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STORYCORPS EXTENDS “NATIONAL DAY OF LISTENING” THROUGH DECEMBER

**Overwhelming success of project that encourages the nation to interview loved ones;
tradition to continue through the holidays**

NEW YORK- StoryCorps, the most ambitious oral history project ever undertaken, announced today that it is extending its “National Day of Listening” through the month of December.

On the day after Thanksgiving, Friday, November 28, 2008, StoryCorps asked Americans to honor a loved one by conducting an interview about his or her life. The response from coast-to-coast was overwhelming. StoryCorps estimates that at least 30,000 American families participated, using recording equipment readily available in most homes. Following November 28th, interest in the National Day of Listening has continued to grow and spread through the blogosphere, word-of-mouth and the media.

“In the midst of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, the idea of listening to a loved one during this holiday season has clearly resonated with people across the country.” Says StoryCorps founder and MacArthur “genius” **Dave Isay**. *“During these difficult times, interviewing a loved one is the least expensive and most meaningful gift we can give to one another. The simple act of listening to loved ones tells them how much they matter and that they won’t be forgotten.”*

StoryCorps encourages Americans to set aside time to record a conversation with anyone they want: a grandparent, an aunt, a neighbor, a soldier, a friend, a client at a local soup kitchen. The not-for-profit has created a simple tool kit of easy-to-use instructions, pointers, and sample questions at <http://www.nationaldayoflistening.org>

Sample questions from the website’s online Question Generator include: *What is your happiest memory? What are you proudest of in your life? What is the most important lesson you’ve learned? How do you want to be remembered?*

StoryCorps supplies tips for recording these interviews and simple instructions on how to preserve them. StoryCorps also recommends ways to upload and share stories online.

The WPA’s Federal Writers Project serves as an inspiration for the National Day of Listening. The 10,000 WPA collected recorded in the 1930s and ‘40s created a portrait of America through the voices of everyday people. Writer Ann Banks, who unearthed these interviews at the Library of Congress thirty years ago and brought them to the public’s attention in her book *First Person America*, writes: “Today, StoryCorps seems more valuable than ever. Stories strengthen people during hard times, offering a bulwark against loneliness and feelings of personal failure. Listening to one other’s stories may grant us a sense of common purpose that money can’t buy.”

Over the past five years, StoryCorps has recorded more than 20,000 interviews with more than 40,000 individuals in fifty states across the nation. Each week, millions of Americans listen to StoryCorps' award-winning broadcasts on NPR's *Morning Edition*.

Fifty of StoryCorps' most emblematic stories have been collected in the *New York Times* bestseller *Listening Is an Act of Love*, which has just been released as a Penguin paperback.

About StoryCorps

StoryCorps is the largest oral history project ever undertaken. Founded in 2003 by Dave Isay, StoryCorps gives pairs of participants the opportunity to leave a legacy in sound for future generations. Across the country, everyday people have visited our soundproof booths to record a 40-minute interview with a loved one. One copy of the interview goes home with the participants on a CD, a second copy goes to the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. To date, StoryCorps has recorded more than 20,000 audio interviews with 40,000 participants. Excerpts of select stories are broadcast weekly on NPR's *Morning Edition*. For its ground-breaking public service, StoryCorps was awarded a special Institutional Peabody Award in 2007, an honor bestowed only once or twice a decade.

Special initiatives launched by StoryCorps include the Griot Project, the largest African American oral history project since the WPA Slave Narratives of the 1930s (in collaboration with the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture); The September 11th Project, an effort to record at least one interview to commemorate each life lost on 9/11 (in collaboration with the National September 11 Memorial and Museum); and the Memory Loss Initiative, which brings StoryCorps to individuals, families and caregivers struggling with Alzheimer's disease.

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