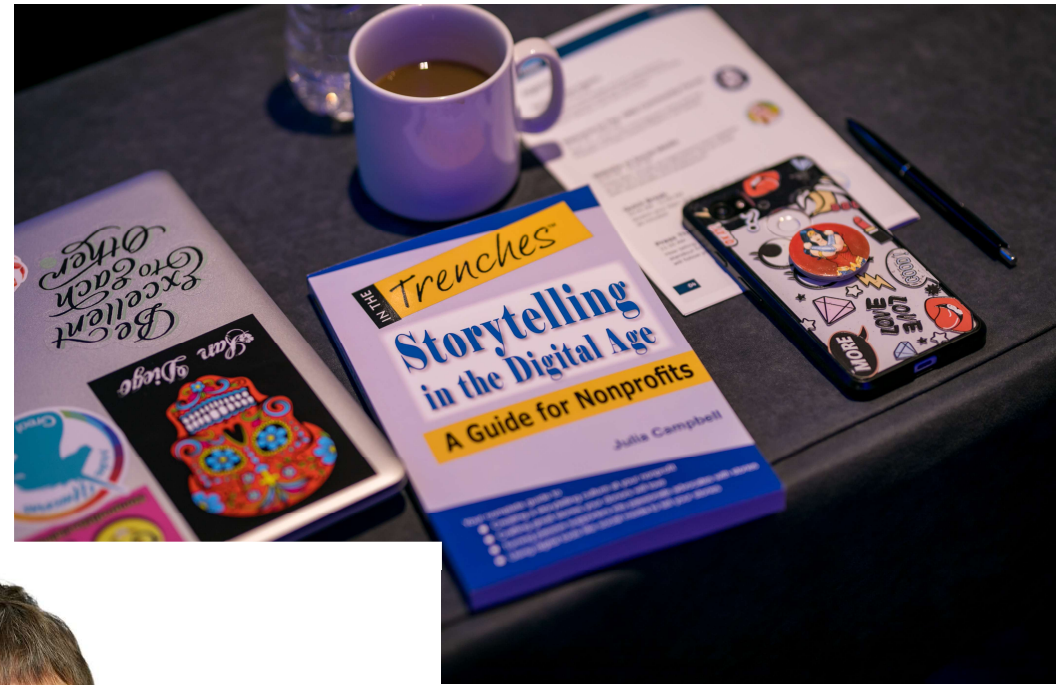




TELLING THEIR STORY, RESPECTFULLY: ETHICAL STORYTELLING FOR CBOS

Julia Campbell
www.JCSocialMarketing.com

NONPROFITnation



TODAY WE'LL COVER:

Why ethical storytelling matters

Common storytelling mistakes

A practical framework

Alternative ways to tell stories

Creating simple policies

Real-life scenarios

The stories we tell
CREATE
the world
WE LIVE IN.

HOW STORYTELLING AFFECTS THE BRAIN

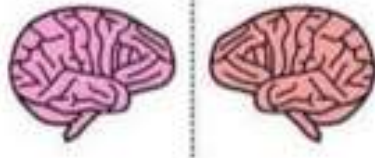
NEURAL COUPLING

A story activates parts in the brain that allows the listener to turn the story into their own ideas and experience thanks to a process called neural coupling.



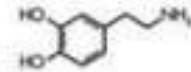
MIRRORING

Listeners will not only experience the similar brain activity to each other, but also to the speaker.



DOPAMINE

The brain releases dopamine into the system when it experiences an emotionally charged event, making it easier to remember and with greater accuracy.



CORTEX ACTIVITY

When processing facts, two areas of the brain are activated (Broca's and Wernicke's area). A well-told story can engage many additional areas, including the motor cortex, sensory cortex and frontal cortex.





“What unites people? Armies? Gold? Flags? Stories. There’s nothing in the world more powerful than a good story. Nothing can stop it.

–Tyrion Lannister

AI cannot write
your stories.

Your stories are
what make you
irreplaceable.





STORYTELLING IS NOT A TACTIC.

Collecting, crafting, and sharing stories about your work and the problem that you solve in the community is **part of your mission.**

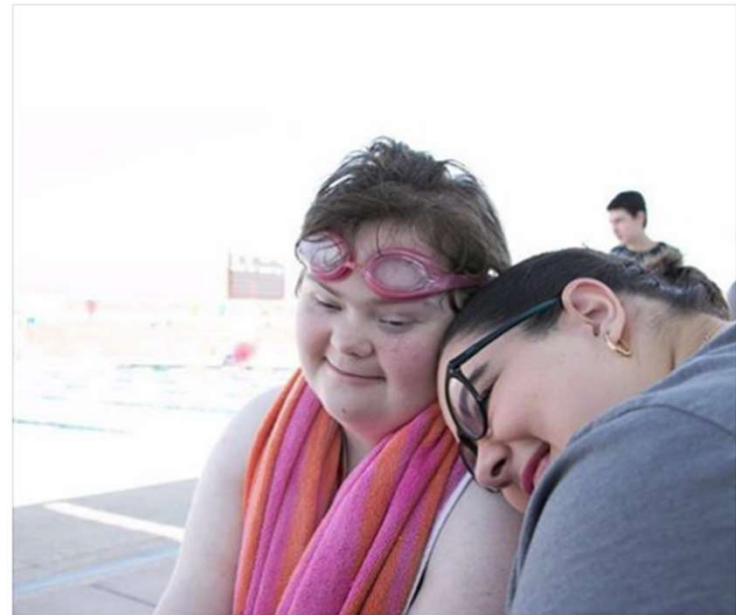
STORYTELLING CONNECTS THE DOTS FOR YOUR DONORS.



