Future Possible Selves
Gallery Walk Learning Object

Introduction

Begin thinking about your future possible self by examining the pictures in this activity. Use the arrow buttons to move through the pictures. You can also click on the home button underneath each picture to return to this page.

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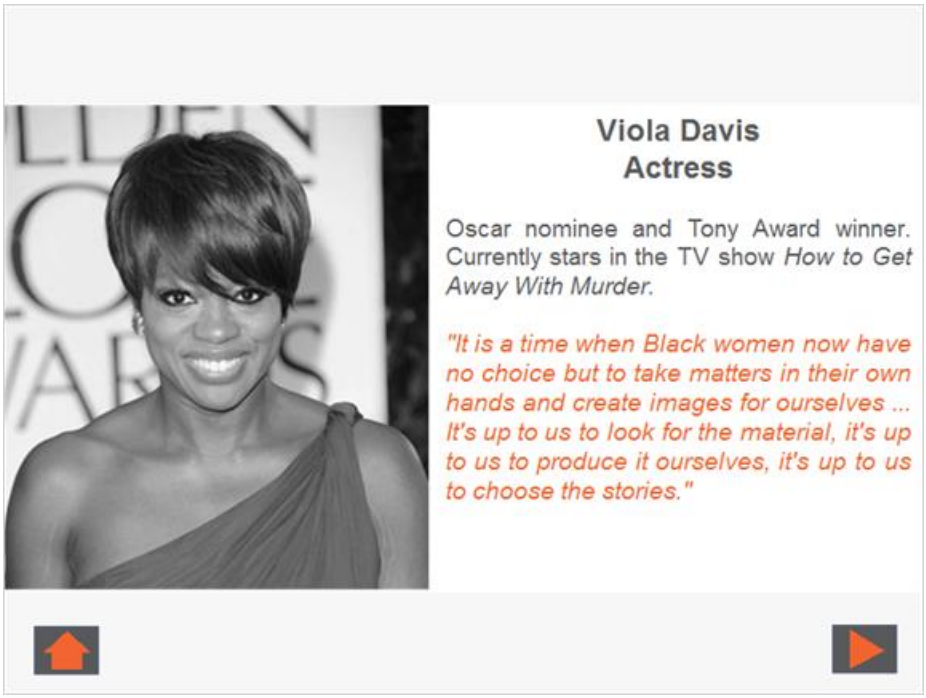
Actress: Viola Davis Actress



Oscar nominee and Tony Award winner. Currently stars in the TV show *How to Get Away With Murder*.

"It is a time when Black women now have no choice but to take matters in their own hands and create images for ourselves ... It's up to us to look for the material, it's up to us to produce it ourselves, it's up to us to choose the stories."

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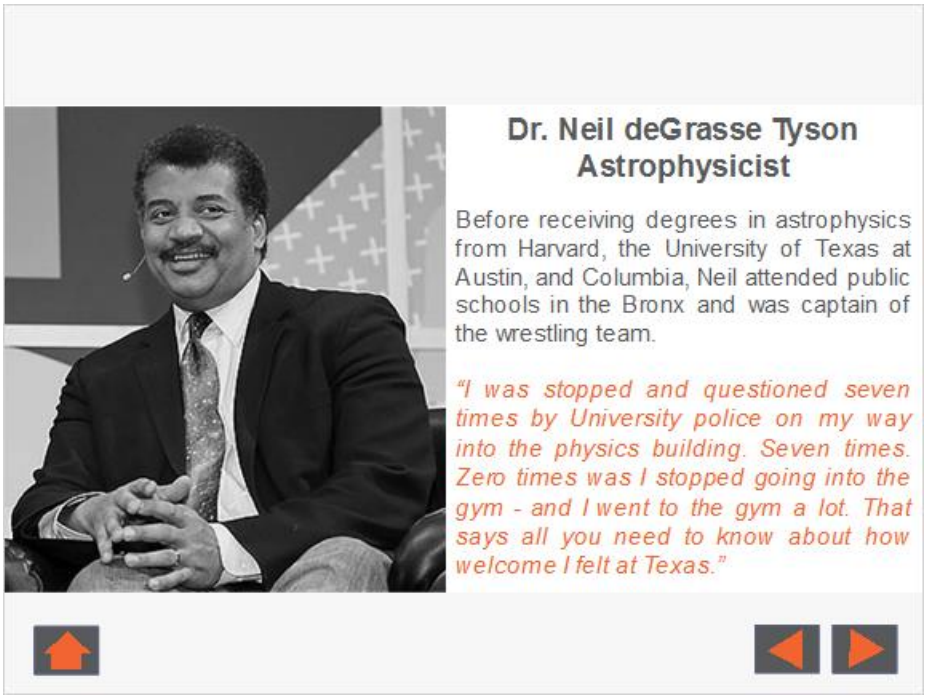
Astrophysicist: Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson



Before receiving degrees in astrophysics from Harvard, the University of Texas at Austin, and Columbia, Neil attended public schools in the Bronx and was captain of the wrestling team.

"I was stopped and questioned seven times by University police on my way into the physics building. Seven times. Zero times was I stopped going into the gym - and I went to the gym a lot. That says all you need to know about how welcome I felt at Texas."

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Chef: Marcus Samuelsson

Born in Ethiopia and adopted by a Swedish family after the death of his mother. He owns Red Rooster restaurant in Harlem. In 2011, Red Rooster hosted a fundraising dinner for the Democratic National Committee that President Obama attended. The event raised $1.5 million at $30,000/plate.

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Rapper, Record Producer, Entrepreneur: Jay-Z

Raised in Brooklyn's Marcy housing projects by a single mom, Jay-Z is one of the most financially successful hip-hop artists and entrepreneurs in America.

