

Press Contacts:
Dan Klores Communications
Jo Flattery (212) 981-5228

NATIONAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OPENS AT WTC SITE TO SERVE AS AN INTERIM MEMORIAL FOR FAMILIES AND VISITORS

StoryCorps, a National Initiative to Create an Oral History of America, Is the First Programming Element for WTC Memorial

Families and Friends of 9/11 Victims Will Record Stories of Lost Loved Ones

NEW YORK, July 12, 2005—StoryCorps, the acclaimed oral history project, today opened a freestanding recording booth in the World Trade Center PATH station. It is the first element of the interim memorial at Ground Zero. StoryCorps-WTC will be open to the general public, but sessions will be reserved for those directly affected by the events of September 11th.

Funding for StoryCorps-WTC comes from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has provided the location for this StoryCorps booth on the concourse level of the World Trade Center PATH station.

StoryCorps-WTC provides a welcoming and respectful environment for 9/11 families to commemorate their loved ones and also stands as a timeless testament to the lives lost. The booth includes a soundproof studio for recording stories as well as an enclosed seating area for visitors waiting to conduct an interview. The booth will have several listening stations where the general public can hear short excerpts of previously recorded interviews.

StoryCorps is a national project to instruct and inspire Americans to record one another's stories in sound. Created by public radio producer and MacArthur "Genius" Fellow Dave Isay, StoryCorps seeks to capture the stories of our time and to create meaningful experiences within families. A StoryCorps interview is like a conversation; participants come to the booth in pairs—for example, two family members or two friends—and interview each other. With 3,000 stories collected already, StoryCorps, the largest oral history project ever undertaken, will collect more than 250,000 interviews over the next ten years.

At the booth, a trained facilitator helps participants create an interview question list and handles the technical aspects of the recording. At the end of a forty-minute session, the participants walk away with a CD of their interview. With their permission, a second copy is sent to the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, where it will be preserved for generations to come. The Library of Congress archive will eventually grow into an oral history of America.

"We are honored and humbled to be a part of the efforts to memorialize the lives of those lost on September 11th," said Isay. "We hope that this booth will serve as a beacon of hope at the site, and a safe and sacred space for families. We believe that there is no better way to capture a person's soul and spirit than through the intimacy of the voice."

Norene Schneider, who lost her brother Tommy Sullivan on September 11th, said, "I am honored to be a part of something that has changed my life and will change innumerable others, too. For the first time in a long time, I've felt more alive because of what StoryCorps has done for me and my family. I am hopeful that through the telling of our stories, the families who lost a loved one will not only grow closer, but also help one another heal."

Alison Crowther, who lost her son Welles on September 11th, said, "It was a deeply moving and beautiful process for my husband and me to record our memories of our beloved son Welles through StoryCorps. The staff was gentle and kind, and encouraged us to open up our hearts and souls. We truly felt that we were serving Welles by preserving his memory in such a profoundly meaningful way for all posterity. It is a way of keeping his spirit and memory alive for generations to come." Welles Crowther is thought to be the "man with the red bandana" who saved at least 18 lives on September 11th before losing his own. He was 24 years old and worked at Sandler O'Neill in the South Tower.

Governor Pataki said, "StoryCorps will help ensure that families have a way to remember their loved ones. Once the Memorial is built, these memories will become an enduring part of the Memorial Museum's permanent collection. StoryCorps will help ensure that we never forget what happened on September 11th and that we will always remember the many heroes we lost."

StoryCorps-WTC is the second freestanding recording studio opened by StoryCorps. The first one opened in New York City's Grand Central Terminal in October 2003. The first two mobile StoryBooths— recording booths constructed inside Airstream trailers— are currently on tour documenting American stories across the country.

Selected StoryCorps excerpts are broadcast on NPR's *Morning Edition* to an audience of 12 million. Reservations for a 40-minute session in the StoryCorps-WTC booth can be made at www.storycorps.net.

StoryCorps is a project of Dave Isay's Sound Portraits Productions, the nationally acclaimed New York City non-profit. For more than a decade, Sound Portraits has celebrated the lives and struggles of unheralded Americans through public radio documentaries, books, CDs, museum exhibitions, and on the web. Sound Portraits Productions has won every honor in broadcasting including four Peabody Awards.

#