Best Buddies International

October 11 at 8:13pm · 🌐

"The best decision I ever made was joining Best Buddies in 8th grade. 7 years and counting with this gem💖💖" - Jacque Kaercher



jacquekaercher

👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share

☰ Buffer

✉ Hootlet



STORY SCOUTING FRAMEWORK



A practical framework staff can use in everyday work to:



recognize meaningful moments



reflect on why they matter



capture stories simply and naturally

STORY SCOUTING FRAMEWORK



IDENTIFY



COLLECT



SHARE

A top-down view of a wooden desk. In the center is an open notebook with lined pages and an orange bookmark. To the right is a white cup filled with brown coffee. To the left are several pieces of crumpled white paper. A hand holding a red pen is visible at the bottom right. A black rectangular box with white text is overlaid on the notebook.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY STORIES IN YOUR EVERYDAY WORK

THINK LIKE A DETECTIVE:

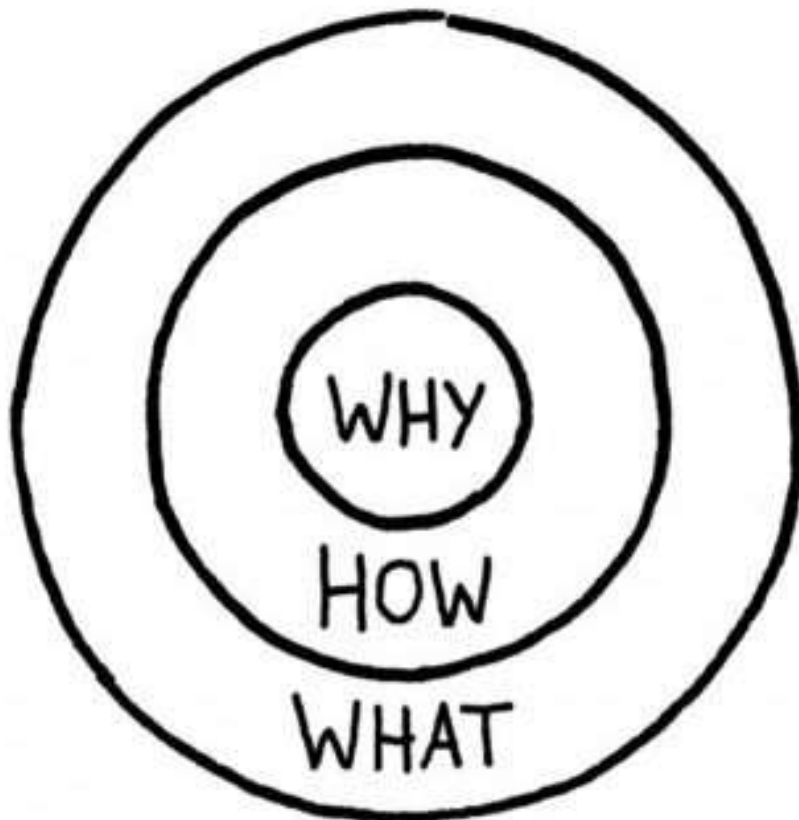
Who are the people nobody notices?

What victories go uncelebrated?

What moments happen every week that we take for granted?

What stories would disappear if no one captured them?





© 2013 Simon Sinek, Inc.

What

Every organization on the planet knows WHAT they do. These are products they sell or the services they offer.

How

Some organizations know HOW they do it. These are the things that make them special or set them apart from their competition.

Why

Very few organizations know WHY they do what they do. WHY is not about making money. That's a result. It's a purpose, cause or belief. It's the very reason your organization exists.



THINK
NOTEWORTHY,
NOT
NEWSWORTHY.



It doesn't have to make headlines.



Your donors want something of note.

“SO, TELL US YOUR STORY...”



What has been your favorite memory?

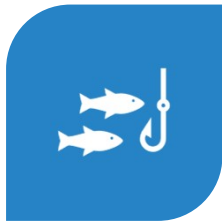
How did you feel when you first discovered us?

What is one reason that you continue to support us?

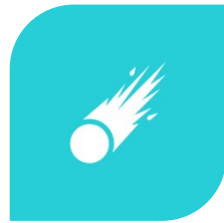
What impact have you witnessed in the community because of our work?

What drives you?