"You learn more in failure than you ever do in success."

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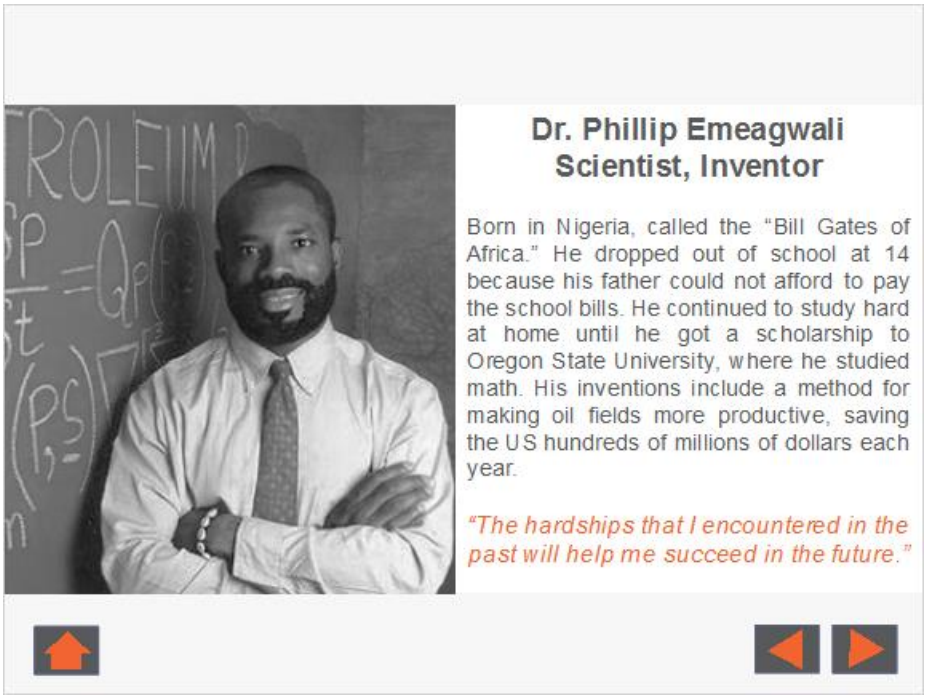
Scientist, Inventor: Dr. Phillip Emeagwali



Born in Nigeria, called the "Bill Gates of Africa." He dropped out of school at 14 because his father could not afford to pay the school bills. He continued to study hard at home until he got a scholarship to Oregon State University, where he studied math. His inventions include a method for making oil fields more productive, saving the US hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

"The hardships that I encountered in the past will help me succeed in the future."

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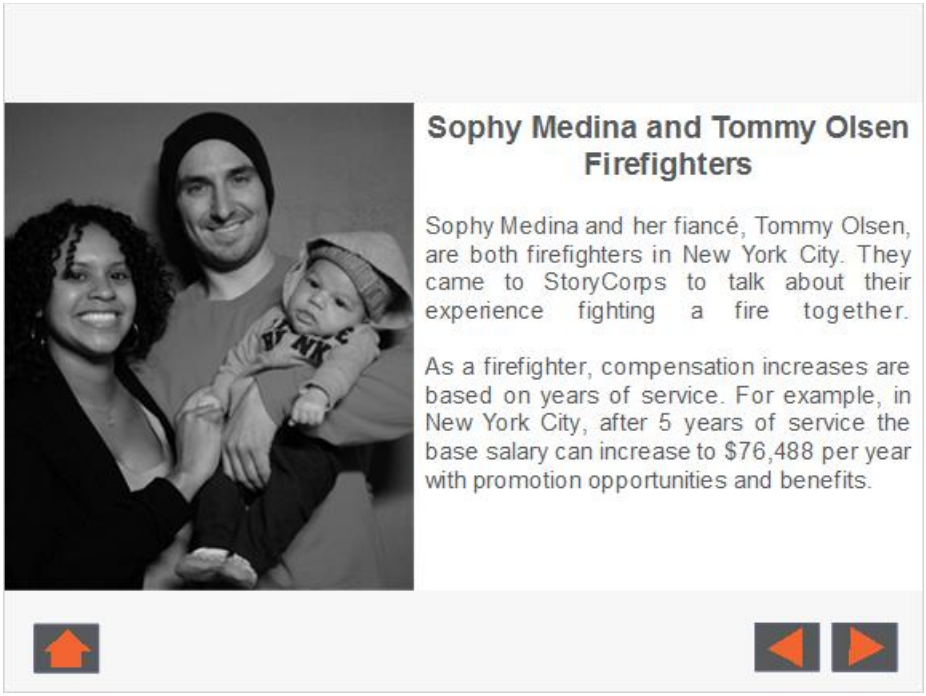
Firefighters: Sophy Median and Tommy Olsen



Sophy Medina and her fiancé, Tommy Olsen, are both firefighters in New York City. They came to StoryCorps to talk about their experience fighting a fire together.

As a firefighter, compensation increases are based on years of service. For example, in New York City, after 5 years of service the base salary can increase to $76,488 per year with promotion opportunities and benefits.

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Cartoonist, Comic Book Artist: Gilbert Hernandez

Gilbert Hernandez knew he wanted to be a graphic storyteller from a young age. He and his 6 siblings were raised by their single mom who passed on her love of comics to her children.

Gilbert studied comics and developed his drawing skills through constant practice.

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Conductor: Gustavo Dudamel

Gustavo Dudamel grew up in the Venezuelan city of Barquisimeto. He has studied music since an early age and is now conducting and working with some of the best orchestras in the world, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

"You have to believe that things will happen, you have to work and love what you're doing."

