

2020 URBAN STORIES FESTIVAL — REPORT

January 22-26, 2020

WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA



PHOTO: GINA FONTANA

INTENTION

FESTIVAL OVERVIEW

The Urban Stories Festival is a multi-day storytelling event celebrating West Palm Beach, Florida - what was, what is, what could be.

We share experiences, celebrate diversity, and find common ground. In harmony with these goals, the festival also supports literacy.

Short stories - poetry - rap - spoken word - oral histories - speakers - workshops - photography - music - dance - improv - and also food

allow us to examine the city through the lenses of civic engagement, economic prosperity, environmental justice, safe neighborhoods and social equity.



2020 festival events

125 STORIES - TRUE STORIES TOLD LIVE

BIKE TOUR - 5 STORIES OVER 5 MILES

YOUTH FESTIVAL - STORIES FROM TEENS

FAITH & MUSIC - STORIES & FOOD

PROGRAM

125 STORIES AT VOLTAIRE ON CLEMATIS ST

Celebrating the 125th birthday of the City of West Palm Beach, seasoned and amateur storytellers stepped up to the mic of a local bar to tell shocking, funny, touching, and thought-provoking tales.

Ten people shared seven-minute stories, and the top three people's choice favorites won prizes. Food and a cash bar rounded out the evening.



PHOTOS: GINA FONTANA

January 22, 2020

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

PROGRAM

BIKE TOUR - WEST PALM BEACH & PALM BEACH

The 2020 Urban Stories Bike Tour led 15 riders to experience five stories over five miles, visiting significant local landmarks and hearing stories on site in West Palm Beach and Palm Beach.

Local experts told stories of economic development, civic engagement, social equity, environmental justice and safe neighborhoods.



January 25, 2020

8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

PROGRAM

STORIES FROM OUR YOUTH AT PALM BEACH ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

The Urban Stories Youth Festival provides a space for stories from our youth. Under the direction of teachers and facilitators, students prepared short stories in advance to present on stage.

During a poetry slam workshop, youth wrote and performed on the spot. A professional artist led a mask-making storybuilding session and teens participated in an improv session.



January 25, 2020

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

PROGRAM

STORIES FROM OUR YOUTH AT PALM BEACH ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY,
CONTINUED

The *Build a Better City* workshop, led by Gigi the Planner, allowed students to get a glimpse into the profession of urban planning.

The students imagined how to use an empty lot and develop a site plan. They learned how planners take into account zoning, parking, landscape and other issues. The youth sketched designs and received feedback from planning professionals.

At the of the workshop, teens presented their designs to the larger group.



PHOTO: GISLA AUGUSTIN



January 25, 2020

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

PROGRAM

STORIES OF FAITH & MUSIC AT UBK COMMUNITY CENTER
IN THE HISTORIC NORTHWEST DISTRICT

Leaders from four different faith backgrounds shared ten-minute stories and music, uplifting the audience and celebrating diversity.

Pictured at right, Imam Mohamed Ismail, Reverend Sheila Guillaume, Rabbi Cookie Lea Olshein, and Reverend Kevin Jones.



Historian and jazz vocalist Dr. Kitty Oliver (at right) shared stories from her memoir and music from her life growing up in the South, experiences as one of the first women of color at a Florida university, and as a musician and scholar.



PHOTOS: GINA FONTANA

January 26, 2020

3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

COMMUNITY

STORIES OF FAITH & MUSIC, CONTINUED

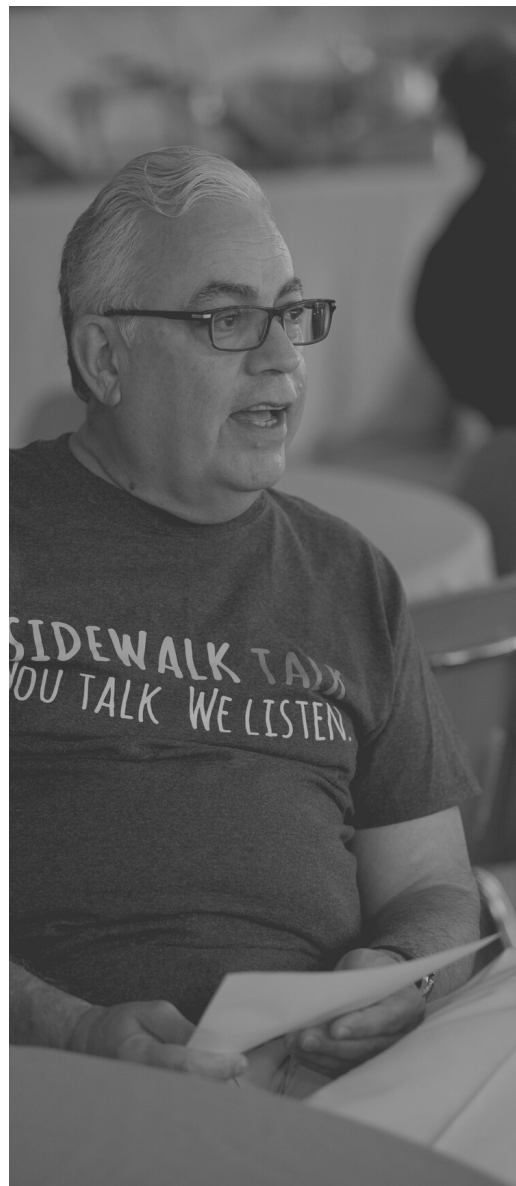
After the formal program concluded, approximately 50 participants enjoyed conversation and a fabulous dinner buffet. The food, suitable for multiple dietary requirements, was provided by local caterer Big Mama's House of Sweets.