CAPTIVATING STORY BUILDING BLOCKS



HOOK



CHARACTER



STAKES



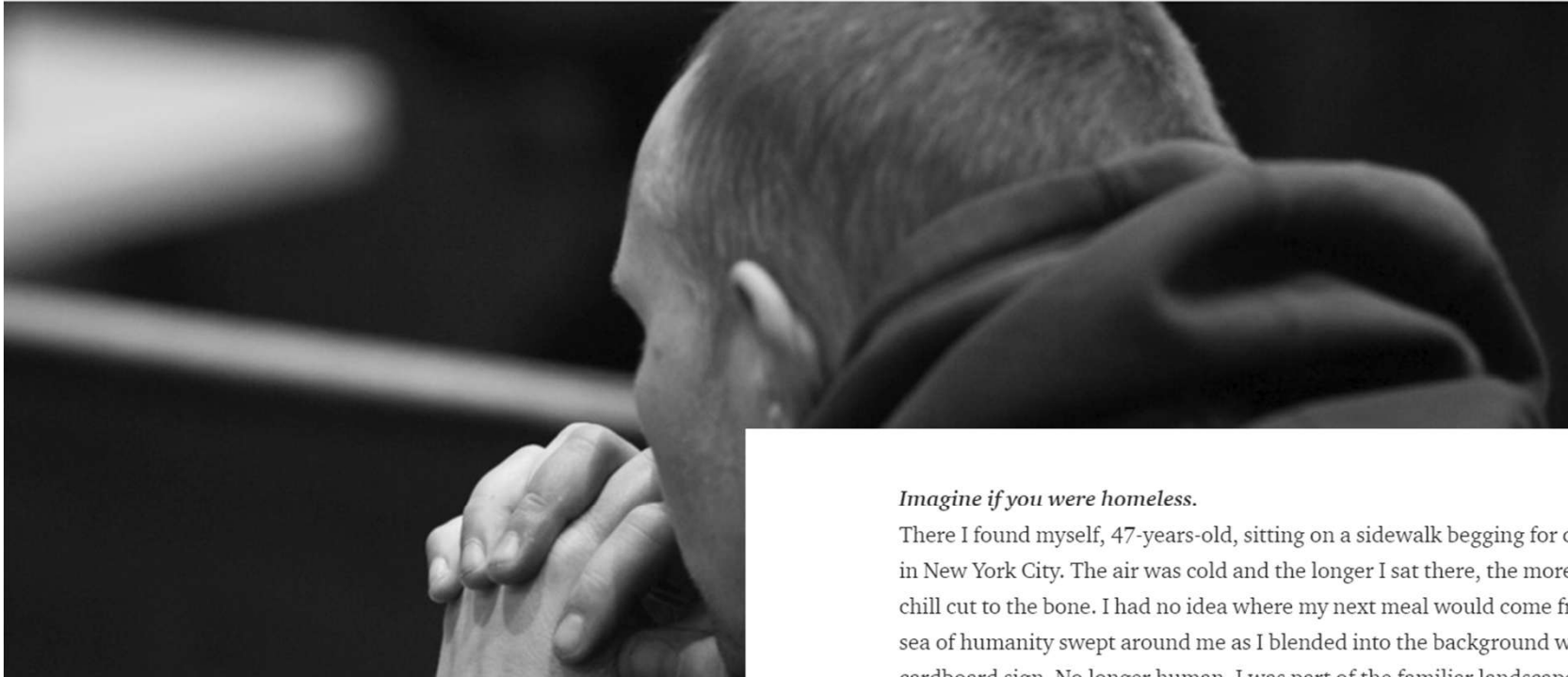
DETAILS



Looking around her new apartment in Lynn, 25-year-old Christina -- who didn't want her last name used -- can't believe how far she's come in the past four years. During that time she's gone from jail to working full-time as a medical assistant and living with her three kids.

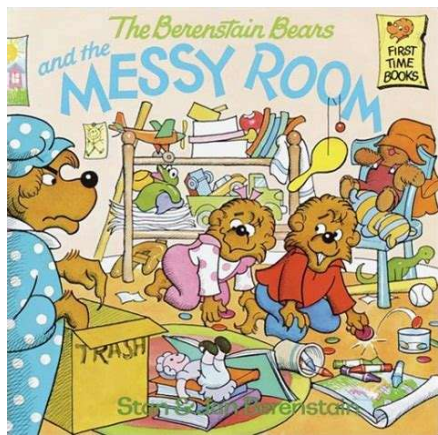
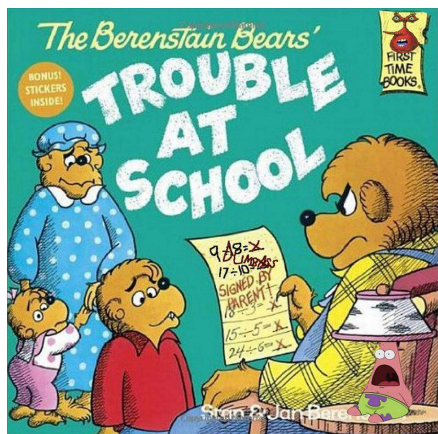
"Four years ago, are you kidding me?" she says, as tears stream down her face. "I couldn't do anything, and I know it sounds horrible. I'm sitting here crying about something that I had control over, and I chose to destroy it. "