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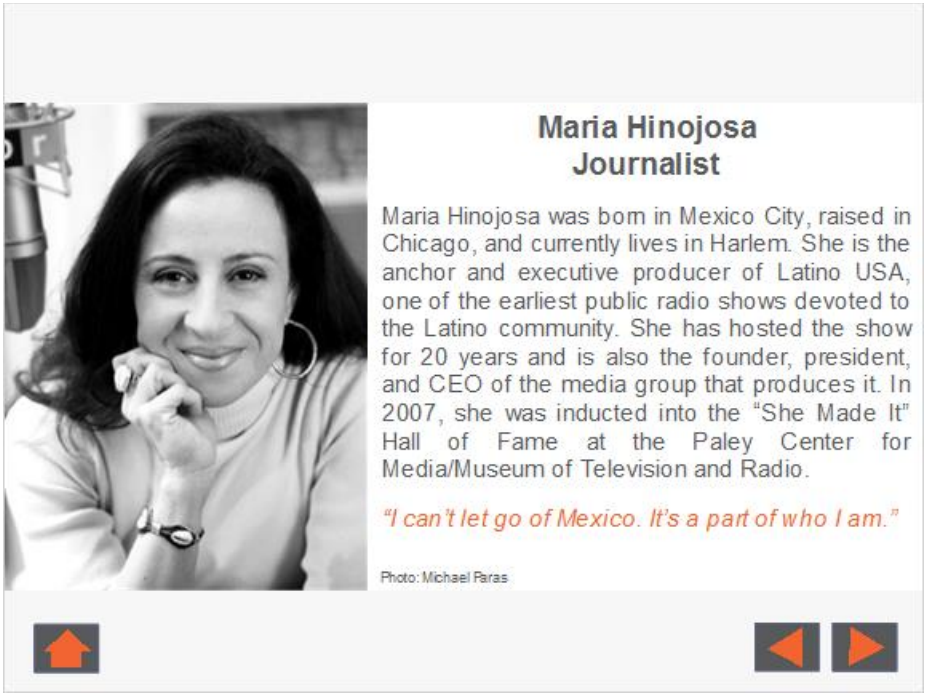
Journalist: Maria Hinojosa



Maria Hinojosa was born in Mexico City, raised in Chicago, and currently lives in Harlem. She is the anchor and executive producer of Latino USA, one of the earliest public radio shows devoted to the Latino community. She has hosted the show for 20 years and is also the founder, president, and CEO of the media group that produces it. In 2007, she was inducted into the "She Made It" Hall of Fame at the Paley Center for Media/Museum of Television and Radio.

"I can't let go of Mexico. It's a part of who I am."

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Film director, Screenwriter, Producer, Editor: Alfonso Cuaron

Alfonso Cuaron has been nominated for 6 Academy Awards, winning Best Director and Best Film Editing for *Gravity*. He was born in Mexico City and studied filmmaking at National Autonomous University of Mexico. He began his career working in television in Mexico and as assistant director to Latin American film productions before landing his first big screen assignments.

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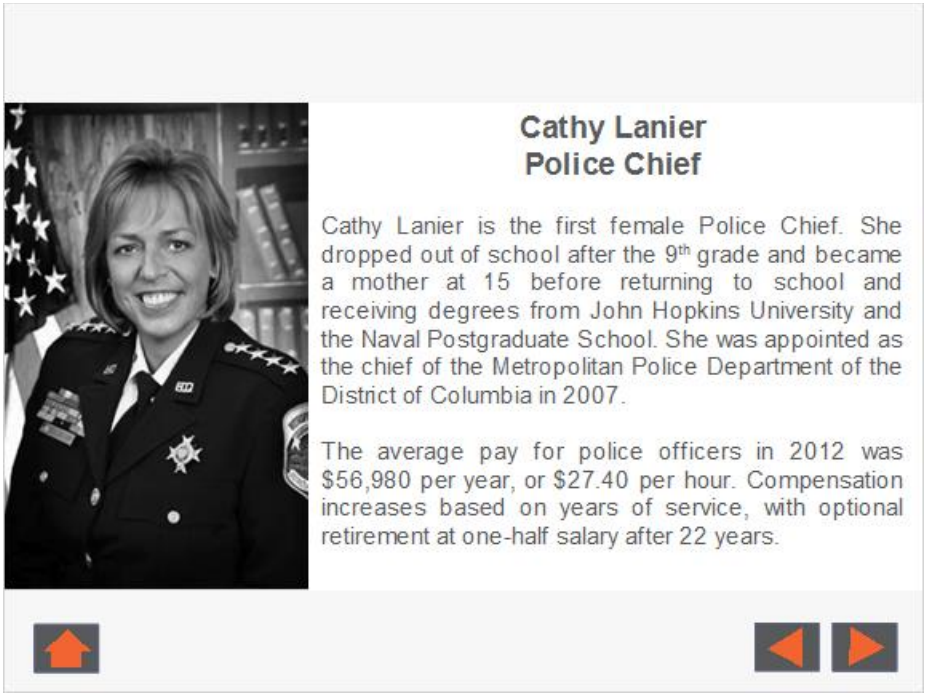
Police chief: Cathy Lanier



Cathy Lanier is the first female Police Chief. She dropped out of school after the 9th grade and became a mother at 15 before returning to school and receiving degrees from John Hopkins University and the Naval Postgraduate School. She was appointed as the chief of the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia in 2007.

The average pay for police officers in 2012 was $56,980 per year, or $27.40 per hour. Compensation increases based on years of service, with optional retirement at one-half salary after 22 years.

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Educator, College President: Dr. Ruth Simmons

Dr. Ruth Simmons was elected Brown University's first female president in 2000 and she was the first African-American president of an Ivy League institution.

She grew up the daughter of a sharecropper and the youngest of 12 kids.

In 2001 Time named her America's best college president and in 2002, she was selected as the *Newsweek* Ms. Woman of the Year.

