

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 19, 2011**

**FROM:** StoryCorps

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**StoryCorps®**



**STORYCORPS LAUNCHES NEW NATIONAL INITIATIVE  
HONORING THE WORK OF TEACHERS**

*Oral history project will record stories celebrating hundreds of public school teachers  
across the nation during the 2011-2012 school year*

September 19, 2011, Washington, D.C.—StoryCorps, the national non-profit oral history project, launched its National Teachers Initiative today. The National Teachers Initiative celebrates the brilliant and courageous work of public school teachers across the country. By recording, sharing, and preserving their stories, we hope to call public attention to the invaluable contributions teachers have made to this nation, celebrate and honor those who have embraced the profession as their calling, encourage teaching as a career choice, and unify the country behind its teachers—helping us all recognize that there is no more important or noble work than that of educating our nation's children.

The National Teachers Initiative is part of "[American Graduate: Let's Make It Happen](#)," a public media initiative supported by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to help local communities across America address the dropout crisis. Many of the conversations recorded as part of the National Teachers Initiative reflect the diverse experiences of educators and students from both rural and urban school districts with high dropout rates.

Interview pairs for the National Teachers Initiative may consist of two teachers interviewing one another, friends discussing the impact an important teacher had on their lives, a student or former student interviewing a memorable teacher, or other relevant pairings. As with all StoryCorps interviews, participants will receive a CD copy of the interview; a second copy will be archived in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress for future generations. Select National Teachers Initiative interviews will be edited for national broadcast on NPR's *Weekend Edition Sunday* with Audie Cornish throughout the 2011–2012 school year.

Over the past five years, StoryCorps has launched a series of Special Initiatives including: the *September 11<sup>th</sup> Initiative*, helping families memorialize the stories of lives lost on September 11, 2001, in partnership with the National September 11 Memorial & Museum at the World Trade Center; and the *Griot Initiative*, the largest collection of African American voices ever gathered, in collaboration with the Smithsonian National Museum of African-American History and Culture. The National Teachers Initiative is StoryCorps' first-ever occupation-specific Initiative.

The National Teachers Initiative will partner with local education and community organizations and public school districts across the country to record stories, placing special attention on the work of teachers in public school districts striving to increase the number of students who graduate prepared for college and careers. StoryCorps will visit cities throughout the country during the 2011-2012 school year to record stories honoring at least 625 teachers. These cities

include: Brockton, Mass., Philadelphia, PA., New York City, Redmond, WA., Fort Riley, KS., Mobile, AL., Baltimore, MD., McComb, MS., and New Orleans, LA.

"Every day teachers all across the country are igniting curiosity, inspiring passions and opening doors for our children," said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. "Through the National Teachers Initiative, StoryCorps is doing what more of us need to – shining a spotlight on what ought to be the country's most respected and important profession"

"It is a great privilege to be embarking on this effort to shine a light on the remarkable work of public school teachers across the country," said Dave Isay, Founder and President of StoryCorps. "The fact that teachers are some of the most brilliant, courageous, and dedicated people among us has sometimes been lost in the rancorous debates over the past year. As a nation, we should express our gratitude each and every day to those for whom teaching is a calling."

"The Corporation for Public Broadcasting is proud to support the StoryCorps National Teachers Initiative, an important part of public media's commitment to addressing the dropout crisis through the 'American Graduate: Let's Make It Happen' project," said Patricia Harrison, President and CEO of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. "The National Teachers Initiative affirms the important work of public school teachers nationwide and their role inspiring students to stay on the path to a high school diploma."

"Teachers are the lifeblood of one of America's most cherished institutions – schools. Yet, their stories of challenges, triumphs and inspiration are largely untold," said Vicki Phillips, Director of College Ready Program, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "The Gates Foundation is proud to support this project that gives voice to some of the most beloved people who have touched all our lives."

"This is a fantastic opportunity to hear from teachers – the people who are the closest to the kids," said Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers. "Their stories will be a window to the world on today's public education—what's working, what's not, and what we can do better to prepare our children for the 21st-century knowledge economy."

Major funding for the National Teachers Initiative is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, with additional funding from the Joyce Foundation.

Additional materials for press are available at:

<http://storycorps.org/about/press-room-news/national-teachers-initiative/>

### **About StoryCorps**

StoryCorps is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide Americans of all backgrounds and beliefs with the opportunity to record, share, and preserve their stories. Since 2003, more than 70,000 people from all 50 states have shared their stories through StoryCorps. To ensure that we capture the widest diversity of stories possible, StoryCorps partners with more than 500 community organizations nationwide each year. Millions of Americans listen to StoryCorps' award-winning broadcasts each week on NPR's *Morning Edition*. Millions more have viewed telecasts of StoryCorps' animated shorts on YouTube, PBS, and at storycorps.org. StoryCorps has published two *New York Times* bestsellers: *Listening Is an Act of Love* and *Mom: A Celebration of Mothers from StoryCorps*. For more information or to listen to stories, visit storycorps.org.

### **About the Corporation for Public Broadcasting**

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) is a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967 and is steward of the federal government's investment in public broadcasting. It helps support the operation of more than 1,300 locally-owned and operated public television and radio stations nationwide, and is the largest source of funding for research, technology, and program development for public radio, television, and related online services.

### **About “American Graduate: Let’s Make It Happen”**

[“American Graduate: Let’s Make It Happen”](#) is a public media initiative funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to help local communities across the country address the dropout crisis. CPB, in partnership with America’s Promise Alliance and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is working with public media stations in 20 “Hub Markets” where the dropout crisis is most acute to raise awareness of the issue and coordinate action with community partners – all with the goal of helping students stay on course to graduate from high school.

### **About the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people’s health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Jeff Raikes and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.

### **National Teachers Initiative Tour Schedule: 2011-2012**

The National Teachers Initiative is scheduled to record stories in the following cities, with more cities to be added throughout the school year:

- Zanesville, OH
- Orlando, FL
- New York City
- Portland, OR
- Fort Riley, KS
- Albuquerque, NM
- Mobile, AL
- Baltimore, MD
- McComb, MS
- New Orleans, LA