

Word on the STREET

VOL. 4, No. 1

NEWS FROM STREETSIDE STORIES

SPRING 2004



Student Angelica Neberba laughs during a Story Swap.

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Photos by Tom Erikson

Firoozeh Dumas and A Clean Well Lighted Place Team up for Streetside on June 5th

Firoozeh Dumas, author of *Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing up Iranian in America* will read her work with Streetside students at A Clean Well Lighted Place for Books on Saturday, June 5th at 2 PM. The reading will launch our 2003-2004 anthology, *Finding Our Way: True Stories of Dilemmas, Difficulties and Discoveries* by San Francisco Youth, written by 6th grade San Francisco students with a foreword by Firoozeh.

Streetside invites you to attend the reading and stock up on summer reading. All weekend, 20% of any purchase you make will benefit Streetside. Just make sure to mention our name at the register.

Funny in Farsi is a hilarious and lighthearted look at Firoozeh's youth. We hope you join us to hear her story and the funny, sad and compelling stories of San Francisco youth!



"I now tell everyone to write his story. It costs nothing yet we all gain by it. By sharing our stories, we spread compassion, wisdom and

sometimes laughter. And most importantly, we remind one another that everybody's life counts, thus making this world a bit kinder, one story at a time."

—Firoozeh Dumas, From the Foreword of *Finding Our Way: True Stories of Dilemmas, Difficulties and Discoveries*.

Behind the Scenes: Streetside's Storytelling Curriculum

"If you have fun while learning, you learn more."

—Student participant, Luther Burbank Middle School

Have you ever wondered how Streetside opens up new worlds of learning for the youth we work with? As our programs grow, serving more youth every year, we'd like to give you a glimpse at some of the methods behind our success. Three elements in particular make our curriculum unique, effective and educational. They are:

- The arts
- Multiple intelligence theory
- Cultural competence

The arts are central for Streetside. Through arts education, young people learn to think critically, tackle complex projects, and express themselves out loud and in writing. New research, compiled by the California Arts Council, has found that arts learning transforms students' experience in school, helping them find meaning in school work and explore their own feelings. Students involved in the arts have better attendance and do better work in school. Our experience bears that out: over and over again we see motivated students proud of new skills and re-engaged in school after a Streetside program.

Most schools lean heavily on reading, writing and lecturing to teach basic skills. But **multiple intelligence theory** says that people use eight different kinds of intelligence, or ways of thinking and understanding the world. Because schools don't teach for different styles, a lot of students fall through the cracks and disconnect from school. Streetside helps students tap into many ways to learn—we let youth act, share in small groups, and tell personal stories. Teachers often tell us that a



Students Luis De La Vega and Rosie Fernandez explore an imaginary world with facilitator Denmo Ibrahim.

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streetside STORIES

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Word on the Street is a publication of Streetside Stories, a non-profit arts education organization based in San Francisco.

Through the power of storytelling, Streetside Stories values and cultivates young people's voices, fostering educational equity and building community, literacy and arts skills.

Established in 1992, Streetside Stories brings literacy arts education to San Francisco youth in public middle schools and the community, through in-school workshops, after school programs for struggling students, and literacy arts training for educators. Streetside engages students in storytelling and theater to make reading and writing come alive.

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New Faces at Streetside Stories!

We are excited to welcome our new Program Assistant, Rio Gache and our newest member of the Board of Directors, Carmen Gonzales. Rio joined Streetside in April and Carmen became a Board member in January.



Carmen Gonzales is the Finance Manager for The Junior League of San Francisco. Prior to that, she worked in the Assurance Division at KPMG. Carmen's intrinsic motivation is to help and improve the community. Her background is in finance and not-for-profits. She belongs to associations such as the National Society of Hispanic MBAs and Management Leadership for Tomorrow. Carmen received her BA in Business Management Economics at UC Santa Cruz and plans to pursue her MBA in the near future. Major interests include reading, traveling, running, and savoring San Francisco's restaurants.

Rio Gache is the new part-time Program Assistant at Streetside Stories. Recently having graduated from San Francisco State University with a BA in Industrial Arts, Rio is also currently working as a part-time assistant at Golden Gate University's CyberCampus Department. Rio was first introduced to the non-profit world as an Accounting Assistant with National Asian American Telecommunications Association, while she was still in college. An appreciation for arts education gives her a new fulfilling journey with Streetside Stories and the young people involved.



Streetside Presents New Mission Statement

We at Streetside are very proud of the work our organization does and the values we stand for. We share with you, our readers—friends, volunteers, and supporters—a belief that all young people deserve a high quality education that makes them excited about learning. Each of us may care most about a specific aspect of our work, whether it be building literacy, telling stories, teaching the arts, helping youth use their voices, or creating community in schools. As part of Strategic Planning, our staff and board members have created a brand new mission statement that encapsulates all the diverse reasons why Streetside Stories is important. Here it is!

