During these challenging days in the United States, our work at StoryCorps—building connection and understanding through the interviews we record and the stories we share—could not be more vital. We continue to work tirelessly to grow StoryCorps into a sustaining national institution with a focus on helping shape a more exceptional America by driving empathy and promoting a culture of listening. By sharing stories collected from more than a quarter million people in this country, StoryCorps illuminates truths that are vital to a civil society and healthy democracy: we share so much more in common than divides us and the fact that all of our stories matter equally and infinitely.

In 2015, StoryCorps doubled down on the public service we deliver to the nation. Over the course of the year, more than 11,000 people recorded interviews in StoryCorps booths across the United States and through our direct outreach; we partnered with more than 400 nonprofit organizations to record the widest swathe of American voices; we broadcast 68 radio stories on NPR; we released four new animations seen by millions; and in March 2015, we introduced to the world the free StoryCorps app at TED.

The app makes it possible to record StoryCorps interviews any time, any place on a mobile device and with one tap, upload them to our archive at the Library of Congress. The launch was a defining moment in our history, giving us the opportunity to scale our interview experience like never before. From the moment the app launched, we saw people of all ages—many who had never heard of StoryCorps or even NPR—download the app and start recording interviews with complete fidelity to the spirit of our work.

Later in the year, we decided to see if we might be able to create large-scale participation in StoryCorps through the app. We created The Great Thanksgiving Listen, in which we invited U.S. history teachers across the nation to ask their students to honor an elder with an interview during the holiday weekend. Over a period of eight weeks we worked with NPR, local public radio stations, school districts, and a host of tech, media, and education organizations to get the word out. The effort succeeded beyond all expectations. Over that single weekend, we saw 55,000 interviews uploaded to the StoryCorps archive—more interviews than we’d recorded in the first ten years of StoryCorps combined. We’re excited to expand The Great Thanksgiving Listen in 2016 and beyond.

We are undoubtedly living through extremely difficult days in these United States—from the shootings in Orlando, Baton Rouge, Minneapolis, and Dallas, to a presidential election that feels at times like it’s ripping the nation apart. At this moment in our country’s history, StoryCorps’ work to build authentic bridges of understanding is more vital than ever.

“Can we find the character, as Americans, to open our hearts to each other? Can we see in each other a common humanity and a shared dignity, and recognize how our different experiences have shaped us? ... With an open heart, we can learn to stand in each other’s shoes and look at the world through each other’s eyes.”

President Barack Obama
Memorial Service for Dallas Police Officers
July 12, 2016

“At our best, we practice empathy, imagining ourselves in the lives and circumstances of others. This is the bridge across our nation’s deepest divisions. And it is not merely a matter of tolerance, but of learning from the struggles and stories of our fellow citizens and finding our better selves in the process.”

President George W. Bush
Memorial Service for Dallas Police Officers
July 12, 2016
MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

In the past year, we took giant strides toward our vision for StoryCorps as an essential American institution touching the lives of everyone and calling us all to our best selves.

We launched the StoryCorps mobile app to make it possible for anyone living anywhere to use StoryCorps as a tool to record a conversation with someone they care about or look up to. With the app in place, we presented The Great Thanksgiving Listen—in partnership with leading educators, tech innovators, and civic organizations—and thanks to the nation’s schoolchildren and their elders, we recorded nearly as many stories over the long holiday weekend as in our previous decade of existence.

We expanded our animation program to reach more people—particularly younger ones, the next generation of listeners and viewers—and started a partnership with the web platform Upworthy to enable access to our content for millions more users. One animation was Traffic Stop, a harrowing story of a young African American man’s brush with death at the hands of abusive cops—a story all too timely in a year in which the nation has been wracked by debate over police practices and the continuing legacy of racism.

StoryCorps was the go-to organization for stories of marriage equality, in the year of the landmark Supreme Court ruling, and for the rich histories of LGBTQ pioneers in the Stonewall era and the hard years of the AIDS epidemic. I’m particularly proud and fond of another animation, The Saint of Dry Creek, in which a gay man in middle age fondly recalls the understanding that his farmer father showed him as a flamboyant teenager.

In each of these short films, as in everything StoryCorps does, a few moments of listening—of opening ears and hearts to someone else’s story—can change perspectives, and possibly lives. Nothing is more important—indeed, urgent—at this time in the United States, when harsh voices are trying to turn us against one another and target our immigrant and Muslim brothers and sisters in particular.

