**StoryArk**

*What's your story? How do you want to tell it?*

**The Blueprint**

## Our Vision
StoryArk envisions a world where all stories are welcomed, valued and uplifted as an integral part of the larger narrative. To fulfill this vision, we create and protect a space where students in sixth through twelfth grade can lift their authentic voice through podcast, film and written word. Student initiated, student led, our creative process focuses on building life skills through passion for storytelling and the desire to communicate and be in relationship with each other. Through our stories, we increase empathy and build a sense of understanding and connection.

## Braided Funding
We want all students regardless of background, socio-economic status, political leanings, and religious views to have their stories uplifted, amplified and heard. To that end, we use a "braided" funding approach where each "strand" allows us to weave a strong fabric from which to support youth. This funding includes:

- **Government grants** (Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, Minnesota State Arts Board)
- **Private grants** (Hugh J Andersen Foundation, Fred C. and Katherine B. Andersen Foundation, Stillwater Area Community Foundation, St. Croix Valley Foundation)
- **School Districts Achievement and Integration dollars along with Transportation funds** (Stillwater Area Public Schools)
- **Individual Contributions** (through fundraising and donations in lieu of tuition)

In braided funding, each strand supports different constituencies. School districts, through integration and achievement dollars as well as transportation funds, can help us reach underrepresented youth whose stories are absent from the mainstream narrative. StoryArk, through donations and grants, can support students that do not meet the school district's criteria including homeschooling, out of district and more affluent, mainstream youth. By uplifting all student stories, we can interconnect diverse youth to each other and within the broader community.

## What's your story? How are you going to tell it? A three step process
Stories provide context and meaning for our lives and can inspire us to think more critically about how we fit into the world and ultimately what responsibilities we have to each other. StoryArk implements a three step process within which students create, develop and share their stories. The three steps include:

1) Creating a psychologically safe space in which affinity groups of like minded students can tell their stories through podcast, film and/or written word
2) Bringing the affinity groups together around a shared learning experience during our StoryArk "FamJams" where professional podcasters, filmmakers, screenwriters, authors, poets, editors, directors and actors share their skills with students; and, youth update each other on their project's successes and challenges. In this way, students begin to build relationships with each other and with professional artists across affinity groups and within shared passion areas.
3) Initiating integrative programming where student leaders from all our teams gather together to create and implement summer camps and intensives focused around podcast, film and written word. Summer programming  brings together the diversity of students to learn and work together on co-creating stories.

## Students Share their Stories
Student storytelling is amplified through:
- The **StoryArk Network**'s website, podcast and mobile app as heard on Apple Podcast, Spotify, iHeart Radio, Google Play and other podcast directories and seen at storyark.org, YouTube and Vimeo.
- **StoryArk Network Live!** at the end of February bringing all student storytellers together to share and discuss their podcasts episodes, short films, prose, and poetry with each other and professional artists.
- **StoryArk Festival** at the end of July celebrating student storytelling in all of its mediums and featuring the stories of all of our students as they share in front of a public audience and answer Q & A.