Through the power of storytelling, Streetside Stories values and cultivates young people's voices, fostering educational equity and building community, literacy and arts skills.



Mr. Kirk, a teacher at Francisco Middle School, helps student Melody Wong to revise her story during a Streetside workshop.

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student who had "checked out" came to life during Streetside programs, sharing hidden skills and talents.

Streetside is special because we integrate **cultural competence** into our work with youth. That is, we value diversity and create programs that connect the many cultures of the communities we serve. Studies by the Multicultural Literacy Program show that when diverse students share stories (including their own), across cultures, they bridge cultural divides *and* do better in school. Time and again, students tell us that Streetside helped them see both their specialness as an individual and the humanity that *everyone* has in common.



Sixth grader Paul Zheng is ready to participate.

FRIENDS

of Streetside Stories

The support of our wonderful donors means so much!
Many thanks to all who make our work possible.

\$20,000 +

Louis R. Lurie Foundation
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Thank You Volunteers!

Where would Streetside be without our valuable volunteers? We can't imagine! Thank you for your support in the classroom, in the office and in the community.

Stephanie Arciero	Dawn Lauter
Jess Austin	Pat Lawlor
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Roya Kashanian	Raegan Yoneda
Adrienne Koteen	

Volunteer of the Month awardees are in bold.
Thank you!

GET INVOLVED!

There are many different ways to contribute to Streetside Stories. To help, contact Britt at britt@streetside.org or (415) 864-5221, or visit our website at www.streetside.org.

WORK IN THE CLASSROOM! Streetside classroom volunteers act as storytellers and mentors, primarily helping students one-on-one with their writing. They also lead discussion groups and participate in improvisation and theater activities with the students.

MAKE A DONATION! Donate or help with fundraising. Does your company have a matching gifts program or take part in a giving campaign like United Way? Earmark your gift for Streetside!

EDIT STUDENTS' STORIES! Type and edit stories written by Storytelling Exchange students for publication in the annual anthology.

Streetside Stories' TALE Tools for Arts and Literacy Education

Ever wished Streetside could come to *your* classroom? Now *you* can make it happen with our teacher training program, TALE.

Streetside trains educators, teachers-in-training, and other youth-service professionals to use our innovative and engaging techniques! Learn to lead story swaps, theater games, and other literacy arts tools. Help your students to tell their own stories, build literacy and get engaged in learning.

Call **Linda Johnson** at (415) 864-5221 for details.

We want to know: What does Streetside mean to you?

In this issue we have considered the mission and purpose behind Streetside's work. By **volunteering or donating** to Streetside, you can **experience firsthand** the meaningful work we accomplish together. When you send your contribution today, please send us **your own story**. Follow the directions below, detach this portion, and enclose your story in the reply envelope included in this newsletter. We can't wait to hear from you!

Step #1: Write one word that describes, for you, the most important thing about Streetside:

Step #2: Think about yourself as a young person. Describe, in a brief story, a moment as a teenager when you felt part of a community. (Write here or on a separate piece of paper.)

- Quote me!
- I choose to remain anonymous.

The Story Swap

At the beginning of each Streetside workshop, facilitators tell an autobiographical story around the year's theme (2003-04 theme: problem-solving) and then ask students whether they have had a similar experience that they would like to share. This is called the Story Swap. This page is dedicated to this idea, and to sharing student and community stories.

Lifestyle

By Samuel Thompson
*Streetside After School participant,
James Denman Middle School*

The problem in my story is being bad. It is very bad to take your anger out on someone else. Try to be respectful and you will be respected. Try to be your most respectful and you will be looked at in another way.

One day I woke up from a night of no sleep at all because I was studying for my spelling test and animal project, and today was the last day for late homework. I worked all - I mean all - night long. I did not go to sleep until 6:01 and I woke up at 6:30. I got 29 minutes. I was mad but happy, too, because report cards were coming in four days and all my work was done. But one thing I was hoping was to pass my spelling test, which I had fourth period. Then I would have four A's and two B's. I was very happy because my mom and dad would have given me a new bike and some nice earrings.

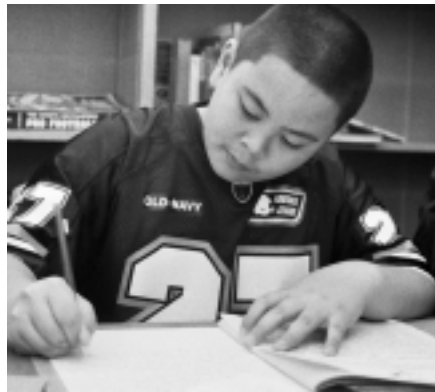
I got out of my big bed and went to my small closet and got dressed. I went down stairs to eat, and I ate for about ten minutes. I had some eggs, bacon, and a big bowl of grits. I was very full. I walked to the bus stop for school and when I got to school I went to class. When it was fourth period, I was ready to take the test. He gave us the paper, right-side down, and gave pens to anyone who needed one. Then he said, "If you are found cheating you will be given an F."

