**How to Get More Stories**

Gretchen Schlie manages *I AM A STORY*, an *OurStoryBridge* project, at the Jefferson County Library District in Madras, OR at [https://www.jcld.org/listen-to-our-i-am-a-story-stories](https://www.jcld.org/listen-to-our-i-am-a-story-stories). She said, “I am going at it like I am the only person who can collect these stories: it is a mission. Otherwise, who else would collect them?”

She suggests the following ideas to help you collect the large volume of stories she has achieved:

- Approach people at events outside of the library, like church events and other community networking venues. Approach people at unexpected venues (local parks, etc.).
- Ask anyone you communicate with, e.g., friends, neighbors, coworkers, family members, patrons at the library, etc.
- Ask at other library programming events, e.g., patrons who rely on the bookmobile, etc.
- Always keep a recorder handy.
- When approaching people, give them a general outline of the project; be transparent with discussing legal requirements of recording stories.
- Encourage people to be spontaneous and record their story “on the spot.” Do not have them read from a script; have them recall their story from feelings. This gives the story a more “organic” feel.
- Get people to sign up to record their stories later; collect email, name, phone number, etc. Although you can send links for recording remotely, it is more beneficial to record the story in person.
- Reach out and contact the storyteller to create a personal, friendly relationship.
- Have people sign up at other library events, e.g., story time, book club, makerspace, teen nights, cosplay events, pet events, pet story time, therapy animal visits, etc. Encourage storytellers to share stories about animals, etc.
- Ensure parental consent if a child under the age of eighteen is sharing a story and confirm via email.
- Make an appointment with the storyteller and send out a text, email, etc. to confirm.
- Visit people; this is a terrific way to collect stories from the elderly, or people who are homebound due to mobility issues, and to be inclusive for all members of the community.
- The time limit can be challenging, so reassure people and create a comfortable atmosphere.
- Encourage people to reach out and recommend the project to friends.
- Attend community events and announce story recruitment; get a table when you can.
- Encourages staff to wear “I AM A Story” shirts.
- Hand out a flyer or bookmark to patrons checking out books with a line like “Don’t forget to tell your story!” and the address to do so.
- Develop a targeted email list.
- Include advertisements for the project in the library newsletter.
- Share business cards
- Send text messages.
- Give out incentives for sharing stories, e.g., water bottles, pins, stickers, drawstring back packs, key chains, pens, notepads, etc.