

US oral history project wins \$1 mn TED Prize

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The founder of a project devoted to capturing stories of people's lives spoken in their own words has won a million-dollar TED Prize that comes with an unfettered wish.

Brooklyn-based nonprofit StoryCorps has recorded conversation-style chats with nearly 100,000 people in the United States.

Copies are archived in the Library of Congress to serve as an oral history told through the stories of people's lives.

Dave Isay, who founded StoryCorps in 2003, will reveal his prize wish at the annual TED Conference in Vancouver in March, organizers said while revealing the winner late Sunday.

"On the tenth anniversary of the TED Prize, it seems fitting that TED - an organization whose central mission is to spread ideas and empower storytellers - is honoring a storytelling pioneer," said TED curator Chris Anderson.

"I am thrilled about this winner, excited to see how TED and StoryCorps will collaborate, and eager to see how we can pair an incredible idea with a global community."

Meeting long-gone kin

Those interested in recording interviews with [friends](#), loved ones or family members can do so for free at one of the group's StoryBooths in Atlanta, Chicago or San Francisco, but donations are sought.

Those involved in interviews, which are limited to 40 minutes, get copies of recordings on compact discs.

StoryCorps also has a mobile recording team.

"Someday your great-great-great-grandchildren will be able to meet your grandfather, your mother, your best friend, or whomever it is you chose to honor with a StoryCorps interview," the nonprofit group said in a release.

Excerpts of stories have made their way onto National Public Radio as well as into books. Edited versions of some recordings can be listened to online, according to StoryCorps.

Inspirations for the project reportedly include oral histories recorded as part of a US Works Progress Administration effort in the aftermath of the Great Depression and the Pulitzer Prize winning author Studs Terkel.

"We are thrilled and honored-and, frankly, floored-to receive this prize," Isay said.

"We look forward to working with TED in the years to come to bring StoryCorps to more people, and to remind everyone of the power of listening and the simple truth that every life and every story matters."

The TED community called onto to help fulfill prize wishes include scientists, celebrities, politicians, artists, and entrepreneurs such as founders of Amazon, Google and Netflix.

The TED Conference was born in California in 1984 and has grown into a global forum for heady "ideas worth spreading."

TED has won a worldwide following for trademark "talks" during which the accomplished speakers deliver thought-sparking presentations.

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