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Doctor, Inventor: Dr. Patricia Bath

Patricia Bath was raised in Harlem, New York. She studied Chemistry at Hunter College. She became passionate about eye care when she became aware that blindness was much more common amongst racial minorities and poor populations. She was determined to address this and went on to become the first African American woman doctor to receive a patent for a medical purpose, a probe to treat cataracts

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Lawyer, Public Servant, First Lady of the United States: Michelle Obama

Michelle was raised on Chicago's South Side in a one-bedroom apartment before she attended Princeton and Harvard.

"Always stay true to yourself and never let what somebody else says distract you from your goals."

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Singer-Songwriter, Musician: Tracy Chapman

Tracy Chapman was raised by her mother in Cleveland, Ohio. When she was young, she was living on welfare and a victim of racial discrimination and abuse. She started playing guitar and writing songs when she was 8 years old. She is now a folk singer and social activist who writes and performs songs about social injustice.

"I think it is important, if you are an artist, to use your music to stand up for what you believe in."

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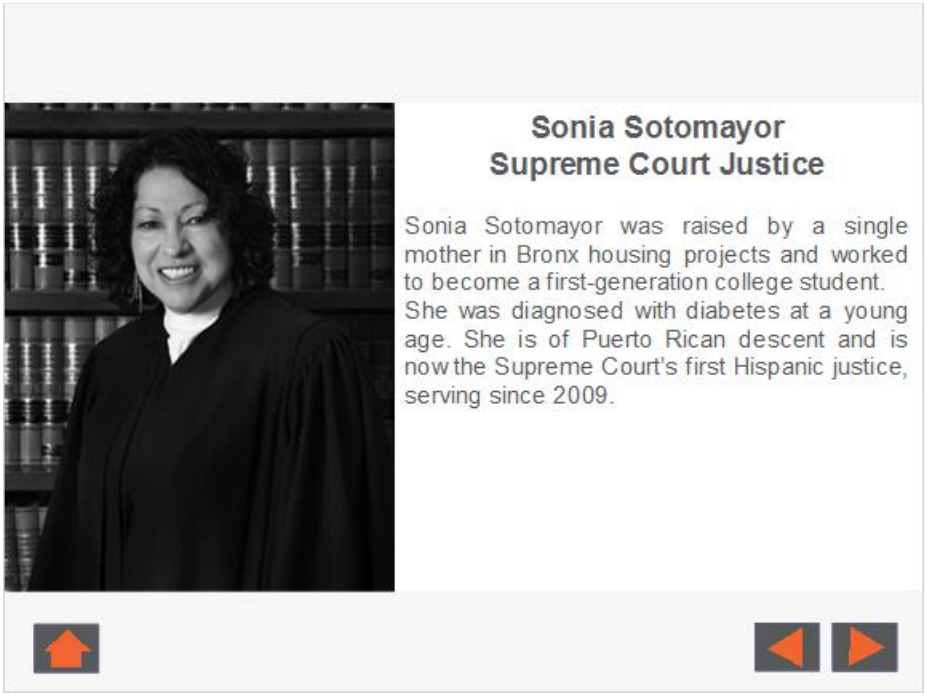
Supreme Court Justice: Sonia Sotomayor



Sonia Sotomayor was raised by a single mother in Bronx housing projects and worked to become a first-generation college student.

She was diagnosed with diabetes at a young age. She is of Puerto Rican descent and is now the Supreme Court's first Hispanic justice, serving since 2009.

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Astronaut: Mae Jemison

Mae Jemison went into orbit aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavor on September 12, 1992. She was the first African-American female astronaut to travel in space.

"Never be limited by other people's limited imaginations…If you adopt their attitudes, then the possibility won't exist because you'll have already shut it out."

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Philosopher, Academic, Activist: Cornel West

Cornel West focuses on the role of race, gender and class in American society. He is frequently a media commentator on political and social issues, appearing on CNN, C-SPAN, MSNBC and PBS.

"None of us alone can save the nation or the world. But each of us can make a positive difference if we commit ourselves to do so."

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CEO: Ursula Burns

Ursula Burns grew up in a housing project in Manhattan's Lower East Side raised be a single mom, a Panamanian immigrant. She now serves as the Chairman and CEO of Xerox. She was the first African-American woman to head a Fortune 500 company. In 2009 she was rated one of *Forbes* most powerful women in the world.

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Fashion Designer: Oscar de la Renta

Oscar de la Renta was born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. He became a world-renowned fashion designer. He is known for his charitable character and committed funds towards supporting his home community. He started a foundation for an orphanage and school for children of La Romana, which now cares for 1,200 children daily.

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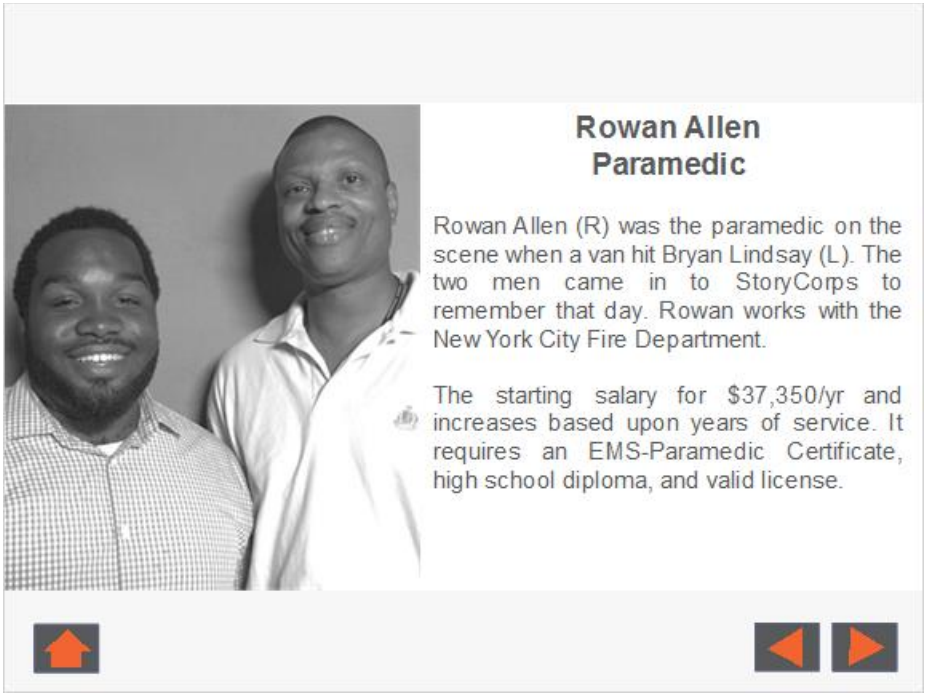
Paramedic: Rowan Allen