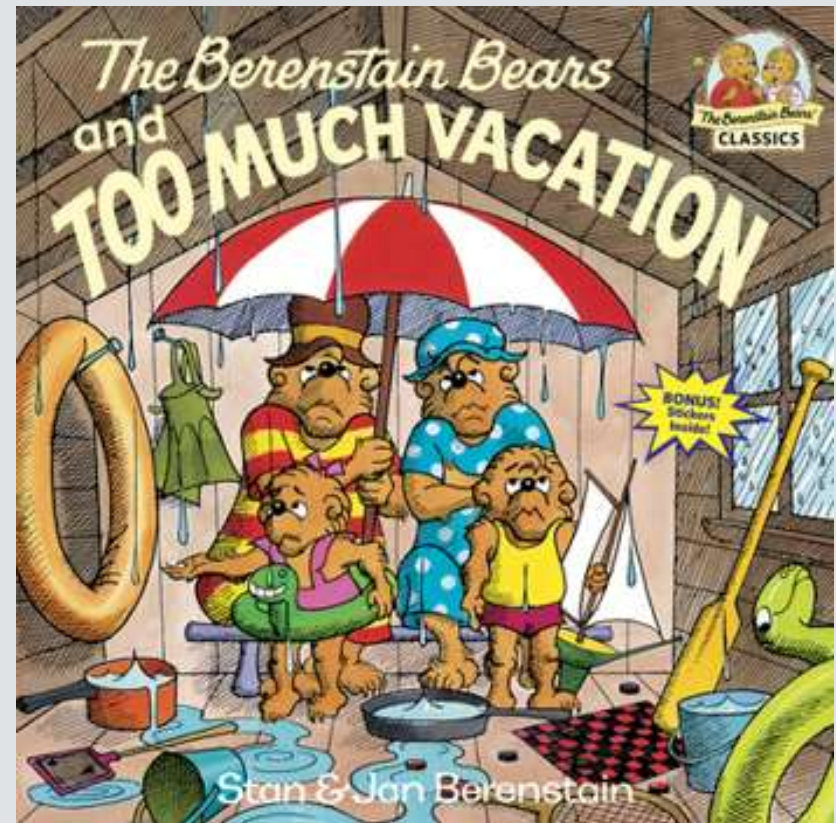
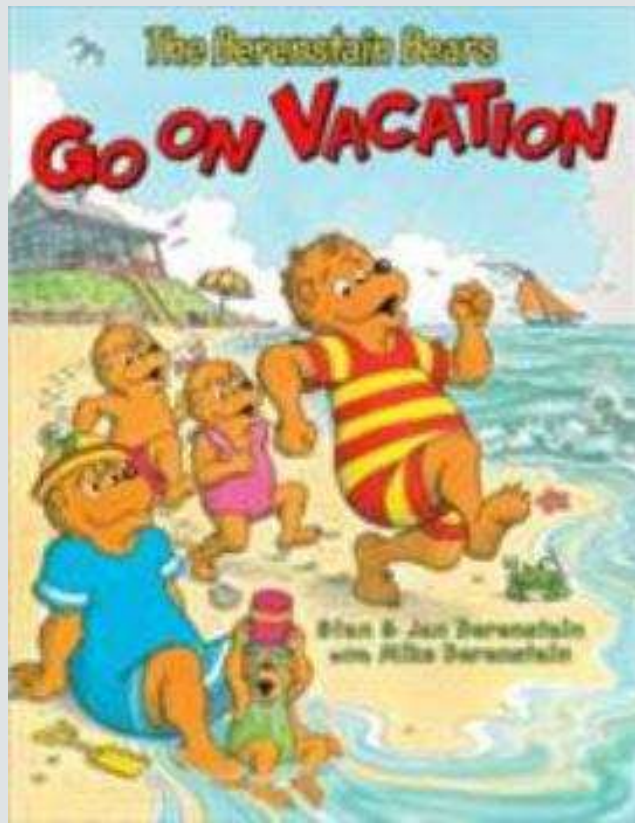
Imagine if you were homeless.

