

Year-long partnerships
to build community through story

SUMMARY

This program brings UWM and Marquette students into year-long partnership with Milwaukee-based organizations to facilitate storying in a range of forms from oral history to poetry and

Story Experience Program to engage a specific community partner and potentially have an undergraduate Fellow assigned to work with them.

COURSEWORK

UWM and Marquette students take 3 credits in the Story Experience program (UWM 575/G) both fall and spring semesters and build a lasting network of peers and community partners. Students meet every other week to learn story project planning and techniques. The remaining hours of their coursework are conducted in the community, guided by a mentor.

In a 2-day retreat before the fall semester begins, and throughout the year, students learn:

- Asset-based approaches to community building
- Oral history techniques
- Field Notes
- Audio Recording / Editing
- Creative engagement activities
- Facilitating Story Circles
- Facilitating Improvisational Storytelling
- Data and media management
- Trauma-informed story engagement / ethics

The two-semester course and assignments satisfy the requirements for UWM Honors College Senior Project with distinction. At Marquette, the coursework satisfies the Writing Intensive requirement.

PARTNERS

Our partners are those seeking to build community, offer programming, and/or better understand and share their story. Potential benefits for participants include

- Building skill by learning expressive / storying techniques across multiple disciplines
- improving well-being by strengthening relationships and self-efficacy

Examples of potential partners include:

- Senior services and congregate care settings
- Services for people with disabilities of all ages
- Agencies / organizations supporting under-served communities
- Food justice organizations
- Public health centers

Each organization identifies at least one mentor to interview and select a Story Fellow through a group interview process. Mentors work closely with the Story Fellow throughout the year, meeting for 30 mins each week. Mentors are also asked to attend (at least two hours of) the training retreat in August.

Some organizational partners offer free room and board (R/B) to Story Experience Fellows so they can truly become part of their communities. Others offer a modest stipend (S).