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FROM: Catholic Community Services / StoryCorps

CONTACTS:

Catholic Community Services of Western Washington
Tanya Mendenhall Mettlen | 253-471-5340 ext. 33
TanyaM@ccsw.org

StoryCorps
Michelle Bova | 646-723-7020 ext.
12, mbova@storycorps.org

**STORYCORPS, THE GROUNDBREAKING ORAL HISTORY ORGANIZATION,
TO RECORD INTERVIEWS WITH CCS IN PIERCE COUNTY**

**Catholic Community Services of Western Washington will host five days of recording
with families who have experienced homelessness**

June 16, 2014 – StoryCorps, an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to recording, preserving and sharing the stories of people from all backgrounds and beliefs, will visit Catholic Community Services of Western Washington-Southwest (CCS) in Tacoma from July 15-19. StoryCorps will partner with CCS to record five days of interviews about family homelessness and the larger issues that surround it—poverty, unemployment and inequality—with a focus on capturing stories about families.

CCS Southwest is the Pierce County local host partner for a new StoryCorps project called “Finding Our Way: Puget Sound Stories About Family Homelessness.” CCS was selected because of its established track record of successfully supporting homeless and at-risk families as they find and maintain stable housing.

All Pierce County residents who have experienced homelessness as part of a family, in their recent or distant pasts—or know someone who has—are encouraged to participate. Those interested can contact StoryCorps at findingourway@storycorps.org, or Tanya Mendenhall Mettlen at CCS, tanyam@ccsw.org. More information about “Finding Our Way” is also available via the [Seattle University Project on Family Homelessness](#), which is assisting CCS by working to find stories from local residents who may not be connected to a nonprofit service provider.

StoryCorps will also record stories in King and Snohomish counties later in the summer — a total of 90 interviews across the three counties. The project is funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

StoryCorps interviews are conversations between two people who know and care about each other. A trained StoryCorps Facilitator guides the participants through the interview process. At the end of each 40-minute recording session, participants receive a CD copy of their interview, and with their permission, a second copy is archived at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. A very small percentage of all of the interviews StoryCorps records are produced for national broadcast on NPR’s *Morning Edition*. All of the interview materials recorded at CCS will also be made available for the Gates Foundation and other local nonprofits to use in their advocacy efforts to prevent and end homelessness among families.

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“StoryCorps tells the true American story—that we are a people defined by small acts of courage, kindness and heroism. Each interview reminds people that their lives matter and will not be forgotten,” said its founder, David Isay. “By strengthening connections between people and building an archive that reflects the rich diversity of American voices, we hope to build StoryCorps into an enduring institution that will touch the lives of every American family.”

Denny Hunthausen, vice president/CCS Southwest agency director, said that CCS is excited to be the Pierce County local host partner for the project. “Families who go through homelessness are some of the most resilient people we’ve ever met. The humanizing nature of this project is what excites us about participating. It’s empowering for the people who tell their stories, and an incredibly positive experience for the people in our organization — our clients, staff, funders, donors, neighbors and everyone who cares about ending family homelessness.”

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About StoryCorps

StoryCorps is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide people of all backgrounds and beliefs with the opportunity to record, share, and preserve their stories. Since 2003, StoryCorps has collected and archived more than 50,000 interviews with nearly 95,000 participants. Each conversation is recorded on a free CD to share, and is preserved at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. StoryCorps is one of the largest oral history projects of its kind, and millions listen to its weekly broadcasts on NPR’s *Morning Edition* and on [its website](#).

About Catholic Community Services

We believe in compassion, love and respect for all people, especially those who are poor and vulnerable, and we believe every person has the right to a safe, affordable place to call home. [Catholic Community Services](#) provide a continuum of care for homeless and low-income people throughout Western Washington. Through day centers, emergency shelters and emergency services, we provide warm, safe refuge from the streets.

About the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life.

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