Rowan Allen (R) was the paramedic on the scene when a van hit Bryan Lindsay (L). The two men came in to StoryCorps to remember that day. Rowan works with the New York City Fire Department.

The starting salary for $37,350/yr and increases based upon years of service. It requires an EMS-Paramedic Certificate, high school diploma, and valid license.

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Women's Rights Activist, Humanitarian: Zainab Salbi

Zainab Salbi was born in Baghdad, Iraq. Her experience of the Iran-Iraq War gave her passion for defending the rights of women around the world. In 1995, Bill Clinton honored her at the White House for her humanitarian work in Bosnia. She is founder and former CEO of Women for Women International, an organization that provides support to women survivors of war.

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Musician, Singer-Songwriter: Stevie Wonder

Although Stevie Wonder has been blind since shortly after his birth, he is one of the most successful musicians of the late 20th century. He was signed to Motown Records in 1961, when he was only 11 years old, and continues to play music to this day. He has recorded more than 30 U.S. top ten hits and won 22 Grammy Awards.

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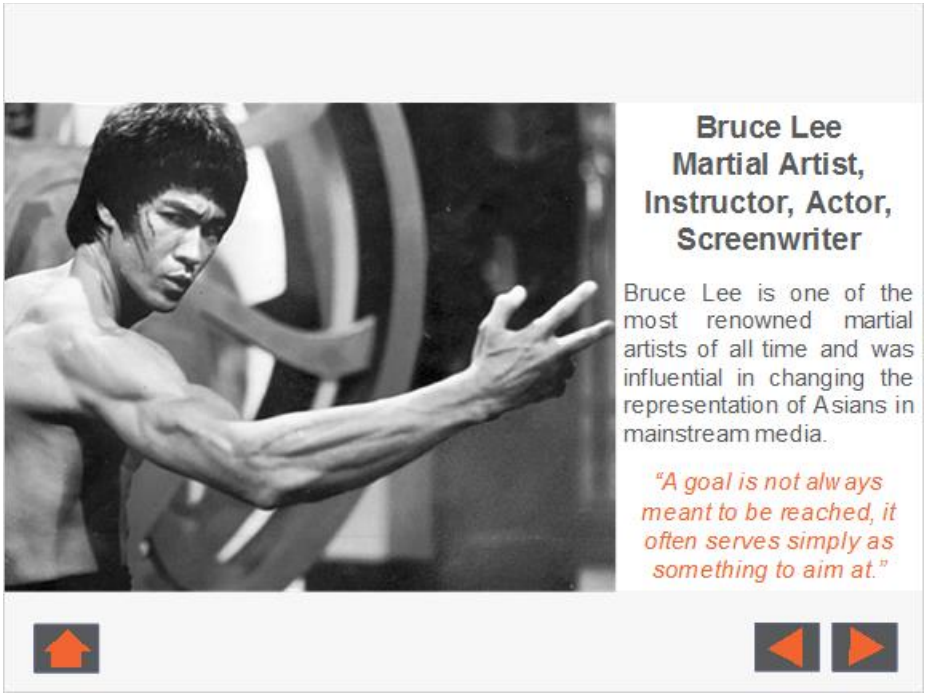
Martial Artist, Instructor, Actor, Screenwriter: Bruce Lee



Bruce Lee is one of the most renowned martial artists of all time and was influential in changing the representation of Asians in mainstream media.

"A goal is not always meant to be reached, it often serves simply as something to aim at."

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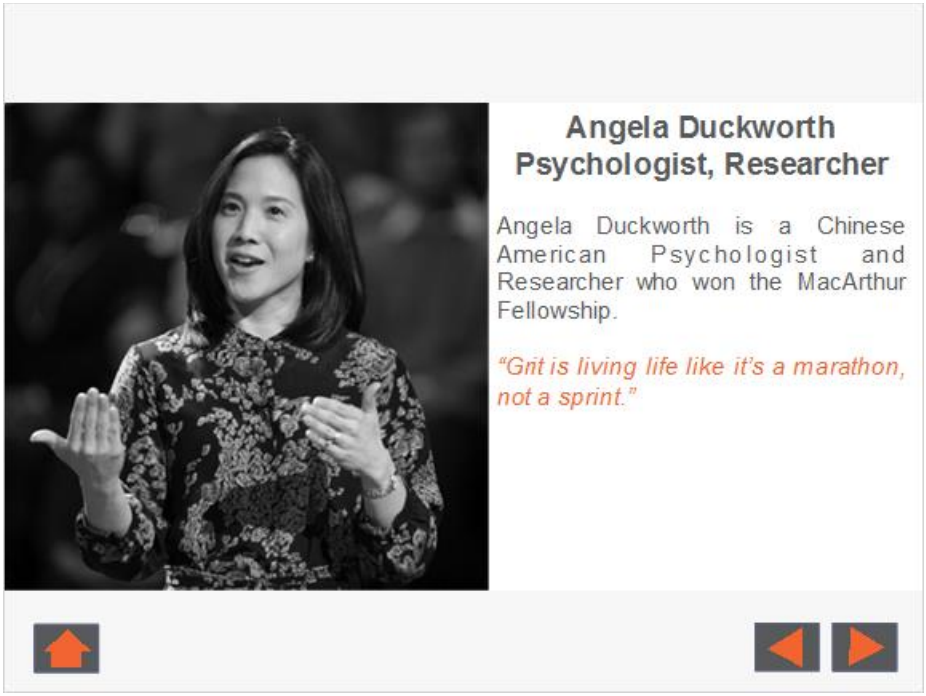
Psychologist, Researcher: Angela Duckworth