It took the whole class 15 minutes to be done. I was the last one done. I walked to his desk as he was checking the spelling tests. I laid mine on his desk and walked back to my desk. Then he gave us 20 minutes to talk. When class was almost over, he walked past all of the desks and gave the tests back. I missed 19 out of 20. I was so mad.

So at the next class I had, I went

in yelling and talking back, being very bad and sad inside. The teacher kicked me out and I was in the office for two hours. They called my house and I told my mom what happened. She said she was not mad that I acted up - she was mad that I had a bad attitude.

I am really not that bad most of the time, and I love my body and myself. So for me to respect myself and get respect, I have to show it. If someone were going through what I was, I would tell them to keep the love and try not to get that mad.



Student Louie Diala writes his messy draft.

No More Crying

By Regina Dayrit
*Storytelling Exchange participant, James
Denman Middle School*

I came home from school that day; it was the last week of school until summer vacation. While I was eating pizza and watching TV, the telephone rang: "Ring. Ring. Ring."

"Hello," my dad answered, his short, flabby arm swaying back and forth as he picked up the phone. The tone of his voice changed. "What? What happened? Where is he now—is he okay?" my dad kept repeating. His voice shivered like he was in Antarctica when he found out the terrible news.

I couldn't help but listen from my room. I felt really scared and worried. I had a terrible feeling in the pit of my stomach; suddenly, my craving for pizza was gone. When he got off the phone, his happy face turned into an expression of shock and sadness. It was a moment of

silence until my dad spoke.

"Your grandpa is in the hospital. He had a stroke," he said in a calm voice.

What?" I muttered.

"We need to go over there," he declared.

My grandpa and grandma lived in San Jose, so we had to go to the Kaiser Permanente Hospital over there. It was a cold and breezy day when I arrived at the hospital. It was very dark because it was 12:30 at night. I was sitting in a patients' waiting room, and I could hear doctors talking to each other about patients. I could see a portrait of a garden with red roses and a portrait of babies wrapped in a blue quilt. There was a round, green bowl filled with candy, so of course I got a piece. As I threw away the Starburst wrapper, I bit into the candy. It was strawberry-flavored and the juice watered my mouth.

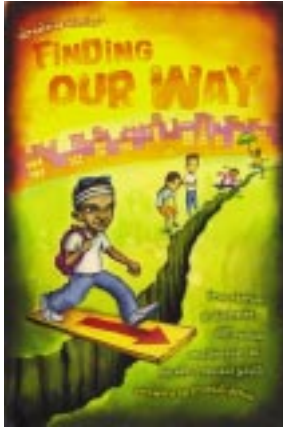
The moment I walked inside my grandpa's room I began to cry. He was lying down on a bed with lots of stuff connected to him, with my grandma at his side the whole time. Napoleon Dayrit Sr. was in a coma and he never woke up from it.

My grandpa was a very loving person. Even though he always looked serious, I could tell he was happy inside. The thing that I miss about him the most was the stories he always told me about his childhood. His one wish was to be buried in the Philippines, so his seven children and some of their children, including me, went to the Philippines.



Francisco M.S. student absorbed in writing.

Streetside's **2004 Anthology**, *Finding Our Way*.
Available June 1st!



Through the power of storytelling, Streetside Stories values and cultivates young people's voices, fostering educational equity and building community, literacy and arts skills.

READERS' CORNER

What books are we reading at Streetside Stories?



Down a Dark Hall
by Lois Duncan

My all-time favorite author is Lois Duncan, who is acclaimed for writing junior-level thrillers. This story is set in a very old mansion-turned-private-art-boarding school where four girls were specially chosen to study in an elite environment. When the girls start having strange dreams and experiences with their new-found artistic skills, they slowly uncover a shocking truth about themselves and why they were chosen.

—Rio Gache, *Program Assistant*



The Age of Grief
By Jane Smiley

This is a collection of short novellas about the unexpected turns of love, marriage, parenthood, and friendship. The stories are not very happy, but Smiley writes with great power about human relationships that we can connect to the dilemmas in our lives. The poignancy of the problems reminded me of the stories Streetside's students have written about this year.

—Jane & George Collier, *Volunteers*

Rain of Gold
by Victor Villaseñor



Although read long ago, this book left me with a lasting impression and a greater appreciation of my heritage. Villaseñor combines captivating and historical events to depict his family's journey from Mexico to the U.S. during the Mexican Revolution. It is an inspiring true story that incorporates adventure, romance, humor, and tragedy—an epic you will want to share with others as well.

—Carmen Gonzales, *Member of Board of Directors*

Me Talk Pretty One Day
By David Sedaris



This hilarious collection of autobiographical stories chronicles the author's adventures and disasters growing up with a family that is, to say the very least, unconventional. I love the way he looks at the world as a joke just waiting to happen, where anything carefully examined becomes absurd and funny.

—Susanna Myrseth, *After School Intern*