The Storytelling Revolution at Your Library!

Support literacy goals, promote your collection, carry on an ages-old human tradition, and have fun by creating storytelling programs at your library! Storytelling has the power to increase linguistic skills, share culture, build community, sharpen visualization & prediction skills, and encourage reading (and writing).

Storytelling is for everyone, and anyone can be a storyteller! Encourage patrons to share the experience, and share the stories, to continue to pass along the long oral tradition that predates libraries & books, that lives on in library books, and continues on today.

How can you feature storytelling in your library programming?
- Incorporate a told story into your existing storytimes
  - Start with what you know: 3 Bears, Little Red Hen, etc.
- Tell a story when a class or group visits the library, or when you visit a school on behalf of the library.
- Guest storytellers: for summer reading, or other occasions (or non-occasions) throughout the year.
- Ongoing program with staff or visiting artists
- Youth programs: “storytellers in training”
- Senior programs
- Host a Storytelling Festival!
  - Several events over a month or a season
  - One big day (or 2 big hours)
  - A combination of the 2: perhaps a special event monthly leading up to festival day
  - Can be a mix of invited tellers & community members

Building a program:
- Setting expectations: DEFINE what storytelling is (it doesn’t hurt to be direct: “this is NOT a storytime!”).
- Decide your target age range: all ages? Seniors only? Middle school only?
- Press hard: Expand your normal publicity range, and consider specialty targets for individual programs.
- Adjust expectations: No, of course you will not get the same-size crowd you get for puppet shows.
- Give it time: Continue offering programs, continue expanding your publicity, and allow the program & its benefits to grow.
- Experiment: what works best for you right now? How can you expand upon that? What do your patrons seem interested in? What would you like to work up to, & how can you make it happen?

Promote the collection, promote the events, promote the collection, (etc.)! Dust off your 398s to create a display framing news of your special programs. Highlight the collection at the programs, and use the collection to highlight further programs. For younger children, host tie-in crafts to your stories & programs, just as you might already for storytimes. Open-ended arts & crafts that allow the children to demonstrate how they visualize the stories help build on this unique element in storytelling. After a storytelling program, read a book featuring the character (or one like it) at storytime. After a storytime book, tie in a story that you think connects well. Discuss the stories, as you would the books! Tell patrons you have more versions of these stories, more books featuring these characters, and that THEY can make up their own versions, too!

Resource for learning stories & effectively incorporating programs in library & classroom settings
Teaching with Story: Classroom Connections to Storytelling by Margaret Read McDonald, et al.

Finding professional storytellers
- Storyteller.net: http://www.storyteller.net/tellers/
- Storytelling Association of California: http://www.storysaac.org/