Angela Duckworth is a Chinese American Psychologist and Researcher who won the MacArthur Fellowship.

"Grit is living life like it's a marathon, not a sprint."

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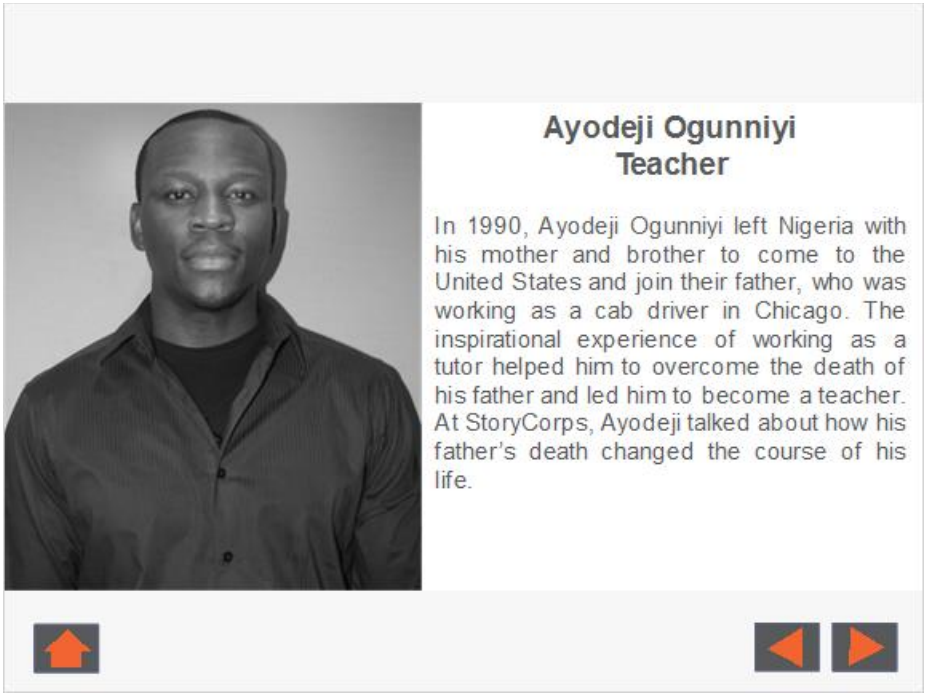
Teacher: Ayodeji Ogunniyi



In 1990, Ayodeji Ogunniyi left Nigeria with his mother and brother to come to the United States and join their father, who was working as a cab driver in Chicago. The inspirational experience of working as a tutor helped him to overcome the death of his father and led him to become a teacher. At StoryCorps, Ayodeji talked about how his father's death changed the course of his life.

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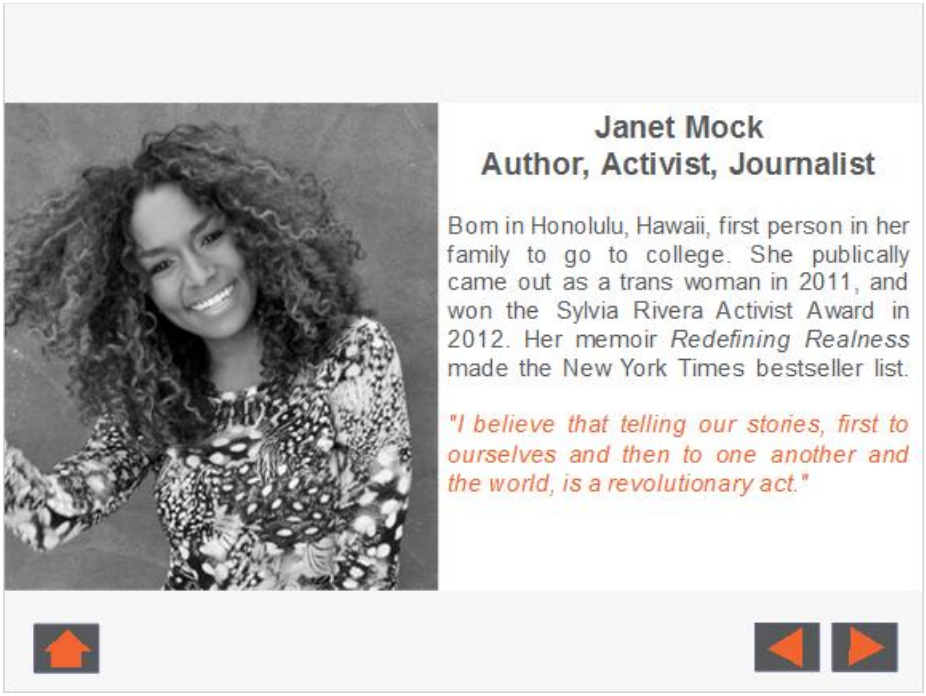
Author, Activist, Journalist: Janet Mock



Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, first person in her family to go to college. She publically came out as a trans woman in 2011, and won the Sylvia Rivera Activist Award in 2012. Her memoir Redefining Realness made the New York Times bestseller list.

