees. Tickets were sold "per household" rather than individuals.

Outreach to East Tennessee Youth through ISC's Teller in Residence Program

ISC's [Teller in Residence](#) program ran from May through October of 2022 and featured 27 professional storytellers who appeared both in-person and online. Tellers in Residence hosted two (2) children's concerts, six (6) pro bono performances for child-centered community organizations and/or school groups, and a week-long Kids Storytelling Institute in November as part of the annual series. In total, the 2022 series engaged with more than 800 students and/or youth in subsidized performances and learning opportunities.

On-site educational opportunities included:

- Private performances for Andrew Johnson Elementary, George Washington Elementary (Tennessee), and Holston High School (Virginia)
- "Master Class" sessions with students from East Tennessee State University's graduate-level storytelling program; students attended a storytelling concert

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- followed by a private talkback session with resident storytellers over the course of eight (8) weeks
- Curriculum-based “Kids Storytelling Institute” for 450 regional students and teachers

Community outreach provided by the teller-in-residence program included:

- Participation in free community events sponsored by the Town of Jonesborough (Tennessee)
- Cultural workshop for a LatinX summer camp at Langston Centre (Tennessee)
- Performances for the Washington and Unicoi County libraries (Tennessee)
- Performances for the Coalition for Kids Summer Bridge Program and the Boys and Girls Club of Greeneville (Tennessee)

2023 Niswonger Foundation Workshop for Teachers:

In May 2023, ISC recorded an on-demand [teacher workshop](#) for Niswonger School Partners titled *Bringing History to Life! Story Strategies for Integrating ELA and Social Studies*. The recorded tutorial was led by storyteller Tim Lowry, whose professional development workshops are geared to benchmarks of Tennessee Academic Standards and 21st-century learning skills. The content was directly applicable to all teachers and students of Tennessee and American history from grades 4-12 and was also intended to support teachers of English Language Arts who are interested in partnering with Social Studies teachers to closely integrate the two subjects.

Workshop Description:

The power of a good story well-told fires the imagination and motivates students to learn more on their own and share their knowledge with others. In this digital workshop, Storyteller Tim Lowry demonstrates creative ways to integrate English Language Arts and Social Studies to help students speak, read, and write about American history. Keeping a teacher’s busy schedule in mind, Tim will share short, video segments on where to find tellable tales to spice up your American history lessons, easy techniques for sharing those stories with your students in engaging ways, and creative ideas to get your students writing and telling stories on their own. This workshop will also include complimentary access to the online resource “Story Village, USA!” This digital package includes three hours of downloadable video adventure stories, 15 audio folktales, 15 articles of interest, history journals, and annotated bibliographies.

Story Guides for the Classroom:

ISC continues to host and expand educational materials in its [Learning Library](#) with resources for both educators and students.

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Success/Challenge of Grant and Lessons Learned

ISC's youth programming is designed to reach elementary, middle, high school, and college students in East Tennessee and beyond. We solicit feedback from our target audiences, including preferred formats and specialized content that teachers are looking for to support student learning. ISC also consults with relevant educational partners, individuals, and advisors when developing and refining programs.

We are sincerely grateful to the Niswonger Foundation for believing in this critically important work, for being one of ISC's most valuable educational partners, and for working with us to enrich the lives of young people through storytelling.

Budget and expenditure report – see attached

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**Niswonger Foundation Grant
Budget and Expenditure Report
July 2022 - June 2023**

Budget

Live Streaming the National Storytelling Festival	\$	5,000.00
Underwriting Support for ISC's Children's Programming	\$	3,500.00
Elementary School Teacher Workshop	\$	1,500.00
Total Budget	\$	10,000.00

Allocated Expenditures

Live Streaming the National Storytelling Festival		
Videographer Technical Services & Support		
Festival Stage Lighting, Camera Placement, & Sound Support		
Expanded Marketing through billboards in high traffic areas &		
National Public Radio Stations across the U.S.	\$	6,260.00
Underwriting Support for ISC's Children's Programming		
Children's Ticket Subsidy - Storytelling Live - 320 Students @ \$7	\$	2,240.00
Elementary School Teacher Workshop		
Teacher Workshop Subsidy - 30 Teachers @ \$50	\$	1,500.00
Total Allocated Expenditures	\$	10,000.00