

# Homework: Storytelling as a Best Practice

The purpose of the “Storytelling as a Best Practice” workshop is to help you refine your storytelling skills to communicate more effectively with all the audiences your organization needs to reach. The workshop will be led by Andy Goodman, a nationally-recognized author and speaker who has worked with many public interest organizations. (For more background on Andy, visit [www.thegoodmancenter.com](http://www.thegoodmancenter.com).) Andy is coming to Baltimore to “make his case for storytelling,” as he puts it, but he doesn’t intend to just talk at us for several hours. After he has reviewed the principles behind effective storytelling, he wants you to work on your own stories so you can put the principles to work for yourself. **That means you have to do a little homework before we convene on January 8th!**

To prepare for this workshop, think about the major points you usually make when you talk about your work. For example, you may stress that you accomplish more by working through partnerships. You may cite your longevity in the field as one of your strengths. Or, on the other hand, you may emphasize that being brand new allows you to bring new ideas to old problems.

Whatever points you make, they remain only “points” until you can tell stories that back them up. **So here’s the assignment:** think of stories — events you participated in, witnessed, or simply heard about — that illustrate these points and bring them to life. Then send an email with 2-3 story ideas to Andy’s associate, Lori Matsumoto ([lori@thegoodmancenter.com](mailto:lori@thegoodmancenter.com)) by Monday, January 5th. Each story idea should be short -- no more than a sentence or two.

Here are three examples from other groups Andy has worked with:

- (1) The mentors who work as adult “friends” to disadvantaged youth in Friends of the Children often go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that their work is effective. The story of T.R. and his friend Zach is one example.
- (2) The fact that the Packard Foundation “walks the walk” of environmental sustainability can be seen everywhere in its headquarters — even the men’s room!
- (3) One way that Reclaiming Futures helps judges in the juvenile justice system better understand the kids who come before them is to put the judges in the kids’ position — which is exactly what happened to Judge Michael Anderegg.

During the workshop, you will have one hour to develop a single idea into a full-fledged story, but you may find — after hearing Andy speak — that one or more of the incidents you had in mind does not “rise to the level of story.” That’s why bringing three options should give you at least one good story to develop. (You may also want to bring a laptop or a pad of paper since you’ll be doing some writing during the workshop itself.)

A few other details... Please plan to meet us at the Key Highway lobby entrance of the Maryland Science Center where someone will direct you to the Harbor Terrace Room where we will spend our days. We will have breakfast waiting for you at 8 am with a start time of 8:30 am. Please see the updated agenda at [www.coseenow.net/training/storytelling2009](http://www.coseenow.net/training/storytelling2009).

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Otherwise, thanks in advance for your time and effort — I know it will help you get the most of this workshop.

Janice McDonnell