



CONTACTS:

Blake Zidell
Blake Zidell & Associates
718-643-9052 or blake@blakezidell.com

StoryCorps Press Desk
646-723-7020 ext. 75
press@storycorps.org

**HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS NATIONWIDE WILL USE STORYCORPS MOBILE APP
TO RECORD CONVERSATIONS WITH THEIR ELDERS IN
“THE GREAT THANKSGIVING LISTEN 2017”**

**Partnership with Adobe Expands the Initiative’s Capacity to Bring People Together
Using Mobile Technology and Social Media**

Knight Foundation Supports StoryCorps Expansion with \$600,000 in New Funding

StoryCorps, the non-profit that collects, shares and preserves the stories of people of all backgrounds, is pleased to announce **The Great Thanksgiving Listen 2017**, in which high school students across the country will record a conversation with a grandparent, teacher, mentor or another elder over the holiday weekend, using the free StoryCorps mobile app. For this third year of the initiative, StoryCorps is engaged in a partnership with **Adobe** that will enable participants to use **Adobe Spark** to add photos, videos and other visual elements to their recordings, enriching stories that will be uploaded to an online StoryCorps Archive and included in the special StoryCorps collection at the **American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress**.

At a time when social media so often creates echo chambers isolating us from one another, the Great Thanksgiving Listen will use technology to bring Americans closer together.

As all of StoryCorps’ wide-serving programs, The Great Thanksgiving Listen provides an opportunity for participants to ask their counterparts about who they are, what they’ve learned in life, and how they want to be remembered. The Great Thanksgiving Listen encourages young people to seek the wisdom of previous generations in particular. “The Great Thanksgiving Listen will foster meaningful connections within families, communities and classrooms, and has the potential to strengthen our national fabric at a time when we desperately need it,” said **Dave Isay, Founder and President of StoryCorps**. “Students will come away from the project not only knowing more about the important people in their lives, and having reminded them that their lives and stories matter, but also having experienced first-hand the power of listening to bring people together. Listening is a skill critical to young people now and in their future.”

From the organization's founding in 2003, until 2015, participating in StoryCorps required visiting the StoryCorps MobileBooth that crisscrosses the country or one of the few permanent StoryBooths (in New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Atlanta). With pioneering support from the **John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**, beginning in 2014 and including follow-on funding in 2015, and with the \$1 million TED Prize awarded to Dave Isay in 2015, StoryCorps developed and launched a free mobile app that takes the StoryCorps experience out of the booth and puts it entirely in the hands of users, enabling anyone, anywhere to record and archive a conversation.

Knight Foundation today announced \$600,000 in new support to StoryCorps to improve its features and build its reach, including enhanced services for diverse groups such as multiple language versions and improved accessibility. StoryCorps will further use the funding to develop new tools for nonprofits and private sector partners as a way to generate new and ranging story collections. It will expand the ways in which users can interact with its mobile platform using personal assistants, such as Amazon Alexa and Google Home.

“StoryCorps combines the power of storytelling with the reach of technology, inviting people to connect around their shared history and unique experiences. We hope that its continued evolution will provide a model for capturing diverse voices and help build more knowledgeable communities,” said **Chris Barr, Knight Foundation director for technology innovation**.

“The Great Thanksgiving Listen is an opportunity for families to connect in a meaningful way during this special time of year. Adobe is delighted to partner with StoryCorps in helping Americans digitally capture real stories from older relatives, and to bring these historical insights and perspectives to life via Adobe Spark,” said **Aubrey Cattell, Sr. Director of Adobe Spark**. “As extra credit, students participating in this project can now use Spark to enhance their interviews, easily creating visual stories of the most meaningful memories they’ve captured. Stories make us who we are, and together StoryCorps and Adobe Spark are providing a lasting experience for students and their families.”

At the time the app launched March 2015, StoryCorps had in its booths already gathered more than 50,000 recordings—the world's largest single collection of human voices. Yet the organization has a much bigger aspiration: to become an institution that touches the life of every American. The 2015 pilot version of The Great Thanksgiving Listen revealed the initiative's potential to help StoryCorps reach that ultimate goal. Over the holiday weekend, StoryCorps gathered more than 50,000 recordings from more than 100,000 participants—as many as it had collected during the 12 years since the organization launched. To build teacher participation and excitement among broader audiences for the program, StoryCorps forged partnerships with leading education organizations, as well as media and technology companies. In a rare imprimatur, The Great Thanksgiving Listen was featured on the Google homepage with a short animation voiced by David Hyde Pierce. *The Wall Street Journal* wrote, “Imagine it: During the holidays, instead of using gadgets to ignore each other, we might use them as an excuse to look each other in the eye and listen.” In a 2016 TED Talk, StoryCorps founder and president Dave Isay addressed a global audience to talk about the 2015 pilot, sharing some of the stories it generated and the lessons it taught.

In 2017, nearly a quarter million people have been recorded and had their stories shared using the StoryCorps app. More than 75,000 stories have been shared under the premise of The Great Thanksgiving Listen.

To help bring attention to this year's Great Thanksgiving Listen, StoryCorps is working with national partners in media, technology and education, as well as school districts and educators in all 50 states. Education partners include National Education Association, Facing History and Ourselves, Teach For America, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), Civic Nation, and the Journalism Education Association; and school districts across the country. Media partners include NPR, TED and the Library of Congress. The Great Thanksgiving Listen is supported by Knight Foundation, Adobe and Barnes & Noble College.

About StoryCorps

Founded in 2003 by Dave Isay, StoryCorps has given more than 400,000 people—Americans of all backgrounds and beliefs, in towns and cities in all 50 states—the chance to record interviews about their lives. The organization preserves the recordings in its special StoryCorps archive at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, the largest single collection of human voices ever gathered, and shares select stories with the public through StoryCorps' weekly podcast, NPR broadcasts, animated shorts, digital platforms, and best-selling books. These powerful human stories reflect the vast range of American experiences, wisdom and values; engender empathy and connection; and remind us how much more we have in common than divides us.

StoryCorps is especially committed to capturing and amplifying voices least heard in the media. The StoryCorps MobileBooth, an Airstream trailer the organization has transformed into a traveling recording booth, crisscrosses the country year-round in order to gather the stories of people nationwide. With the 2015 TED Prize awarded to Dave Isay, StoryCorps launched a free mobile app that puts the StoryCorps experience entirely in the hands of users and enables anyone, anywhere to record meaningful conversations with another person and upload the audio to the Library of Congress. StoryCorps also records interviews in its permanent StoryBooths, in New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Atlanta.

Recording an interview in a StoryCorps booth couldn't be easier: You invite a loved one, or anyone else you choose, to a StoryCorps recording site. There you're met by a trained facilitator who explains the interview process, brings you into a quiet recording room and seats you across from your interview partner, each of you in front of a microphone. The facilitator hits "record," and you share a 40-minute conversation. At the end of the session, you walk away with a copy of the interview, and a digital file goes to the Library of Congress, where it will be preserved for generations to come.

StoryCorps is working to grow into an enduring national institution that fosters a culture of listening in the United States; celebrates the dignity, power and grace that can be heard in the stories we find all around us; and helps us recognize that every life and every story matter equally. In the coming years StoryCorps hopes to touch the lives of every American family.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Knight Foundation is a national foundation with strong local roots. We invest in journalism, in the arts, and in the success of cities where brothers John S. and James L. Knight once published newspapers. Our goal is to foster informed and engaged communities, which we believe are essential for a healthy democracy. For more, visit knightfoundation.org.

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