"I believe that telling our stories, first to ourselves and then to one another and the world, is a revolutionary act."

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Actress, Writer, Producer: Mindy Kaling

Studied playwriting in college, first woman writer on *The Office*. She moved to Brooklyn after college to work as a baby sitter and then production assistant before breaking into the stand-up scene. She is the first South Asian woman to star in her own TV show in the U.S., *The Mindy Project*, which she created, writes, and produces.

"Write your own part. It is the only way I've gotten anywhere. It is much harder work, but sometimes you have to take destiny into your own hands. It forces you to think about what your strengths really are, and once you find them, you can showcase them, and no one can stop you."

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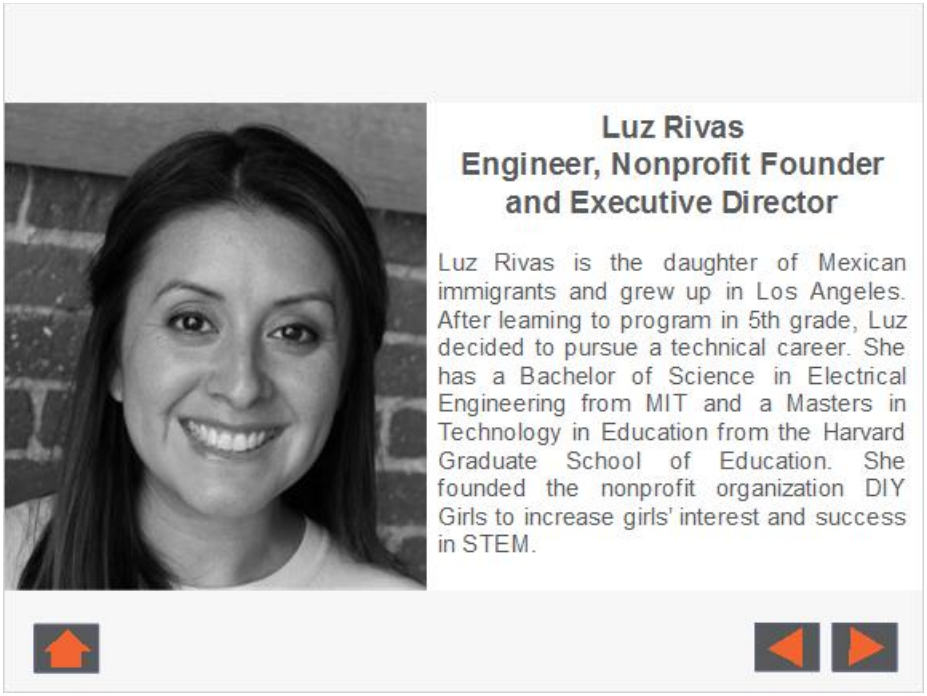
Engineer, Nonprofit Founder and Executive Director: Luz Ruvas



Luz Rivas is the daughter of Mexican immigrants and grew up in Los Angeles. After learning to program in 5th grade, Luz decided to pursue a technical career. She has a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from MIT and a Masters in Technology in Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She founded the nonprofit organization DIY Girls to increase girls' interest and success in STEM.

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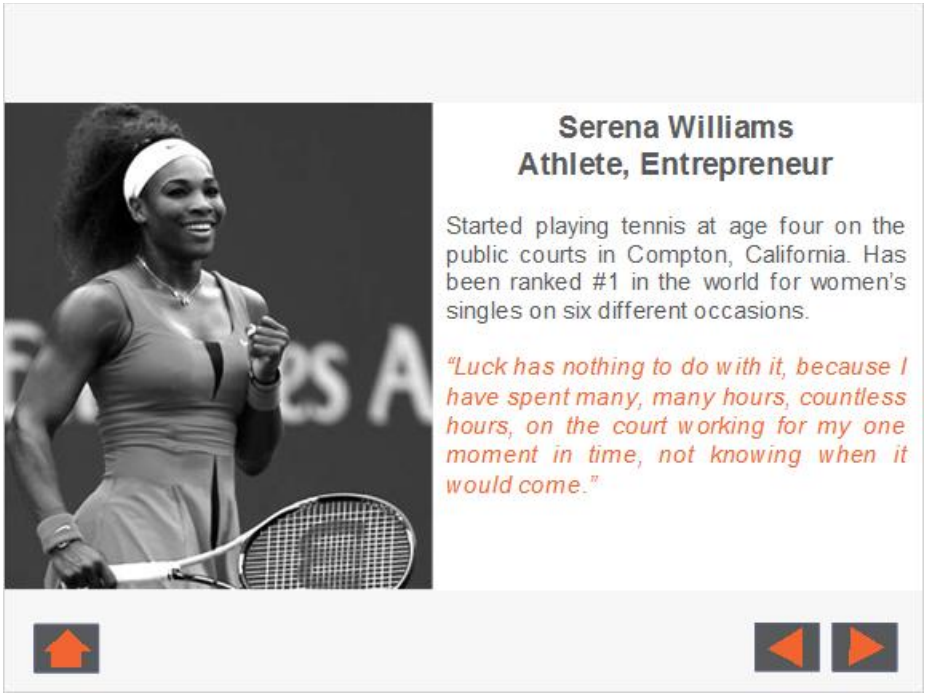
Athlete, Entrepreneur: Serena Williams



Started playing tennis at age four on the public courts in Compton, California. Has been ranked #1 in the world for women's singles on six different occasions.

"Luck has nothing to do with it, because I have spent many, many hours, countless hours, on the court working for my one moment in time, not knowing when it would come."

