

November 7, 2016

The most extraordinary lives are often the ones lived most quietly, most remarkably, by one's neighbors and loved ones, if we just pay attention. If you just listen, everyone has a song.

Lara Dotson-Renta

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This year, the Nock Middle School is planning a school-wide project to give all students the opportunity to listen to some of these songs.

You may be familiar with StoryCorps, a project founded by Dave Isay whose mission is "to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world." In 2003, Dave Isay started with a recording booth in New York's Grand Central Station to give people the chance to interview each other and to share their stories. Thirteen years later, the result is a weekly broadcast on public radio and thousands of interviews archived in the Library of Congress.

We have decided to give students their own opportunity to listen to the stories of a family member this holiday season. In the next two weeks, students will be introduced to the project and will receive a packet of possible interview questions. Between Thanksgiving and New Year's, we ask that they conduct their interviews and record them by audio, video, or take notes on paper. Alternately, you or your child may choose to download the StoryCorps app on your phone. If you choose, you may opt to upload the interview to the StoryCorps website for archiving in the Library of Congress, but that is optional. Later in the year, we will be sharing some of the recordings, with permission, in a school assembly.

Our hope is that the interview process will be just as valuable to both interviewers and interviewees as the final product. If you have the time, please take a few minutes to visit storycorps.org to download the app or listen/watch a few of the stories. You'll quickly see that everyone does, indeed, have a song.

Please feel free to contact me at ellantos@newburyport.k12.ma.us or your child's LA teacher with any questions or concerns. Thank you for support.

Sincerely,

Eriko Antos
8th-grade ELA teacher