We know from many thousands of StoryCorps sessions, bigotry and hatred are not who we are in America. And with your help, we can make the voices that represent our best selves—love and caring, hard work and dedicated parenting and teaching, laughter and tears, acceptance and dignity, and all the pieces of the vibrant quilt that makes up this country—ring out more strongly.

On behalf of my colleagues on the StoryCorps board and staff, thanks for your support. It’s more vital than ever.

Gara LaMarche, StoryCorps Board Chair
YEAR IN REVIEW

5,984

interviews were archived at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress

11,008

people of all backgrounds recorded StoryCorps signature stories in our StoryBooths and through our outreach efforts

Four animations were released in 2015, viewed more than 15 million times by audiences worldwide

STORYCORPS APP

debuted in March 2015

200,000+

registered users in its first year; Best New App featured in iTunes and Google Play store

ONE BIG IDEA:

Capture the stories of a generation in one weekend

50,000+

stories uploaded

23,000

downloads of the Teacher Toolkit

50+

NPR partner stations promoted in local markets across the country with national media coverage

Since its founding in 2003, StoryCorps has touched the lives of more than a quarter million people in America.

66,080

signature interviews in the StoryCorps collection at the Library of Congress

116,595

people of all backgrounds have recorded in our recording booths

The Saint of Dry Creek featured at the Sundance Film Festival in 2016

#THEGREATLISTEN
It is rare to hear a nine-year-old interview an adult on a national radio broadcast. But in this conversation between Aidan Sykes and his father Albert—about the difficulties of raising an African American male in Mississippi—that’s exactly what happened. Listen to the story.

Patrick Haggerty grew up in the 1950s in rural Dry Creek, Washington. As a teenager, Patrick began to realize he was gay—something he thought he was doing a good job of hiding from others. One day his father, Charles, offered advice that showed Patrick his father knew him better than he ever realized. Watch the animation.

Ten years after Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans’ Lower Ninth Ward, plagued by slow recovery, still did not have a single grocery store. But Ninth Ward resident Burnell Cotlon set out to change that. Listen to the story.

On February 10, 2015, Yusor Abu-Salha, her husband, and her sister were all murdered at their home in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Less than a year earlier, Yusor’s 3rd grade teacher, Mussarut Jabeen, had joined her at a StoryCorps booth to record an interview. Listen to the story.

Marines Corps Corporal Zach Skiles lost five friends in Iraq. When he returned home, he had trouble holding a job, eventually ending up homeless. Until Zach and his father, Scott, sat down for a StoryCorps interview, they had not discussed Zach’s life after his time in the service ended. Listen to the story.

The Black Lives Matter movement was at the forefront of political discourse in 2015 when we released an animation based around an incident that happened to Alex Landau in 2009 in Colorado. Watch the animation.

Glenda Elliott grew up in Mayfield, Georgia, during the 1940s. Long before the 1969 Stonewall Riots launched the modern gay rights movement, she met the love of her life—a woman named Lauree. Listen to the story.
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- WBEZ 91.5

2015 Mobile Tour Partners
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The Producer’s Circle is a dedicated group of StoryCorps donors who provide critical support for our mission by contributing $1,200 or more annually. Members of the Producer’s Circle play a leading role in helping StoryCorps grow into a timeless American institution.

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FINANCIALS 2015

ASSETS

Cash & Cash Equivalents $2,675,567
Unconditional Promises to Give $3,209,612
Miscellaneous Receivables $299,928
Prepaid Expenses & Other Assets $91,776
Property & Equipment, At Cost $503,567
(net of accumulated depreciation)
Security Deposits $41,033
Total Assets $6,821,483

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Liabilities
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses $287,034
Deferred Revenue $476,625
Note Payable $697,169
Total Liabilities $1,460,828

Net Assets
Unrestricted $1,238,234
Temporarily Restricted $4,122,421 Total
Net Assets $5,360,655
Total Liabilities & Net Assets $6,821,483

REVENUE $10,372,350

- 19.5% Corporate
- 26.0% Foundations
- 20.7% Government
- 13.3% Individuals & Major Donors
- 4.6% Donated Services & Materials
- 4.4% Special Events
- 16.5% Other Income & Fees

EXPENSES $10,404,597

- 76.3% StoryCorps Program
- 11.1% Management & General
- 12.6% Fundraising

*StoryCorps’ fiscal year ended December 31, 2015.
StoryCorps’ mission is to preserve and share humanity’s stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world. We do this to remind one another of our shared humanity, to strengthen and build the connections between people, to teach the value of listening, and to weave into the fabric of our culture the understanding that everyone’s story matters. At the same time, we are creating an invaluable archive for future generations.

Listen to hundreds of stories and learn more at storycorps.org