

The Seeing "I"

Empowerment through Interactive Storytelling

Vol7 No3

September 2010

Look Around! Watch for exciting news about a StoriesWork outdoor public event called Move Your Zucchini! We are inviting the community to support this good food effort and have fun walking or running and stopping to hear our storytellers tell "zucchini stories." We will be publicizing this event soon. *Look Around!*

Transitions for everyone

"I was intrigued when I first saw the article about StoriesWork in the *Burlington, NC Times-News*," exclaimed Nina Spears. "The StoriesWork interactive storytelling technique so sparked my curiosity, I had to attend the very next program."

Nina Spear was referring to the StoriesWork series of six programs entitled *Transitions: facing life challenges*, which StoriesWork presented at various sites in Alamance County this past Spring. The series, generously supported by the North Carolina Humanities Council, allowed us to open discussions about life changes in parenting, returning veterans, aging, health, marriage, and immigration.

Nina is no newcomer to community programming and group leadership. She had worked for many years at a community mental health center, was on the support staff of the University of Minnesota Family Social Service Department, and now cooperates with her husband, Ralph (a pastor, a counselor, and a Vietnam Veteran), in church programs.

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**Plus ca change,
plus c'est la
meme chose!**

French proverb:
The more things change,
the more they remain
the same.

Change has become the watchword of the current era. Space travel, blackberrying, social networking, distance learning –these ideas have come into our lives and language within living memory. Is life better now? Is it worse? Is it just different? Or, as the French proverb says, do things remain the same even when they change?

Perhaps a story can help provide answers.

Noised the Noise (*Southern Iraq*)

Rustam, the great Prince of Kermabad, thought he was invincible. To rejoice over the birth of his son, he invited dignitaries from far and wide to a great feast. After much eating and drinking, the guests settled back to listen to Rustam's wise words, and the room fell silent. In this quietness, the Prince stood up. And suddenly without warning, he noised the Noise. Now, among his guests, there was great tolerance for a sneeze or a cough or even a belch. But not for this Noise. No, this was a disgrace.

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"Transitions"...from previous page

"The StoriesWork technique rang a bell for both of us," Nina continued. "We attended the *Home from the Wars* program about veterans, and we were amazed."

What was so impressive? "I have attended a great many meetings and discussions over the years and I know the difficulties in sparking meaningful discussions and a good exchange of ideas. But here, Melissa Blake, the StoriesWork storyteller/discussion leader, was remarkably skilled in establishing a safe, non-threatening atmosphere, guiding the discussion through probing questions, and moderating all views and opinions. The StoriesWork training shone in her leadership, and audience members responded with enthusiasm!"

Nina described Interactive Storytelling as a unique tool – different, imaginative, and effective. And she praised StoriesWork for developing a technique that safely moves people toward empowerment, insight and understanding.

We invited Nina to come to our Dinnertable Storytelling series in the Fall. Her response was immediate. "What an imaginative idea! Yes, of course. I look forward to being with you again."

We are grateful to Nina Spear for her kind words and genuine appreciation. She has become a good friend of StoriesWork and we value her sensitivity and esteem.

Dinnertable Storytelling

Six interactive storytelling sessions about good food, smart eating and fighting obesity, free and open to the public. See page 4 for details.



"Food"...from previous page

Aghast, the Prince ran from the room in shame and confusion. Not knowing what to do, he saddled a horse and galloped away into the night. From that moment on, he wandered the world far from his home, abandoning wife, child, estate, and all he held dear. In disguise, Rustam spent the next forty years roaming from place to place, experiencing both sad and happy adventures, but always yearning to see his home and family.

In his seventieth year feeling himself close to death, Rustam decided to return to Kermabad. Surely by now things have changed. The incident of the Noise must be long forgotten. Perhaps he would be welcomed back as the great prince he used to be.

As he approached the city, he saw that great changes had occurred. Tall buildings, gleaming concert halls, large tree-lined thoroughfares, beautiful parks. How different from the more rustic place he remembered! Rustam immediately accosted a stranger and asked whether this really is Kermabad. The stranger replied: It used to be a long time ago, but now it is called Noiseabad.

Some questions to consider.

What made Rustam change his life so drastically? Would it have been better if he had stayed?

What kinds of things changed in this story, and why?

What kinds of things did not change in the story, and why?

What could Rustam do after he returned to Kermabad to improve his situation?

What influence do people have over changes that affect their lives?

We are reminded of the plea: *May I have the patience to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change what I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*

Personnel Changes . . . Board of Directors

Welcome to Judy Wilson, a consultant for the McKesson Company.

Welcome to Marjorie Hyde, who recently joined IBM



Board, staff and guests at the farewell lunch for Melissa. (left to right) Eddie Williamson, Wayne McGrath, Judy Wilson, Jill Hudgins, Melissa Blake, Lenora Ucko, Margie Rose and Peter Anlyan

Staff

Sadly, we have said “*Au revoir*” to **Melissa Blake**, Assistant to the Director for the past year. Melissa is pursuing full-time employment but is planning to work with us as a volunteer. We are delighted to have Melissa with us as her time allows.

Welcome to Jill Hudgins, a writer and teacher, who has joined us as Program Coordinator. Jill is coordinating our next big project, *Dinnertable Storytelling*. Please welcome Jill and contact her as need be at 919-433-1535 www.storieswork.org

New Volunteers

Stephanie West, a senior at Peace College, has recently put us on Facebook and will keep the site up to date. Please look at our entry and become a friend.

Bhavani Crisp is working with us on a volume of folk stories about food and nutrition. We looking to find financing for this innovative work soon.

Margaret McWhorter is keeping our office in good running condition in her free time. She has already improved our filing system and updated our mailing list, both very needed activities.

Leah Gordon, who recently returned from work-related overseas trips for UNC-CH, is updating and improving our website, www.storieswork.org.

We are most grateful to our volunteers for their dedication and fine work for StoriesWork. They

contribute a great deal to our success. Thank you, one and all.

What’s happening with Dinnertable Storytelling?

We have set dates for the six sessions at the Panzanella Restaurant in Carrboro, NC.

They are Mondays, 6:30 to 7:30 pm on September 13 and 20; October 4 (in Spanish) and 18; November 1 and 15, 2010

Jill and Lenora are now planning the storytelling, nutrition and food sampling programs in cooperation with Jason Baker of Weaver Street Market. We are getting lots of interest in this unique series.

Things are moving!

We are planning a “getting to know you” get-together in November to raise StoriesWork’s visibility, recruit supporters, and expand our financial support.

We have been asked to partner with the Carolina Theater in Durham to provide *Storytelling for Adults* programs to promote two of their scheduled events in the Spring.

Remember to look for future information about our planned outdoor relay race, *Move Your Zucchini!*



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Dinnertable Storytelling



Come to our interactive storytelling sessions about good food, smart eating and fighting obesity, at Panzanella Restaurant, Carr Mill Mall, Carrboro, North Carolina six Monday evenings, 6:30 to 7:30 pm.

September 2010

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2

October 2010

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

November 2010

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	1	2	3	4