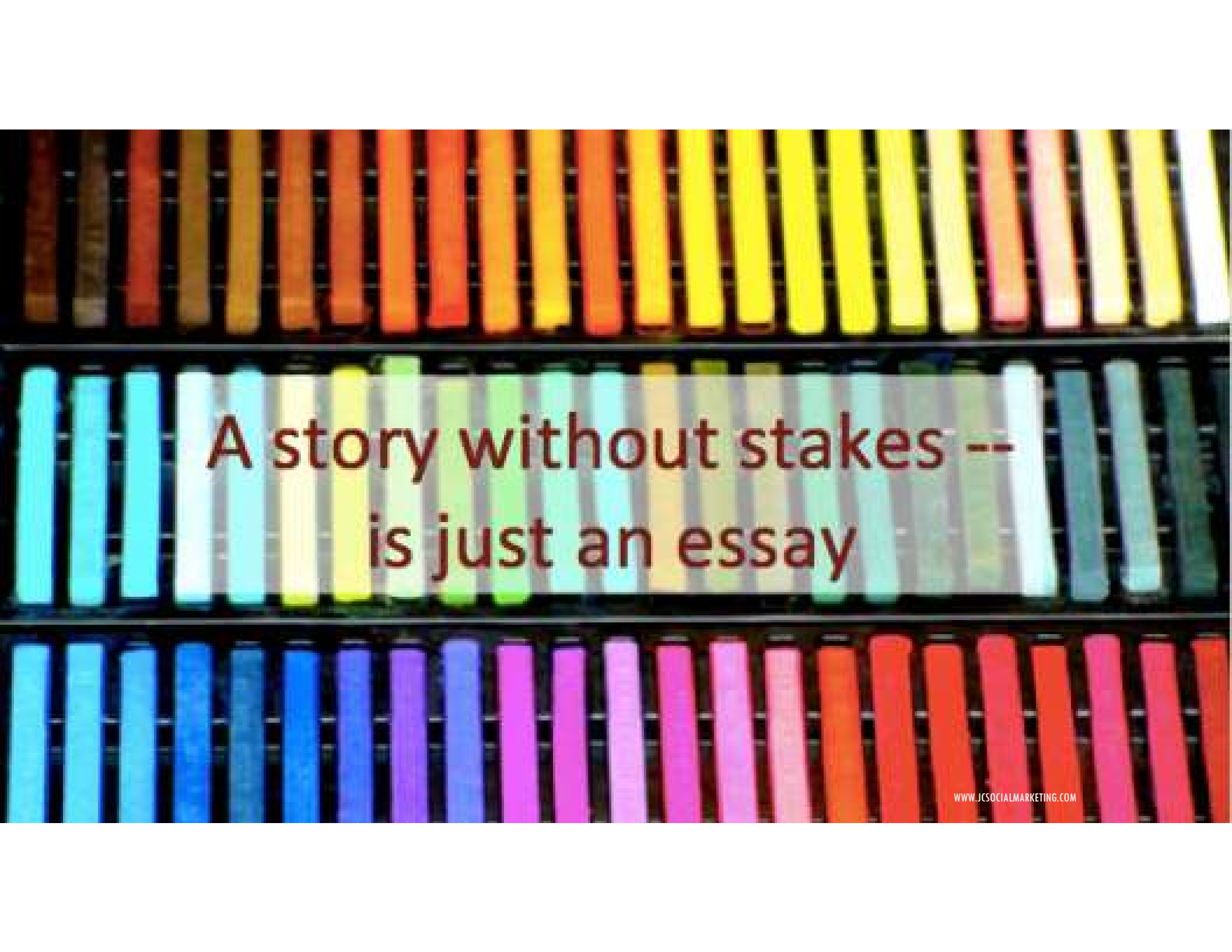


Imagine if you were homeless.

There I found myself, 47-years-old, sitting on a sidewalk begging for change in New York City. The air was cold and the longer I sat there, the more the chill cut to the bone. I had no idea where my next meal would come from. The sea of humanity swept around me as I blended into the background with my cardboard sign. No longer human, I was part of the familiar landscape of this renowned city. They say that if you can make it here, you can make it anywhere. I found myself amongst those who blended into the background, like part of the concrete, because they definitely weren't making it and there was no light at the end of the tunnel either. How did I find myself here?







A story without stakes --
is just an essay

ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR STORYTELLING



C.A.R.E. STORYTELLING FRAMEWORK

C – Consent

A – Agency

R – Respect

E – Empowerment

CONSENT

Deep consent means that the storyteller understands:

Exactly how their story will be used, both in terms of purpose and method of distribution;

That they feel empowered to remove themselves from the process at any time;

That they are under no obligation to tell their story as a condition of receiving services at your organizations;

That they will not receive any preferential treatment or status as a result of sharing their story;

That they have the right to ask the organization to remove the story from any online, print, or other media at any time without any fear of reprisal or negative consequences



WILLING IS NOT THE SAME AS READY

Someone may say yes because

they want to help

they trust you

they feel obligated

they don't know what comes later

Being ready means they understand

permanence

audience

emotional impact

future consequences

AGENCY

People own their stories.

Organizations borrow them.

Whenever possible, allow the storyteller to use their **own words and voice.**



"I continue to do this work after twelve years **because of hope**. It's not just inspiring hope in those we serve, but the hope they inspire in me: hope that even in the darkest times, **change is available to us and it is possible.**"

-G.J.
Intake Coordinator at CRC



RESPECT

Avoid

poverty porn

trauma as entertainment

before/after clichés

oversimplification



LANGUAGE MATTERS

Instead of

"They were rescued."

"They overcame."

"They were saved."

Use

"They chose..."

"They worked toward..."

"They shared..."

"They accomplished..."

EMPOWERMENT

Focus on:

growth

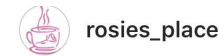
strengths

relationships

resilience

hope

rather than only crisis



rosies_place



11 likes

rosies_place All her life, Muqeedah struggled with mental health issues. We met her when she was sleeping in her car in Rosie's Place parking lot. That was the start of a new life. To see a video of Muqeedah's story, click on our bio. [#HHweek](#)

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Followed by the_cabot, northshoremag, kingfishmedia + 4 more



amirahnewengland • Following

amirahnewengland It's #MilestoneMonday! A woman has completed her 30 Day Program and is now entering Phase1 of her full whole-person care program at Amirah! We're so proud of the hard work she's done during her first month and that she is choosing to continue her journey with us. Please join us in congratulating her and supporting her for the days ahead. .

#WholePersonCare #milestone #monday
#progress #survivor #safehome
#sextrafficking #humantrafficking
#traffickingsurvivors #TraumaRecovery
#journey #fromexploitationtoliberation
#boston #massachusetts #newengland
#HopeLivesHere



22 likes

MAY 21

Add a comment...



