

# Facing Diversity: Marshallese Stories

---

Dubuque, Iowa is home to approximately 300-600 Marshallese people. Close family ties create close-knit units that provide a social resource for members. This close-knit community is rich in culture, and is one that residents of Dubuque know little about. The Facing Project, brought in partnership with Inclusive Dubuque and the Social Work Department at Clarke University, would provide a method for local residents to learn about the growing Marshallese community.

Through the telling and writing of Marshallese community member's stories, Dubuque may be able to better understand and appreciate the culture and traditions, as well as the barriers Marshallese people have overcome. The ability to tell their stories will be empowering to the Marshallese community, individually and collectively.

Storytelling is not only a way to share who we are with others, it is also a way to hear and understand ourselves better. Telling our stories is a way to be heard—to communicate our joys, fears, strengths, and dreams to those closest to us, as well as those who do not know us at all. It gives us a safe way to recognize that seemingly great differences aren't as great as we may believe—we are more similar than we are different.

## BECOME A STORYTELLER

---

Are you a member of the Marshallese community? Would you like to share your story with the rest of Dubuque?

The Facing Project provides an opportunity for you to share your story so non-Marshallese residents can learn about your history, culture and family experiences. Having the opportunity to tell your personal stories allows all of us to build relationships with others in a deep and authentic way, and impacts the lives of both storyteller and listener.

Here's how it works:

1. You'll be matched with a volunteer writer.
2. You will meet with the storywriter face-to-face so they can come to know your story as if it were their own.
3. The writer will write your story as if it were their own, as if they experienced it themselves. Is your story sad? Joyful? Scary? You must convey these emotions to the writer so they can recreate them on paper.
4. You get to read the story and suggest changes. The story doesn't get published without your final approval.
5. Your story is included with others in a book that will be shared across our community.
6. An event and book launch will be held in May that will coincide with the Marshallese Independence Day celebration, sponsored by the Multicultural Family Center. Your story could be read as a monologue!
7. That's it! The stories live on in the books and on the Internet educating and inspiring those who read them.

# BECOME A STORYWRITER

---

Writers unite! Are you interested in helping tell the story of our Marshallese community? Listening to personal stories allows us to build relationships with others in a deep and authentic way, and impacts the lives of both the listener and storyteller.

Here's how it works:

1. You'll be matched with a storyteller: storytellers will be individuals from the Marshallese community.
2. You'll meet with the storyteller face-to-face so they can share their story with you. Often this will take a couple of hours, but ultimately, this process isn't about time: it's about coming to know the storyteller's story as if it were your own.
3. You will then write the story as if it were your own, that is, in first person.
4. Once you have written the story, the storyteller must have the opportunity to read what you wrote and offer suggestions, if needed. The story doesn't get published without their final approval.
5. Project editors will review the story before it is published in a book that will be shared across our community.
6. An event and book launch will be held in May that will coincide with the Marshallese Independence Day celebration, sponsored by the Multicultural Family Center. Some of the stories could be read as monologues.
7. That's it! The stories live on in the books and on the Internet educating and inspiring those who read them.

## HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

---

If you are interested in becoming a storyteller or story writer, contact Suzie Stroud at [inclusivedbqfacingproject@gmail.com](mailto:inclusivedbqfacingproject@gmail.com), or call 563.588.2700 and ask for Katrina Farren-Eller.

For more information, visit [www.inclusivedubuque.facingproject.com](http://www.inclusivedubuque.facingproject.com).

## ABOUT THE FACING PROJECT

---

The Facing Project was originally launched in Muncie, Indiana in 2011 under the title, Facing Poverty as a storytelling project to raise awareness about poverty in the Muncie community. Twenty-one storytellers and storywriters were paired together, and their stories were compiled into a book to share with the community. Through the stories shared and dialogues created, Facing Poverty helped bring the face of poverty to the forefront.

Since then, many other communities have joined the Facing Project to tell their stories about various groups including Facing Autism, Facing Homelessness, Facing Cancer, Facing Immigration, and many more.