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AS AMERICANS ARE ENCOURAGED TO STAY HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS, STORYCORPS ISSUES A NATIONWIDE CALL TO DIGITALLY CONNECT STUDENTS WITH ELDERS BY RECORDING THEIR STORIES FOR AMERICAN HISTORY

The Great Thanksgiving Listen Aims to Bring Families—and the Country—Together Through Listening

NEW YORK, November 18, 2020—This Thanksgiving, **StoryCorps**, the national non-profit organization dedicated to recording, preserving, and sharing the stories of people of all backgrounds and beliefs, invites students nationwide to use the new remote recording platform [StoryCorps Connect](#) to record conversations with a grandparent, teacher, mentor, or another elder. As the nation endures a spike in COVID-19 cases, and Americans are advised to remain at home for the holidays, the **Great Thanksgiving Listen** gives families and communities a safe opportunity to come together, across generations, to listen to the stories of their loved ones. With permission, each interview becomes part of American history in the StoryCorps archive at the Library of Congress.

The Great Thanksgiving Listen provides an opportunity for participants to ask elders about who they are, what they've learned in life, and how they want to be remembered. Students (ages 13 and over) from middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities around the country, will participate in The Great Listen as an assignment to carry out over the holiday season, in a year when the holidays will look markedly different than usual.

In a recent interview, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said, “If you are in a situation where you have people who are vulnerable and you really want to be safe with them, you might want to not bring them together into a big dinner, or a big gathering where you have the possibility of a high risk of infection.”

Dr. Fauci recorded a StoryCorps conversation on November 17 with his wife, Dr. Christine Grady at their residence in Maryland.

Since older adults are considered higher risk, and therefore more likely to be isolated around the holidays, this assignment is uniquely situated to provide much needed connection, allowing for recording with high-risk family members as well as with people who have been sheltering at home together for months.

All conversations for The Great Thanksgiving Listen will be preserved in the online StoryCorps Archive and in the special StoryCorps collection at the **American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress**. More than 600,000 people have recorded StoryCorps interviews since StoryCorps’ founding in 2003, making it both the largest single collection of human voices ever gathered and a priceless repository of wisdom for future generations.

To foster participation among people of all backgrounds, StoryCorps has created a free toolkit, available at thegreatlisten.org. The toolkit includes everything families and students need to know about how to record a StoryCorps interview, how to archive for the Library of Congress, and also aligns the activities with Common Core Standards.

Whether using StoryCorps Connect or the StoryCorps mobile app, the platforms guide users through the interview experience, from recording to archiving to sharing their stories with the world. It provides easy-to-use tools to help people prepare interview questions; record high-quality conversations on their desktop or mobile devices; and upload the audio to archive.storycorps.org which serves as a home for these recordings. along with the Library of Congress. New in 2020, StoryCorps’ online archive features transcripts of participants’ interviews powered by [Google Cloud](https://www.google.com/cloud/)’s state-of-the-art AI technology and advanced machine-learning capabilities. With this innovation, StoryCorps collection of stories of our time in America is becoming more accessible to more people via search and in written word.

In recent participant and listener surveys, 88 percent of participants said that StoryCorps made them feel “connected to people of different backgrounds,” 81 percent said StoryCorps had “reminded listeners of their shared humanity,”

and 80 percent said StoryCorps “humanized social issues, events, and policies.” Through The Great Thanksgiving Listen, students and teachers can create community in virtual classrooms, and make this very odd fall feel a little less disconnected.

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. Partners include **American Federation of Teachers, Chalkbeat, Digital Promise, Facing History and Ourselves, Journalism Education Association, Museum of the City of New York, National Council for the Social Studies, National Education Association, National Educational Telecommunications Association, Teach For America, Teachers Pay Teachers**, and collaborators like **PBS LearningMedia** that provides free classroom-ready resources for educators and students.

The Great Thanksgiving Listen 2020 is made possible by the generosity of our Sponsors: [Morgan Stanley](#), the **Fetzer Institute**, and the **Gruber Family Foundation**.

Original support for the StoryCorps App has been provided by **TED** and the **John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**.

StoryCorps Connect is made possible by the **Corporation for Public Broadcasting**, a private corporation funded by the American people, and is powered by **Vonage**.

Partners include the **American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress** and **NPR**.

About StoryCorps

Founded in 2003 by Dave Isay, StoryCorps has given over 600,000 people across the United States of all backgrounds and beliefs the chance to record interviews about their lives. The organization preserves the recordings in its archive 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.

About the StoryCorps Mobile App and StoryCorps Archive

Launched with support from the 2015 TED Prize and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, our free mobile App puts the StoryCorps experience entirely in your hands so that you can record and archive a meaningful conversation with anyone, anywhere.

The App guides users through the interview experience, from start to finish, with easy-to-use tools to help you prepare interview questions, record high-quality conversations on your mobile device, and upload the audio to the StoryCorps Archive.

The StoryCorps Archive is the largest single collection of human voices, featuring conversations recorded in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. The full collection of interviews is housed at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Visit archive.storycorps.org to access a selection of the interviews shared by people who have recorded a conversation with StoryCorps since 2003. This site, made possible in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities, represents a growing archive: new interviews are added every day by StoryCorps and by people from across the country and around the world. It was developed as a resource for the public and people who have recorded with StoryCorps, as well as students, educators, researchers, noncommercial media makers, community partner organizations, and others involved in scholarly or cultural work.

About StoryCorps Connect

StoryCorps Connect is a new platform that makes it possible to record and preserve meaningful conversations remotely.

StoryCorps Connect was developed in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with generous support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and powered by Vonage. This platform will help connect generations, preserve the wisdom of humanity, and offer a source of comfort and meaning to elders who may feel isolated and alone. “Social distancing” is the exact opposite of the StoryCorps ethos, which strives to bring people together and acknowledge and celebrate our common humanity. At this time of physical separation, the StoryCorps interview is a more essential tool than ever before for bringing us together.

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