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ASPIRATIONS, NOT CHALLENGES

“There are too many people in America whose worthiest aspirations and contributions are brutalized daily by relentless classism, racism, and assaults on their souls for repudiating the American myth by simply existing.

We need to tell their story better.”

~Trabian Shorters, Founder of BMe Community: [‘You Can’t Lift People Up by Putting Them Down’: How to Talk About Tough Issues of Race, Poverty, and More](#)



Deficit Framing

"John grew up in poverty and never had stable housing."

"This community lacks resources."

Strength-Based Framing

"John is known for his curiosity, humor, and resilience. As a child, he learned to adapt to frequent moves."

"This community has built strong relationships and mutual support while navigating inconsistent public investment."

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

Would your community feel proud if they saw this on social media or in an email?

Would they share it with their networks, thus increasing your reach and visibility?

Asset-framing is modeling how you want your clients and community members to see themselves.

Example from DonorsChoose.org: [The Story Continues: New Series Books for Devoted Readers | DonorsChoose project by Ms. Hlousek](#)



Kibera is a place where people live, where they form friendships and make meaningful connections. It is a place with its own culture and nuances, a place where people are striving to make the most out of their lives just like anyone else. Another story needs to be told. The real story.



LITTLE MOMS OF KIBERA
STORIES FROM KIBERA



MR AND MISS KIBERA – ONGOING
STORIES FROM KIBERA



BOXING IN KIBERA
STORIES FROM KIBERA

<https://kiberastories.com/stories/>

TIPS TO HELP BUILD ETHICAL STORIES

Look Beyond the Obvious Story:

What other, more nuanced stories can you tell that encapsulate your organization's work?

What small moments encapsulate the depth of your organization's work?

Expand Beyond Stories of Those Who Engage with Your Services Directly:

Volunteers, contributors, staff, Board Members, and others all have a unique perspective and experience that connect powerfully with a wide range of audiences.

CREATE GUIDING DOCUMENTS

Examples include:

A storyteller Bill of Rights;

a written code of ethics or value statement to guide storytelling across different media and departments;

a checklist for staff, volunteers, and Board of Directors that codifies awareness around ethical issues.



STORYTELLER BILL OF RIGHTS: EXAMPLES

<https://immigrantsrising.org/storytelling/bill-of-rights/>

<https://breakthroughctx.org/storyteller-bill-of-rights/>

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61e0aa683eff0705ceb89b6d/t/6250b7aa7eec675efdda9628/1649457066633/RELATE+Lab+Storyteller+Bill+of+Rights.pdf>

When sharing or being asked to share my story by Breakthrough Central Texas, I have the right to:

- Choose when, where, how and if to tell my story based on the request, without any negative impact on my relationship with Breakthrough staff or participation in Breakthrough programming
- Ask for training and guidance before and after accepting invitations for speaking engagements
- Ask whom the audience is, how the story will be used, and the purpose of having my story told
- Answer only questions that I am comfortable with
- Use discretion in order to protect myself, my loved ones and my personal information
- Be recognized and identified as I choose
- Ask for editing rights over my story and how I am identified
- Share any and all aspects of my story
- Not be expected to represent experiences that are not my own
- Ask that my story not be shared without my explicit consent
- Ask for fair compensation
- Opt out at any time

STORYTELLING PRINCIPLES OF TRUST

When Breakthrough asks people to share their stories, we promise to:

- Encourage and promote a wide spectrum of experiences and stories
- Frame stories from a position of strength not victimization
- Be transparent about why people are being asked to share their stories as well as any expectations and goals
- Be transparent about when and how the story will be shared and who the audience will be
- Request prior approval from story sharers before sharing their personal information and stories, and before recording
- Provide training in public speaking and/or interviews
- Respect story sharers' right to say no or opt out at any point
- Provide ample support before, during, and after the story sharing process
- Encourage opportunities for healing through the story sharing process
- Provide fair compensation
- Stay faithful to our Storytellers Bill of Rights

EVERY ORGANIZATION NEEDS



SIMPLE PHOTO
RELEASE



CONSENT
PROCESS



STORY APPROVAL
PROCESS



STAFF
GUIDELINES



ANNUAL REVIEW

Ethical Storytelling

Do we have permission?

Can we tell this story?

Is the story accurate?

Does this help our mission?

Trauma-Informed Storytelling

Is the person emotionally ready?

Should we tell this story now?

Is the storyteller protected?

Does this honor the storyteller?

GROUP DISCUSSION: SCENARIOS

-  **Share as planned**
-  **Share, but make changes**
-  **Wait and revisit later**
-  **Don't share this story**

ETHICAL STORYTELLING QUICK CHECK

Before you publish, ask:

- ✓ Did the storyteller choose to participate?
- ✓ Do they understand where this story will be shared?
- ✓ Does this story preserve dignity?
- ✓ Does it emphasize strengths—not just challenges?
- ✓ Would I feel comfortable if this story were about me?
- ✓ Does this story advance our mission?

YOUR STORIES ARE THE GOLD.



“Think of the story itself as gold.



You mine the gold, you capture the story.



Then you bring it back to your office and you need to pound that gold into different shapes and sizes, depending on whom you’re talking to, or also where you’re telling it.”



