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**Young Appalachian Story Summit – Leadership and Civic Engagement for Young Adults**

**(Jonesborough, Tenn.)** – The International Storytelling Center (ISC), home to the world-renowned National Storytelling Festival and *Storytelling Live!* teller-in-residence series, is proud to announce the 2021 Young Appalachian Story Summit (YASS), a day-long workshop-intensive event which provides story-based leadership and civic engagement training for young adults in Appalachia, all free of charge thanks to a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

YASS focuses on how young adults ages 18-25 can use storytelling as a leadership tool to help create Appalachia’s future. The theme of the 2021 Summit is *Crossroads* and aims to empower young Appalachians, particularly those of historically marginalized backgrounds, to work together and use the power of storytelling to cultivate a united voice during global unease. Summit participants will have the opportunity to hear from diverse voices within Appalachia, to practice how storytelling can help them take action in their own communities, and to join a collaborative network of like-minded young Appalachians for support beyond the event. The theme of *Crossroads* addresses the intersections of who we are and how we engage our voices with the wider community. Through workshops, networking, panel discussions, and story circles, participants will collaboratively explore their own strengths at each of these “crossroads” and develop concrete ways to use these strengths as tools in their lives and work.

The Summit will be held on August 14, 2021 at the International Storytelling Center in Jonesborough, Tennessee, from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. Young adults between the ages of 18-25 and who live in the Appalachian region are welcome to register for this FREE event. While the immediate target area is Central Appalachia (e.g. Northeast Tennessee, Southeast Kentucky, Southwest Virginia, and Northwest North Carolina), the Summit is open to all those who live and work within any of the 13 Appalachian states. More information, including event registration, can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/3ihL1zJ>.

While 2020 saw the Summit on hold, YASS was held in both 2018 and 2019. One past participant noted how impactful the connections were at the Summit: “I spent the day surrounded by people who encouraged one another. Over 50 people who have a desire to not only tell the stories of Appalachia, but to do everything they can to make Appalachia better.” Another participant highlighted the power of implementing story in their life: “One of the key important things that I learned today is the importance of our stories and how in the uniqueness of our stories, there is an element that connects us to the broader story of humanity.”

The Young Appalachian Story Summit is made possible by funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The grant supported the launch of a five-year endowment-building project to culminate in an International Year of the Story during the 50th anniversary of the National Storytelling Festival.

To learn more about the International Storytelling Center and upcoming Young Appalachian Story Summit programming, please visit [www.StorytellingCenter.net](http://www.StorytellingCenter.net).

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