

About the *JustStories* Storytelling project ...

The JustStories Storytelling project is an initiative that brings together diverse professional storytellers to develop, write and perform stories that deal with ethnic identity, race relations and dealing with differences. This project seeks to use professional storytelling as a tool to bring together the races and diverse religious and ethnic groups in dialog and cooperation. This project also includes a Fellowship that supports a professional storyteller in developing, writing and readying for performance their own original story about race-relations and inclusive themes.

- ◆ 2003: Antonio Sacre was commissioned and supported with a JustStories Fellowship to write and perform four stories about Latino-American life, journeys and challenges.
- ◆ 2003: The first 2-Day JustStories Festival was held at Techny, IL
- ◆ 2003-04: A series of JustStories Festivals were held for hundreds of high school students in the Chicagoland area.
- ◆ 2004: Storyteller Susan O'Halloran wrote, produced and hosted the JustStories TV series for Cable Channel 17 in Northbrook, IL.
- ◆ 2004-05 : Lakota-Kiowa Apache Storyteller, Dovie Thomason, was commissioned to write and perform her story *Spirit & Survival*.
- ◆ 2005: Gayle Ross of the Cherokee Nation received support from the JustStories Fellowship in completing her story about her ancestors: *Inside the Beaded Beltway: Stories of American Indian Ambassadors*.
- ◆ 2004: The Asian Voices Day and Storytelling Concert with storytelling duo Eth-Noh-Tec. This event celebrated the pains and joys of Asian-American journeys and lives. A Vietnamese storytelling workshop was held in connection with this day of learning, celebration and story-creation.
- ◆ 2005: New York storyteller Gerald Fierst was supported by a JustStories Fellowship to develop his Jewish-centered stories as part of the ongoing *More Alike Than Not* storytelling project.
- ◆ 2005: *More Alike Than Not : Stories from Three Americans - Catholic, Jewish and Muslim* - a storytelling performance written and performed by Gerald Fierst, Susan O'Halloran and Arif Choudhury was premiered at the JustStories Festival. Also presented at this event: *Towards A New Land: A Commemoration of the Vietnamese Diaspora*.
- ◆ 2005: Mexican-American storyteller Olga Loya was commissioned to write and perform her story *Nepantla: Between Two Worlds*.
- ◆ 2006: Olga Loya premiered her story at the JustStories Festival. The 2006 Festival also brought together the talents of storytellers La Ron Williams, Susan O'Halloran, Antonio Sacre and Arif Chodhury under the overall theme for the Fest: *Searching For Home. Tribes & Bridges*, created in 2000 was performed at this Festival and continues to go "on the road" from time to time.
- ◆ 2005-07: A schools-version of the *More Alike Than Not* project was further developed by Arif Choudhury and Susan O'Halloran and is now being performed at schools and other sites in the Chicagoland area. Renowned Jewish storyteller Syd Leiberman has recently joined the present *More Alike Than Not* outreach.
- ◆ 2007: Arif Choudhury - Northbrook resident and a newcomer to storytelling was commissioned with a JustStories Fellowship to develop his new story *My Real Name*. Arif's story is premiered at today's festival.

The stories created under the JustStories Fellowship continue to be told -- in forms long and short in festivals, schools and events, for young and old across the nation and overseas.

JustStories is an ongoing initiative of Angels Studio/Chicago and O'Halloran Communications/Evanston. **Information:** www.racebridges.net

