



Young Storytellers 101

YS HISTORY

Young Storytellers began in 1997 when 3 screenwriters from AFI sought to fill a gap in Arts Education in LAUSD.

- They started a program to teach screenwriting to a group of students at a school, using mentorship as a tool to bring out students' creative voices.
- They sought to fill a need for creative spaces to connect in public education.
- They continued this program and expanded to other schools as years passed, eventually incorporating as a 501(c)3 in 2003.
- The organization grew as YS served more schools and partnered with various corporate and community partners to deliver more programming, eventually serving over 60 schools across the country through its various programs.

In Spring 2020, Young Storytellers shifted all of its programming to virtual learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- This allowed for a deeper look into social disparities highlighted by the pandemic.
- YS continues to respond to the world and has begun a commitment to equity work in tandem with empowering young people's creativity through storytelling.
- Part of this work includes continuing to adjust curriculum to be more culturally responsive, diversifying the volunteer pool, accommodating school needs, and pursuing reparative actions for communities that have been historically oppressed.
- You can read more about this in our [Worldview](#).

MISSION STATEMENT

Young Storytellers sparks creative self-discovery through storytelling. Our programs highlight young people as the center of their own narratives, emphasize that their stories matter, and celebrate their unique voices as the ones telling them. Young Storytellers works towards a future where young people experience the impact that their thoughts, feelings, and words can have on the world in which they live.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

- Our program is FREE to the schools, and funded by corporate sponsorships, individual donations, fundraising, and grants
- We are Common Core (CCSS) aligned, but our focus is teaching our students the skills to connect with others, feel free to play, explore their ideas, and create spaces for themselves and others to belong. Because of that, we also utilize other learning frameworks (CASEL, Teaching Tolerance SJ Standards) in order to teach them social-emotional and social justice skills.
- We're trying our best to continue serving our students and further exploring how we can be more diverse and equitable

CASEL Framework

- CASEL = Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
- The CASEL Framework focuses on **5 Core Competencies**:
 - Self-Awareness
 - Self-Management
 - Social Awareness
 - Relationship Skills
 - Responsible Decision Making
- To learn more about the CASEL Framework, check out this [Interactive SEL Framework](#).

Social Justice Standards

- Oxford dictionary defines social justice as “justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.”
- Social justice seeks to achieve balance between individuals in society measured by comparing the distribution of resource differences: things like wealth, personal liberties, and fair privilege opportunities.
- **Social Justice Domains**
 - Identity
 - Diversity
 - Justice
 - Action
- For more information on Teaching Tolerance’s Anti-Bias Framework, including anchor standards, domains, and grade level outcomes, take a look at these [Social Justice Standards](#).

YOUNG STORYTELLERS VALUES

People Connect

Genuine connection between people requires empathy and sensitivity. The respect and honesty needed to connect is a fundamental element of everything that we do.

Everyone Plays

Play with a purpose allows participants to engage with wonder and investigate their world. This is how we remove roadblocks to creativity and build a more whole collective.

We Explore

Being vulnerable and inventive requires a supportive environment. Young Storytellers fosters exploration of the self and the world in which we live, while empowering our community to tell their stories.

You Belong

Originality and individuality are things to be celebrated. We serve young people and adults by cultivating an open community where everyone gives of themselves and speaks fully from their unique perspectives.