



January 15, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: internacional@museudapessoa.net

US and Brazilian Organizations Announce Campaign Declaring May 16 an International Day for Sharing Life Stories

The Museum of the Person International Network (Brazil, Portugal, USA and Canada) and the Center for Digital Storytelling (USA) have announced **Listen! – International Day for Sharing Life Stories**, an international celebration of life stories to take place on May 16th 2008. They are launching the project website, www.ausculti.org*, to assist with information sharing and coordination of the campaign. The goal of the campaign is to gain broad recognition of May 16 as an annual day for sharing, listening to, and gathering the stories of people’s lives.

“Our two organizations see the movement to share life stories as a critical part of the democratic process,” states Joe Lambert, founder and director of the Center for Digital Storytelling. “As our own work has expanded around the globe from our respective countries, we have found ourselves in dialogue with colleagues who have countless different approaches and perspectives to life story, but who share the sense that this work is vital to our contemporary societies.”

“What has been lacking is a common call to celebrate all these different practices,” adds Karen Worcman, founder and director of the Museum of the Person. “Whether it is helping to collect a local oral history, encouraging new learners to share their life in writing, producing stories using analog or digital media, or exhibition of life stories online or through mobile technologies, we felt we needed a day to bring all these different practices – different roads to the same destination – together. This is what inspired us to join in this call. We want this day to be especially dedicated to celebrating and promoting life story projects that have made a difference within neighborhoods, communities, and societies as a whole.”

CDS and the Museum of the Person are calling on people to gather in community halls, classrooms, public parks, theaters, auditoriums on May 16 to share their stories. They are also calling on organizations to mark the day on their websites and host virtual story circles via online chats and exchanges, and publication of new stories. Some of the other activities they are proposing include:

- Story Circles in people’s homes
- Public open-microphone performances of stories
- Exhibitions of stories in public venues as image, text, and audio-visual materials

- Celebratory events to honor local storytellers, practitioners and organizations
- Open houses for organizations with a life-story sharing component
- Online simultaneous gatherings, postings, and story exchanges
- Print, Radio and Television broadcast programming on life stories, and documentaries that feature oral histories and story exchanges

Already, public events are being planned in globally in Sao Paulo, Cape Town, Melbourne, Toronto, Stockholm, Hamilton, New Zealand, Los Angeles, Washington D.C., Denver, Berkeley, Columbus, Ohio and Long Island, New York. Since October, over 200 individual and organizational endorsements for the International Day for Sharing Life Stories have been collected, so far representing fifteen countries and 80 institutions. People are invited to add their endorsement by registering at the site or writing to internacional@museudapessoa.net.

Throughout the campaign, CDS and Museum of the Person will be developing special features, topics, and activities for the website, as well as creating an events listing. They also hope to share thoughts about issues in storytelling work, great storytelling examples and case studies, curriculum for schools and other activities.

Also, a special online celebration of the life and seminal work of oral historians Studs Terkel and Paul Thompson will be developed for the day. Studs celebrates his 96th Birthday on May 16, and Paul Thompson will be holding his retirement celebration in England that day.

For more information about the day, please email:

internationalday@storycenter.org or internacional@museudapessoa.net, or call Joe Lambert in the U.S., 510 548-2065, or Ana Nassar at the Museum of the Person in Brazil at +55 11 2144-7170.

WHO WE ARE

Museum of the Person

The [Museum of the Person](#) is an international network of virtual museums of life stories, located in [Brazil](#), [Canada](#), the [USA](#) and [Portugal](#). Our mission is to contribute to make every person's life story valued by society.

Museu da Pessoa Brasil – www.museudapessoa.net

Musée de la Personne – www.museedelapersonne.ca

Museu da Pessoa Portugal - www.museu-da-pessoa.net/

Museum of the Person USA - <http://www.bloomington.in.us/~mop-i/>

Center for Digital Storytelling

The [Center for Digital Storytelling](#) is based in Berkeley, California. CDS is a non-profit training, project development, and research organization dedicated to assisting people in using digital media to tell meaningful stories from their lives. Our focus is on developing large-scale projects for community, educational, and business institutions, using the methods and principles of the Digital Storytelling Workshop. We also offer workshops for organizations and individuals and serve as an international clearinghouse of information and resources about storytelling and new media.

www.storycenter.org

*Ausculti is the Esperanto word for "listen."

Selected Quotes from Endorsers

“I agree with Muriel Rukeyser that ‘the universe is made of stories, not atoms,’ and that monumental changes are only possible when the stories people tell each other about the world change. I wholeheartedly and enthusiastically endorse the International Day for Sharing Life Stories”

- Howard Rheingold, author, journalist, professor, Stanford University

“I can't imagine anything more appropriate than dedicating a day to promoting all of these wonderful goals. We live in a world where person-to-person communication is often subsumed under the more pervasive forms of mediated communication that we experience daily. Intervening in this dominant media landscape and bringing the focus back to intimate dialogue between people is the first step to deconstructing the hegemony of the mediated world.”

-Gary Kolb, Dean, College of Mass Communications, Southern Illinois

"In the last few years there has been an increasing number of organizations around the world interested in applying oral history, life stories, oral testimony and voice-related activities in their work. An International Day will help to bring some of these far-reaching experiences, organizations and individuals together to learn from each other and to celebrate their experiences. The day would also serve to promote the value of life stories to a wide international audience and thereby generate greater interest in, and support for this powerful approach to communication, learning and social change.”

- Siobhan Warrington, Head of Oral Testimony Programme, Panos London,

Organizational Endorsers include

- The Center for Social Media, American University (Washington DC, USA)
- Centre d'Histoire de Montreal (Montreal, Québec, Canada)
- Departamento de Museus e Centros Culturais do Iphan - Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil)
- E-Knowledge for Women in Southern Africa (Harare, Zimbabwe)
- Fundação Genésio Miranda Lins (Itajaí, SC, Brazil)
- Instituto Fazendo História (São Paulo, SP, Brazil)
- International Storytelling Center (Jonesborough, TN, USA)
- Nabuur.com – The Global Neighbor Network (Amersfoort, Netherlands)
- Panos (London, UK)
- Sonke Gender Justice Network (Cape Town, South Africa)
- Story Express (Wellington, New Zealand)
- Zone Zero (Mexico City, Mexico).

Individual Endorsers include

- Sylvia Bolstad - Artmakers (Hamilton, New Zealand)
- Nur Abdi (Ramallah, Palestine)
- Dave Isay - StoryCorps (Brooklyn, NY, USA)
- Dave Eggers – 826 Valencia Author, Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius, (San Francisco, CA, USA)
- Susanne K. Jensen – Copenhagen Immigration Museum (Copenhagen, Denmark)
- Monica E. Nilsson – University of Blekinge (Blekinge, Sweden)
- Connie Regan-Blake – Storywindow (Asheville, NC, USA)
- Ana Serrano - Canadian Film Centre (Toronto, Canada)
- Don Warrin - Regional Oral History Office, University of California (Berkeley, CA, USA)
- Pip Hardy – Patient Voices (Cambridge, England)
- Theo Hug – University of Innsbruck (Innsbruck, Australia)
- Brenda Laurel - California College of the Arts (San Francisco, CA, USA)
- Thaddeus Miles – Mass Impact (Springfield, MA, USA)
- Michelle Miller – Service Employees International Union (Chicago, IL, USA)