



923 East 3rd Street #307 • Los Angeles, CA • 90013 • 323.962.4500 • www.youngstorytellers.com

THE YOUNG STORYTELLERS PROGRAM

WHAT TO EXPECT

CONGRATULATIONS...

You have taken the first step into a rich and rewarding experience for your students, your faculty, and your community. You are bound to see a dramatic, positive change in the students that you select to participate in the program. To make this session a success, we need commitment and involvement from the school, teachers, students, and parents. This brochure will guide you through the school's role in the program, and in the culminating event of the Young Storytellers Program -- The Big Show.

THE PROGRAM

The Young Storytellers Program is a free creative writing and self-esteem program for fourth and fifth grade students. In order for the program to work successfully at your school, YSF requests that every participating school make a nine-week commitment to the program. For the first seven weeks, our YSF mentor-screenwriters will spend one hour a week helping 10 students learn the basics of storytelling and create their own 5-7 page screenplay. Finally, one evening during Week 8, professional actors will perform each student's script at the Big Show in the school auditorium for family, faculty, friends, and classmates. During week 9 we will review and evaluate the students' experiences.

PROGRAM ENVIRONMENT

We create a free and safe environment where the students can express themselves. The group activities and one-on-one time that form the curriculum often allow students to write from their emotional core. To achieve this we make the Young Storytellers space free from a typical classroom's performance-based assessments, and we let our young writer's know they are naturally talented and creative. Because of the sensitivity of this creative relationship, we find it is best that teachers and administration are not present during our sessions. However, if curious, they're welcome to observe the initial session.

THE HEAD MENTOR

A Head Mentor serves as the Young Storytellers main contact with your school and runs each school's program. The Head Mentor organizes the schedule with the school's liaison, leads the weekly sessions, and delivers progress reports to the Young Storytellers program director.

THE SCHOOL LIAISON

If you haven't already, please choose a liaison from your staff to help coordinate all elements of the program with the Head Mentor. The liaison should work with the Head Mentor to provide a consistent space for the group to meet. On the first day of the program, the liaison should provide a list of the 10 students participating with their home classroom included. For The Big Show, the Liaison should ready an auditorium or performance space, set up with chairs for the audience, and a PA/microphone system.
ent and creativity with you.

THE BIG SHOW

Because the goal of the Young Storytellers Program is to increase both literacy and self-esteem, the Big Show of the utmost importance. It provides the opportunity for students to be in the spotlight and celebrated for their effort. Their reward is an overwhelmingly positive response from the audience. Showing these young writers that their stories make people laugh, cheer, or even cry, directly translates into self-esteem.

By widely publicizing this event throughout your school and community, you will contribute immensely to the most critical part of the program. YSF is happy to help facilitate this in any way we can. The more applause, the more we can raise self-esteem.

We hope that the Big Show will be a bi-annual, community building event. The more important this event becomes to your community the stronger the impact on the students involved. We have seen YSF alumni return to see the Big Show and to give the current students advice about the big night. Some schools make participation in the program a reward for students trying to achieve a scholastic or disciplinary goal. Many schools have seen an increased parent involvement in their child's education after seeing what their child has accomplished at the Big Show YSF. Teachers and faculty who attend will be amazed to see the student in a new light.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

In order to maintain the integrity and success of our program, and to serve our young writers as best we can, we are continually evaluating the program's effect on participating students, mentors, teachers, schools, and communities. Your participation in the evaluation is an essential part of our success. Please feel free to contact our main office at any time to let us know how you feel about the program.

Thank you for your participation in the Young Storytellers. It's our honor to serve your students, and celebrate their talent and creativity with you.

OUR HISTORY

Young Storytellers was founded in 1997 in Los Angeles by three screenwriters at the American Film Institute. Learning of cutbacks in funding for creative arts programs in the Los Angeles public schools, these three writers developed a six-week, one-hour-per-week, curriculum. Together with seven other writers, they offered the first Young Storytellers session at the Playa Del Ray School in Venice, CA.

The program was an immediate success. The original mentors recruited new volunteers and slowly expanded the program, adding one to two schools each semester. In 2003, in order to ensure the integrity and longevity of the program, Pamela Colburn and Jay Gibson, two long-time mentors, established the Young Storytellers Foundation as a non-profit organization.

Since opening its doors, the Young Storytellers Foundation has forged strong partnerships with the entertainment community, local businesses, as well as with the Los Angeles Unified School District. Foundation staff continue to carry out the Young Storytellers vision of expand the reach of the program's services. Young Storytellers currently runs its program twice-a-year at over 20 Los Angeles schools and has served over 5,000 children.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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