



NEW YORK LIFE
FOUNDATION



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FROM: Michael's Place / StoryCorps

CONTACTS:

Michael's Place

Melissa Fournier | (231) 947-6453

Melissa@MyMichaelsPlace.net

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StoryCorps Press Desk

646.723.7020 Ext. 75

press@storycorps.org

**MICHAEL'S PLACE PARTNERS WITH NATIONAL NONPROFIT STORYCORPS
TO RECORD TRAVERSE CITY COMMUNITY STORIES**

January 21, 2019 – TRAVERSE CITY – Michael's Place is partnering with StoryCorps and the New York Life Foundation to record and preserve stories of children and families grieving the death of a family member or friend as part of *Road to Resilience: Memories that Move Us Forward*. This program leverages the power of stories and storytelling to help children cope with the death of a parent, sibling, friend or loved one.

In the New York Life Foundation's 2017 [Bereavement Survey](#), those who lost a parent growing up spoke to storytelling's important role in their grief journey, indicating that the most helpful thing family or friends did after their loss was to share stories about their loved one (37%, highest cited action). A full 68% felt that it would have been easier to cope with their grief if our society was more open to talking about death and loss.

Through *Road to Resilience*, StoryCorps is partnering with bereavement support organizations to provide opportunities for children and their families to preserve memories of their friends and loved ones, share their grief journeys, or simply to record themselves as they are. Partnering organizations receive in-depth training from StoryCorps and special resources to assist them in incorporating the interview model into their existing programs.

Michael's Place is one of six bereavement organizations chosen from a large applicant pool to participate. Michael's Place will invite their participants to record 40-minute conversations facilitated by their trained staff and volunteers for inclusion in the program.

At the conclusion of this project, StoryCorps will create and share free digital training resources to help local providers enrich and strengthen their work through storytelling and, in turn, to encourage more dialogue around grief and the issue of childhood bereavement.

Founded in 2003 by Dave Isay, StoryCorps has given nearly 500,000 people—Americans of all backgrounds and beliefs, in towns and cities in all 50 states—the chance to record interviews about their lives. The organization preserves the recordings in its archive at the Library of Congress, the largest single collection of human voices ever gathered, and shares select stories with the public through StoryCorps' weekly podcast, NPR broadcasts, animated shorts, digital platforms, and best-selling books. These powerful human stories reflect the vast range of American experiences, wisdom and values; engender empathy and connection; and remind us how much more we have in common than divides us.

"Looking a loved one in the eyes and asking about his or her life is one of the greatest gifts we can give one another. The simple act of listening tells them how much they matter, and documenting that conversation for posterity tells them that they won't be forgotten," said Dave Isay, StoryCorps Founder and President.

"We are so excited to partner with StoryCorps on the *Road to Resilience* project. Sharing and witnessing stories of bereaved children is part of our everyday work at Michael's Place, and the opportunity to work with a nationally recognized organization like StoryCorps to preserve these children's experiences, fits so beautifully with our

mission”, explained Melissa Fournier, Program Director at Michael’s Place. “To create these recordings and preserve these memories and experiences is a gift to the children, their families, and the community, both now and into the future.”

“Creating opportunities for children in grief, their families, and caregivers to record, preserve, and share their stories aligns with the New York Life Foundation’s longstanding support of grieving children and the organizations that serve them,” said Maria Collins, Vice President, “Our partnership with StoryCorps seeks to heighten awareness of childhood bereavement while focusing on resiliency and positive responses to death through personal voice and story.”

To listen to excerpts from some of the stories already recorded as part of StoryCorps’ *Road to Resilience*, visit www.storycorps.org/road-to-resilience

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About Michael’s Place

Michael’s Place is a grief support center for children, teens, adults. The organization gives those who grieve a voice to share their story, care and support to survive their loss, and hope to begin to live again. Last year, Michael’s Place provided grief support services to 1,700 individuals in the community at no cost.

For more information, visit www.MyMichaelsPlace.net or call (231) 947-6453.

ABOUT STORYCORPS

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ABOUT THE NEW YORK LIFE FOUNDATION

Inspired by New York Life's tradition of service and humanity, the New York Life Foundation has, since its founding in 1979, provided more than \$270 million in charitable contributions to national and local nonprofit organizations. The Foundation supports programs that benefit young people, particularly in the areas of educational enhancement and childhood bereavement. The Foundation also encourages and facilitates the community involvement of employees and agents of New York Life through its Volunteers for Good and Grief-Sensitive Schools Initiative programs. To learn more, please visit www.newyorklifefoundation.org.