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**STORYCORPS, THE NATIONAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT,
COMES TO GRAND RAPIDS, MI**

***WGVU HOSTS STORYCORPS DURING ITS FOUR-WEEK STAY AS IT TOURS
THE U.S. TO CAPTURE STORIES OF EVERYDAY AMERICANS***

September 10, 2009 – Grand Rapids – StoryCorps, a national initiative to document everyday history and the unique stories of Americans, will arrive September 21, 2009 in Grand Rapids to collect the stories of Grand Rapids’ residents as part of its cross-country tour. StoryCorps is an independent nonprofit project in partnership with NPR and the American Folklife Center (AFC) at the Library of Congress.

The StoryCorps MobileBooth - an Airstream trailer outfitted with a recording studio - will be parked in front of the Public Museum on Pearl St. for four weeks and will be open 10:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. StoryCorps plans to collect around 120 interviews during its stay in Grand Rapids.

Registration times are already filling up! Additional times will open for reservation on September 25, 2009 at the StoryCorps web site at storycorps.org or by calling 800-850-4406.

StoryCorps was created by award-winning documentary producer and MacArthur “Genius” Grant recipient Dave Isay. This unprecedented project has traveled to every corner of America, instructing and inspiring individuals to record their stories in sound. StoryCorps is the largest multi-year oral history project ever undertaken. Since its launch in October 2003, StoryCorps has collected interviews in all 50 states - over 26,000 stories in all.

In Grand Rapids, StoryCorps is partnering with WGVU, west Michigan’s NPR station, which will air a selection of the local stories and create special programs around the project. Selected segments may also air nationally on NPR’s *Morning Edition*.

At the MobileBooth, interviews are conducted between two people who know and care about each other. A trained facilitator guides the participants through the interview process and handles the technical aspects of the recording. At the end of a 40-minute session, the participants walk away with a CD of their interview. With their permission, a second copy becomes part of an archive at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress for future generations to hear.

“We are very pleased to be able to bring StoryCorps to west Michigan,” says WGVU General Manager, Michael Walenta. “It’s an incredibly unique and important project, and it’s exciting for WGVU to be able to share some of the stories of our local community with our listeners, and

possibly with the nation. StoryCorps offers the chance for everyday people to talk about the memories and experiences that are important to them, and that's not something that you're likely to experience on any other radio station."

"As StoryCorps has traveled across the country, we've seen the profound effect it has had not only on the lives of those who have participated in the project, but also on the millions who have heard them each week on NPR," said Isay. "We are so proud to continue our mission to teach people to become better listeners, foster intergenerational communication among families and communities, and help Americans appreciate the strength in the stories of everyday people they find all around them."

StoryCorps currently operates a freestanding soundproof recording booth at Foley Square in New York's Lower Manhattan and at the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco. In 2006, StoryCorps launched an initiative to reach out to people affected by memory loss. StoryCorps Griot is an ongoing initiative to ensure that the voices, experiences, and life stories of African Americans will be preserved and presented with dignity. All interviews recorded as part of the Griot Initiative will be archived at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture in addition to the Library of Congress.

Major funding is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. StoryCorps also relies on the support from its participants and listeners.

Individuals can visit **StoryCorps.org** to make interview reservations, listen to stories, and learn how they can support StoryCorps' mission to honor and celebrate one another's lives through listening.

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About WGVU

WGVU's continued mission is to provide educational, informative, and entertaining programs and events to the West Michigan community as a service of Grand Valley State University.

About StoryCorps

StoryCorps is an independent nonprofit project whose mission is to honor and celebrate one another's lives through listening. Since 2003, tens of thousands of everyday people have interviewed family and friends through StoryCorps. Each conversation is recorded on a free CD to take home and share, and is archived for generations to come at the Library of Congress. Millions listen to the award-winning broadcasts on public radio and the Internet. Select stories have also been published in the New York Times bestselling book, *Listening Is an Act of Love* (Penguin Press). StoryCorps is one of the largest oral history projects of its kind, creating a growing portrait of who we really are as Americans. Major funding is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). Visit www.storycorps.org for more information.