

Fall 2021 “FUN” raiser Newsletter

Welcome to October, National Arts Month! In 1993, the National Arts & Humanities Month was established and is celebrated every October in the United States. It was initiated to encourage Americans to explore new facets of the arts and humanities in their lives, and to begin a lifelong habit of participation in the arts and humanities. In October, communities everywhere come together to celebrate and embrace the extraordinary art in their region. Whether your support is demonstrated by engaging with a new experience yourself, financially supporting an artist, group of artists, or arts organization, Lil' Miss Story Hour encourages you to support the Arts by embracing a new artistic experience this October. We would be thrilled for you to engage with Arts Month by sponsoring us this October.

Lil' Miss Story Hour is a grass roots, Colorado Springs, Colorado-based donation-run educational organization, providing literacy themed programming and entertainment for children. It was founded in 2019 by Vanessa Little, a Colorado native and educator with more than 30 years of experience teaching infant through college-aged individuals in the Colorado, Washington DC, Virginia, and Maryland areas. Lil' Miss Story Hour hosts monthly community story times that present a diverse range of children's literature, written and illustrated by remarkable authors and illustrators from BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) communities.

Lil' Miss Story Hour saw that in Colorado Springs, there was a need for more representation and inclusion in children's literacy and Arts focused events. The starting point for this work was to expose children to books written and illustrated by a wide range of individuals, especially those from BIPOC communities, individuals with disabilities, military individuals, specifically women, and individuals from LGBTQ communities. There has been an explosion the past two years of BIPOC individuals telling their own stories and writing books in which children can see representations of themselves. The statistics have not yet been updated as to how this has affected children's literature, but 2019 Stats from the Cooperative Children's Book Center show the following. 41.8% of main characters are White, 29.2% are Animal/Other, 11.9% are Black/African, 8.7% are Asian/American, 5.3% are Latinx, and 1.05% are Native American/Pacific Islander.

To address the importance of representation, Lil' Miss Story Hour began their program in July 2019 in Colorado Springs at the Ruth Holley Library. We began this program in hopes of showcasing diverse books, so that as BIPOC children grow up, many will become authors, writing their own stories and the stories of people who look like them for the next generations.

Since its inception, Lil' Miss Story Hour has grown from 40-minute story sessions to a two-hour program that includes special guests and artists ranging from dancers, singers, musicians, yogis, healers, poets, authors, illustrators, visual artists, workshop presenters, educators, entrepreneurs, motivational speakers, and more. Because of the support of wonderful local and out of state attendees, Lil' Miss Story Hour has had the opportunity to be featured in local newspapers, [the Gazette](#) and [The Colorado Springs Independent](#) and continues to gain momentum and recognition in Colorado Springs, as well as a handful of cities throughout the U.S. We have been able to feature artists from all over the U.S. and have collaborated in Colorado Springs, with the [Colorado Springs Juneteenth Festival](#), [COATI Uprise](#), [The African American Historical and Genealogical Society of Colorado Springs](#), [Colorado Backpackers](#), [Dear Summer Fest](#) and [The Garden](#) to host many successful story time events. These events including the 2nd Annual Black History Month Story Time, the 2nd Annual Women's History Month Story Time, the 2nd Annual National Poetry and Jazz Month Story Time, and the 2nd Annual Juneteenth, Pride, and Black Music Month Story Time, and the 2nd Annual Back to School Story Time, to name a few.

Additionally, because of a successful Spring 2021 Fundraiser, Lil' Miss Story Hour supported double the number of artists, 28 phenomenally talented humans, increased stipends by an additional 25% from the previous six months, and took their programming on a National tour to select U.S. states. We stopped in the Atlanta, GA area on May 8, 2021 at [Black Dot Cultural Center and Bookstore](#), for A Mother's Day Story Time; Seattle on June 5, 2021 at [Wa Na Wari Art Center](#), for A Foodie Story Time; Washington DC on July 10, 2021 at [BusBoys and Poets](#), for I Love Me Story Time; Philadelphia, on July 17, 2021 at [Sol Garden Studio](#), for Community Love: A Black Family Month Story Time; Los Angeles, CA on August 28, 2021 at [Reparations Club](#), for Count Me In: A Voting Rights Story Time; and Jackson, Mississippi on October 2, 2021, at [The Afrikan Art Gallery and Bookstore](#), for Loving Black Elders Story Time.

As evidenced above, the growth we've experienced since our Spring "FUN" raiser would not have been possible without your support. Lil' Miss Story Hour and the children of Colorado Springs and the world appreciate you for making it possible to keep this programming alive! Please take a moment to visit our website lilmissstoryhour.com, peruse our photo and video galleries of past events, check out upcoming events, or write a review!

Thank you so much for your sponsorship and support!

Sincerely,

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