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Athlete: Jeremy Lin

Received no offers of athletic scholarship for college and did not get drafted to NBA upon graduation, but was accepted to Harvard University and earned a spot on the basketball team. Now a professional basketball player for the LA Lakers.

"My best career decision was probably not giving up when I wanted to."

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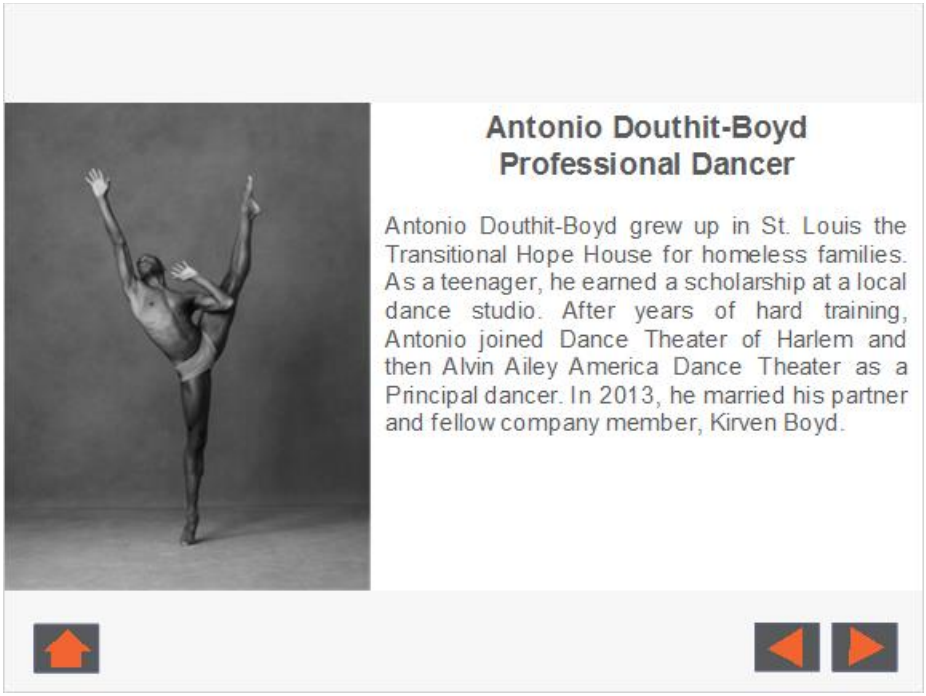
Professional Dancer: Antonio Douthit-Boyd



Antonio Douthit-Boyd grew up in St. Louis the Transitional Hope House for homeless families. As a teenager, he earned a scholarship at a local dance studio. After years of hard training, Antonio joined Dance Theater of Harlem and then Alvin Ailey America Dance Theater as a Principal dancer. In 2013, he married his partner and fellow company member, Kirven Boyd.

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Entrepreneur, Stockbroker, Author: Chris Gardner

Chris Gardner was in foster care as a child and struggled with homelessness twenty years later while raising his young son. He got back on his feet and become the CEO of his own company.

The movie "The Pursuit of Happiness" is based on his memoirs.

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Community Activist: Linda Sarsour

Linda Sarsour is a Palestinian Muslim American who was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. She is a community activist who speaks out and organizes against religious and racial profiling and police brutality. Currently she is the National Advocacy Director for the National Network for Arab American Communities and locally serving as the Director of the Arab American Association of New York.

She was honored in 2011 by the White House as a “Champion of Change”, and recently named “American Muslim of the Year” by the largest Muslim civil rights organization in the U.S.

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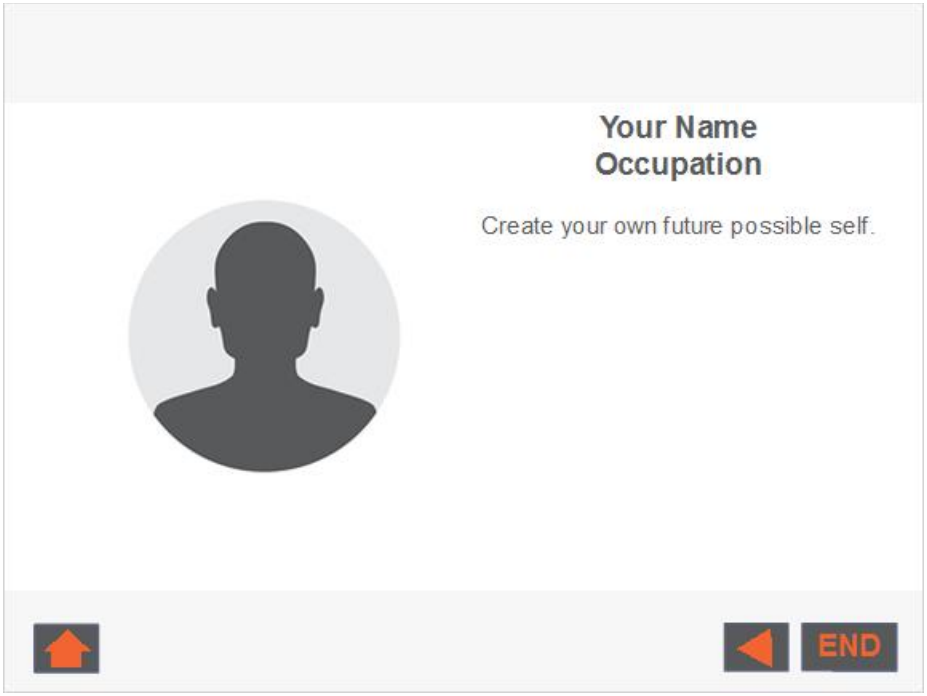
You



Create your own future possible self.