



INTERNATIONAL  
STORYTELLING CENTER

*Connecting the World through the Power of Storytelling*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**End Date:** October 19, 2019

**International Storytelling Center announces Second Young Appalachian Story Summit, an event produced by and for young Appalachians**

**(Jonesborough, Tenn.)** – The International Storytelling Center (ISC), home to the world-renowned National Storytelling Festival and *Storytelling Live!* Teller-in-Residence series, announces it will host the second annual *My Voice, Our Place: A Young Appalachian Story Summit* on Saturday, October 19 from 9 am to 5:30 pm. The free, one-day event will feature an inspirational keynote, story circles, interactive workshops, and opportunities to stay involved beyond the event.

Summit participants will have the opportunity to hear from diverse voices within Appalachia who are using storytelling as a leadership tool; to understand how to take action in their own communities; and to join a network of like-minded young Appalachians to collaborate with beyond the event. The Summit will focus on the issues in Appalachia that attendees are passionate about and participants will have the opportunity to customize a one-of-a-kind agendas based on their own interests and experience.

Through a choice of storytelling and arts-based workshops, young leaders will learn to apply story skills and techniques to effectively advocate for their causes and communities. Workshop leaders include Kiran Singh Sirah, UN Peace Champion and President of the International Storytelling Center; Hilarie Rose Spangler, a young storyteller and co-founder of the Cardinal Cross Arts Company, an interdisciplinary rural-urban exchange created to produce, amplify, and celebrate the untold stories of marginalized Appalachians; Artist and Johnson City Zine Fest founder Suzie Kelly; Distinguished University of Tennessee lecturer and Sundress Academy for the Arts Founder Erin Elizabeth Smith; and Appalachian filmmaker Oakley Fugate.

Fugate will also provide a special address to summit attendees. Born and raised in Whitesburg, Kentucky, Fugate is an alumni of the Appalachian Media Institute, and has been making films since 2012. Named an Open Society Youth Fellow, he produces documentary films about LGBTQ youth in Eastern Kentucky, drawing a connection between exclusion on the basis of disability. Fugate cites the discrimination that he has faced due to his Aspergers as his inspiration to create films about human rights.

The event will close with an open mic, where attendees are welcomed to share performance pieces of all kinds. Following the summit, participants will have other invaluable opportunities, including free webinars and social media idea exchanges, and will also be eligible for a competitive internship at the International Storytelling Center.

“We are honored to have the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities to make the *My Voice, Our Place* Summit happen,” said event coordinator Rachel Stiltner. “Historically, the voices of Appalachians, and especially those of marginalized groups within Appalachia, have been stifled by stereotypes. Helping young Appalachians identify and tell their own stories creates leaders. And when we connect those voices to communities, we can build a better, truer Appalachia for young people.”

*My Voice, Our Place: A Young Appalachian Story Summit* is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The event is free, open to young Appalachians aged 16-30, and limited to 75 applicants. A travel and lodging stipend is available. To learn more about the International Storytelling Center or to apply for the event, please visit [www.storytellingcenter.net](http://www.storytellingcenter.net) or call 423-753-2171, ext. 224.

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*In association with the Smithsonian Institution*

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