~Andy Goodman

WHERE YOU SHARE DEPENDS ON...

Your goals!

What do you hope to achieve
with digital storytelling?

What does success look like?

What do you want people to
do?



WHERE YOU SHARE DEPENDS ON...

Your target audience!

Where do they spend their time?

Which platforms do they use?



Tatiana, Worcester, MA, 12 years old

“

Girls Who Code makes me feel brave because I'm confident in myself; I know that I can do it. I'm a 12-year-old, and usually I have to listen to an adult—but now I know that girls can be inspired to try new things and know they can be engineers.

”

WHERE YOU SHARE DEPENDS ON...

Your capacity!

How much time do you have?

What kind of budget do you have?

REAL-LIFE STORIES

What Is It Like to Be a Childhood Cancer Survivor? It's Complicated.

by Zoe Enderle Wagner

🕒 June 25, 2018

Honored Kid Zoe was diagnosed with [acute myeloid leukemia](#) when she was a teenager. Now, almost four years after finishing treatment and getting the news that the cancer was gone, Zoe is taking a look at what she's learned during her cancer — and cancer-free — journey.



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DONATE

OUR WORK

TAKE ACTION

ABOUT US

GIVE YOUR BIRTHDAY



250 MILLION
KIDS CAN'T READ THIS

LET'S CHANGE THAT →

YOUR WEBSITE

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Stories of Changed Lives

Evan

Evan's image of himself was distorted. Meth. Alcohol. Cocaine. He was held captive to his addiction. But he's no longer an addict. Today, he's healthy, he's sober, and he's taken on a new image.

"I had to break down and reach my hand out, and I feel like God extended His hand to me and lifted me up," he says.

[READ MORE](#)





"Moving in to this place means freedom."

Don, a Boston native, returned home after 32 years to deal with health issues. After hitting rock bottom and experiencing homelessness, Don settled in one of Pine Street's permanent supportive housing locations.



"It made me feel so good to move in."

Our Outreach team met Christine on the streets, and talked to her at length about coming in to shelter. They told her about a house in JP where she could live if she worked to get sober. Finally, she said yes.

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<https://www.matter.ngo/inspirational-volunteer-story/>

An Inspirational Volunteer Story: Meet Caitlin

Meet Caitlin. A student at [The Blake School](#) in Hopkins, 13-year-old Caitlin is one of **MATTER**'s young volunteers with an inspirational volunteer story. Back in 2020, Caitlin began participating in an optional Service Pathway program through her school that encourages students to volunteer during their free time. This inspired her whole family to volunteer. They bought a couple **MATTERbox Volunteer Kits** and packed

ING.COM

Read Volunteers' Stories



03.24.2019

For this teen, the 20th placement was the

After more than a decade in foster care, and with his CASA volunteer by his side, Jeremy headed to a secure future with his adoptive family.

[READ MORE >](#)



03.24.2019

Teen succeeds in school with the help of a CASA

Thanks to his own hard work and the support of an adult with the time and initiative to enable his school success, Michael is now a full-time community college student.

[READ MORE >](#)



03.24.2019

CASA/GAL volunteers are more than a voice in

In becoming effective advocates, CASA/GAL volunteers become more.

[READ MORE >](#)

EMAIL



WEEKLY NEWS

Featured patient story



Sweet 16 at St. Jude

Patient Anna wasn't able to celebrate her 16th birthday at home. Instead, a group of friends from her hometown made the journey to St. Jude, making her birthday a sweet success. [Read her story.](#)

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Julia Campbell <juliaclairecampbell@gmail.com>

"I never felt like I was looked down on because I was homeless."

1 message

Our Health California <care@ourhealthcalifornia.org>
Reply-To: care@ourhealthcalifornia.org
To: julia@jcsocialmarketing.com

Fri, Aug 17, 2018 at 11:04 AM



Herve remembers the exact date he broke his ankle. It's a day that changed everything.

He was living behind the west L.A. library when he stumbled on a curb late at night. Paramedics brought him to Providence Saint John's Health Center's emergency department. From there, a team of people guided him through the process of healing, recovering, and finding a permanent home.

Meet Herve's 'angels' -- the heroes who go above and beyond to change lives for Santa Monica's homeless. You'll never forget this incredible story of compassion.



[Get to know Herve's heroes](#)

In the U.S., one in five homeless people live in California. In recent years, the population has skyrocketed in areas like Santa Monica.

Caregivers, firefighters, and social workers are at the front lines of caring for this vulnerable population. As the numbers of homeless have grown, these caretakers have teamed up to find real solutions to the crisis.

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*Paul W. Hamann,
President & CEO*

May 28, 2020

Dear Friend,

I am a sucker for traditions.

