

*The following were given to administrators and teachers at the four co-sponsoring religious programs, to tell them a bit about our organization and the program we are developing, and to let them know how they can become involved:*

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**Teacher workshops in storytelling offered as part of the ‘Children at the Well’ project of the Interfaith Story Circle of the Tri-City Area**

The Interfaith Story Circle of the Tri-City Area (Albany, Schenectady and Troy, NY) recently celebrated eleven years of interfaith telling. Each month, from September to June, we are hosted by a different faith community. We meet in synagogues, mosques, Buddhist centers, Christian churches, a Hindu temple and a local interfaith sanctuary.

The intent of our new program, ‘Children at the Well’, is to deepen the experience of our story circle and be of service to our broader community to promote interfaith peace and understanding in an intergenerational context.

We will gather a group of young people (Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Hindu) with the guidance of teachers from their religion programs. We will seek students who have demonstrated a high degree of interest in storytelling. Professional storytellers will work with them, instructing in storytelling technique and developing each young person’s story from their own tradition to tell at an end-of-year performance. Sensitive listening to the stories of others will be stressed.

**Additionally, three teacher workshops will be held for interested religious school faculty.** The teacher workshops will be interfaith, and will focus on the uses of storytelling in religious education. It will be discussed and demonstrated that storytelling need not be performance-based to be effective as a teaching tool. Workshops will be scheduled as much as possible for the convenience of participants, starting in November of 2005.

In order to assemble our group of young people, we will ask teachers and administrators who will be participating in the teacher workshops to nominate students they feel have potential as storytellers as well as sufficient maturity to commit to our project.

Please see the student nomination slip we'll have the teachers fill out to turn in their student recommendations.

We'll encourage the teachers to let parents know about the project and have them get the parents' verbal permission for us to be given contact information.

The students will be asked to submit letters to us indicating their interest and willingness to commit to participation in the program. Please find the enclosed letter which we intend to give to the nominated students to elicit their letters to us.

We will read the students' letters as a committee, gauge their interest and level of commitment, look at the statements written by their teachers on the student nomination forms, and take into consideration the numbers in terms of religions, age, and sex. In this way, we will choose our participants.

## **STUDENT NOMINATION SLIP**

### FOR POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS IN THE 'CHILDREN AT THE WELL' PROJECT INTERFAITH STORY CIRCLE OF THE TRI-CITY AREA

To assemble our group of young people, we ask that teachers and administrators who will be participating in the teacher workshops nominate students they feel have potential as storytellers as well as sufficient maturity to commit to our project. Students should be in at least the sixth grade.

Please let the students' parents know that you are making this nomination, and secure their verbal permission to give us the contact information for the students.

Thanks very much for your assistance.

Name of teacher nominating student: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of student being nominated: \_\_\_\_\_

Male or female? \_\_\_\_\_

Age and grade level of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Has the student's parents been made aware of this nomination? \_\_\_\_\_

Have the parents given consent to have contact information made available to us? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, please enter contact information for student:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please briefly describe the qualities you see in this student which led you to make this nomination:

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October XX, 2005

Dear

Congratulations! You have been selected by your teacher to apply to participate in a new program of the Interfaith Story Circle of the Tri-City Area, called "Children at the Well". We have organized this program so that young people can develop their skills in telling stories from their own religious traditions along with young people of other faiths.

We plan to have a group of twelve students meet with story coaches about six times over the coming school year to learn about storytelling and work on their stories. It would be important to come to most, if not all, of our meetings. For some of these meetings, we will be going to various religious schools to tell to children there. We plan to have participants then tell their stories at a community gathering of friends, family and others in April, 2006.

Please share this letter with your parents, so they can learn what this project is all about.

If you are interested in participating, we would like you to write a letter back to us to tell us a bit about yourself and explain why you would like to be involved. There are some questions below that can help you get started in writing the letter.

Don't feel you have to answer every question. But please do write at least a page.

- Have you done any storytelling in the past?
- Have you had an opportunity to hear a storyteller?
- Is there anyone in your family who is a good storyteller? If so, what do you like about their stories?
- Do you have a story about your own life that you find yourself telling to other people? For example, something about a pet? A funny haircut? A time you got lost?
- Is there a story from your own religion that you particularly like to hear?
- Storytelling involves practicing. Is there something you've had to practice to get better at? Would you be willing to put the time in to practice storytelling?
- This project will involve sharing with people of other faiths. Would you be interested in that?

You can send your letter to me in the envelope provided. We'll let you know as soon as we can whether or not you have been selected for the program.

Thank you for your interest. I am looking forward to reading your letter, and sharing it with the rest of the committee.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Gert Johnson  
452 Wallace Rd.  
Schenectady, NY, 12304

(518) 374-0637