Certified listeners from Sidewalk Talk were on hand for one-on-one listening sessions.



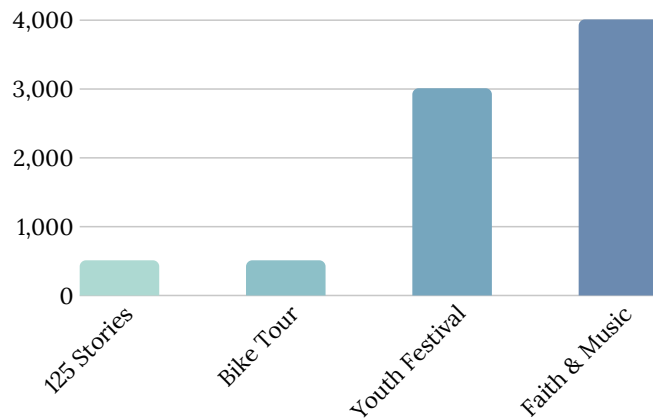
January 26, 2020

3:00 PM - 6:00 PM



PHOTOS: GINA FONTANA

BUDGET & SPONSORS



TOTAL FESTIVAL BUDGET \$20,000

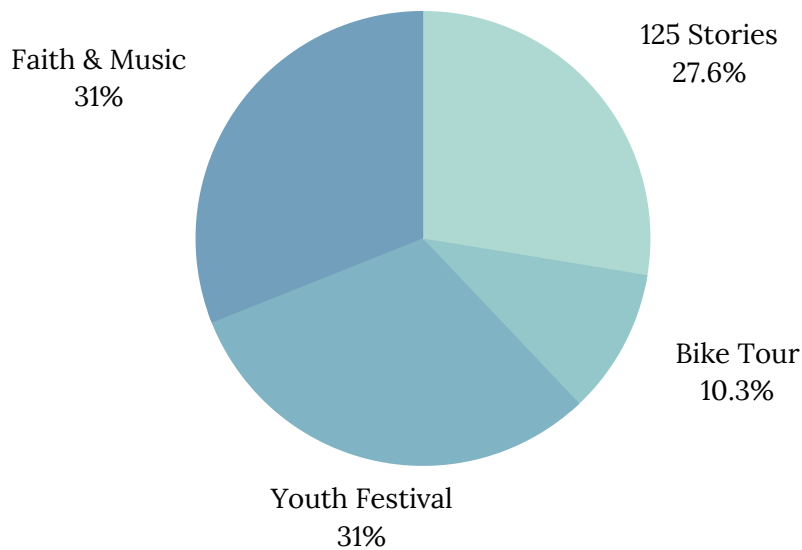
The festival budget with four events equals approximately \$10,000 plus an equal amount of in-kind donations in the form of venues, marketing, and administration.

SPONSORS & PARTNERS

The festival was made possible through the generous support of the following sponsors and partners as well as individual donations.



IMPACT



FESTIVAL PARTICIPATION 180 PARTICIPANTS & VOLUNTEERS

Festival participation at four events over five days was approximately 150 plus about 30 volunteers, facilitators, presenters and staff.

~80 STORIES

**35 STORIES AND POEMS ON STAGE
4 SITE PLANS PRESENTED
25 MASKED CHARACTERS CAVORTED
15 IMPROV SKITS PERFORMED**

Approximately 80 stories were performed, recited, related, or reported on stage or in front of a group, inspiring hundreds of additional one-on-one conversations.

IMPACT

Building community through storytelling celebrates our diversity, highlights common values, allows us to share both our troubles and joys, strengthens us as individuals and as a nation.

Listening reminds us of our responsibilities to each other and our planet. As we connect the generations, we give and receive compassion, and remember to laugh.

We look forward to seeing you at future events and hearing your stories.

Please reach out with any questions or comments.

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FOUNDER/CHAIR



PHOTO: GINA FONTANA