Every Easter, I continue my mother's tradition of making lamb cakes, which I then share with my neighbors. On Fat Tuesday, I have to eat a doughnut because my family always had homemade doughnuts, to celebrate the German tradition of *Fastnacht*, on that day. Each year, on the last night of my annual vacation in Mexico, my companions and I—with tears in our eyes—toast to returning at the same time next year. We then go out to the same restaurant for our final dinner as we have done for the last 15 years.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Short and sweet

Poignant

Eye-catching visuals

Specific call-to-action

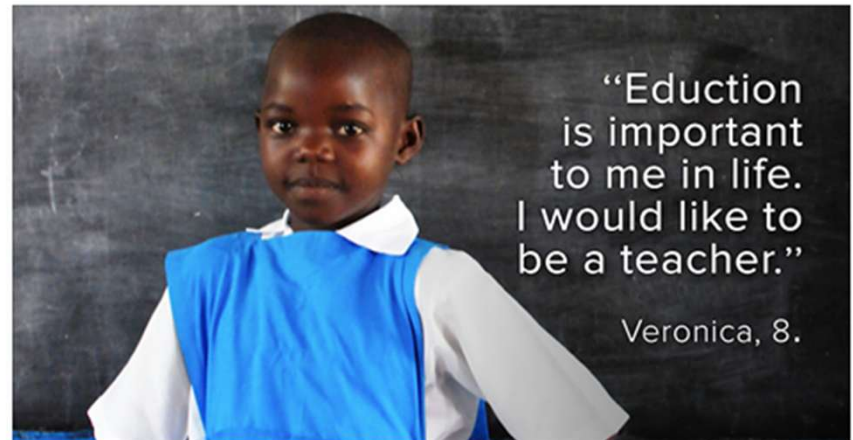


Worldreader

January 10 at 11:00am · 🌐

Veronica wants to be a teacher. Thanks to our supporter [Katie Linendoll](#), Veronica's school will be getting 50 new e-readers and hundreds of digital books. That means Veronica's dream just became a whole lot more of a reality.

To learn more about how you can sponsor a school with e-books visit:
<http://bit.ly/1JSRg3I>



Worldreader - Sponsor a School or Library in Africa

You pick a school to sponsor from a list of projects ready for funding, and we help you send the school 50 e-readers with 100 e-books each.

WORLDREADER.ORG

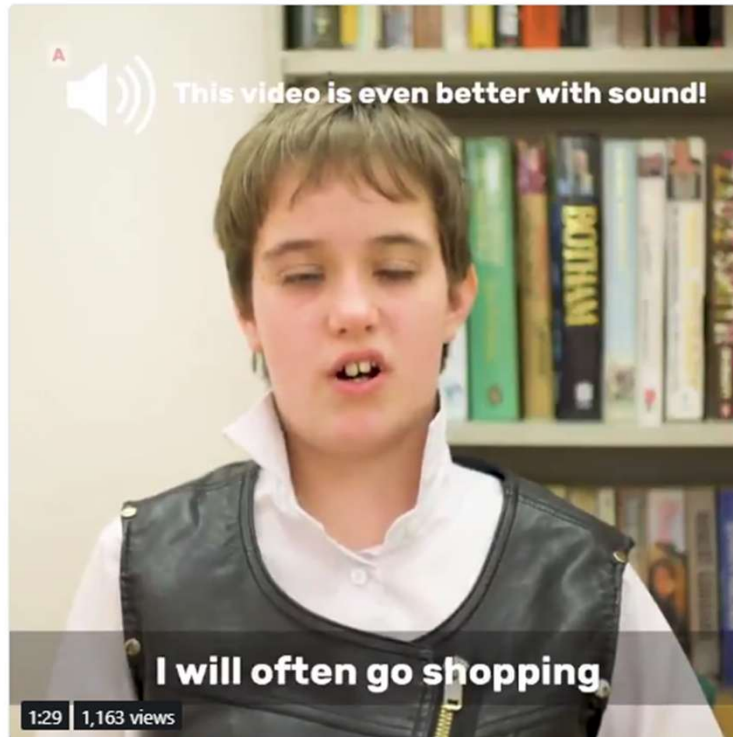


Julie Bentley Retweeted



Action for Children @actnforchildren · 2h

Today marks the start of #CarersWeek. We spoke to young carers who bear the responsibility of caring for a parent. It can be a worrying and stressful thing to do - and Action for Children offer practical and emotional support to ensure they enjoy and achieve, like their peers.



3 QUESTIONS FOR STORIES THAT CREATE IMPACT

Are we telling stories that preserve the **humanity, complexity, and depth of their work** as well as the lives of the people with whom we work?

Are we telling stories that **foster realistic expectations** for what 'success' looks like?

Are we telling stories that **lift up, dignify, and affirm the experience** of the people we work with while still meeting our development and communications goals?





PEOPLE WILL FORGET
WHAT YOU SAID.
PEOPLE WILL FORGET
WHAT YOU DID.
BUT PEOPLE WILL
NEVER FORGET HOW
YOU MADE THEM FEEL.

Maya Angelou

CONNECT WITH ME!

Connect on LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/juliacampbell/>

My website:

www.jcsocialmarketing.com

My podcast, Nonprofit Nation:

<https://pod.link/nonprofitnation/>





SIX WORD STORY

“KATIE STEALS TO FEED HER KIDS.”



Name of a person (doesn't have to be a real name).



There are stakes, conflict – even in just six words.



SIX-WORD STORY EXERCISE

We will take 5-10 minutes.
Write out your 6-word story.
Share it with us!

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EpFCUUKj4r3_QEbCanrGd_twtQtrliZFsq9yon-sKEU/edit?usp=sharing