It is our mission to bring unheard voices, both near and far, into the public arena; to transform lived experiences into written memoirs powerful enough to change hearts, minds, and policy.

Through a quarter century of bringing people into small writing circles and providing the empathy-based tools to break silences together, we join hands to create a powerful grass roots literature that will champion a culture of equity, inclusion and justice. Our facilitated writing workshops help people - no matter the level of education - break their silence, add their voices to the public discourse, and process the experiences that have shaped their lives.

Since 2017, Herstory has been the Long Island representative of a state-wide movement to use literature to examine the cracks in the liberty bell, initiated by the National Parks of New York Harbor Conservancy. We thank New York State Council on the Arts, Babylon Citizens Council on the Arts, Suffolk County Office of Cultural Affairs, New York Community Trust, Pritchard Charitable Trust and the Wyandanch Plaza Association for the support that has made this year’s Freedom Forum possible.

Find more information about our community at:

@herstory_writers_network
contactus@herstorywriters.org

All paintings by Gwynne Duncan
Program

3:00 Meet and Greet the Herstory board, staff, and partners, the Herstory/ERASE Racism Fellows, Stony Brook Interns, teachers and students, while Kris Janvier shares his spoken word “The Age of Legality”

Welcome by Heather Pasmore
Herstory Board Chair

Introduction by Honorable Judge Fernando Camacho

Listen to our Stories and Dream With Us: Hands Across our Communities, Students
Writing for a Change
“Solo somos viajeros”
by Breisi Juárez
“I Cannot be Scared Anymore”
by Medjina Chery
Read by Tanasha Gordon
“Barbie’s ‘Perfect’ Life”
by Astrid Lopez
“¿Estás disfrutando tu momento?”
by Breisi Juárez

Introducing if Your Words had the Power
Wyandanch High School Students

Our Stories, Our Hope
Uniondale Middle and High School Students

“Mi cuerpo está aquí pero mi alma mas allá, aya”
by Guadalupe Ortiz Telica
“Mi Travesía”
rap by Chris Bares Alfaro

“Mis Recuerdos”
by Leslie Martinez
“A Glimmer of Hope”
by Keiry Fuentes

We are Strong
Highlights from our new Linda Howard Weissman Program at Touro Law Center, A.S. and K.G. introduced by Hon. Judge Fernando Camacho

Stand by Me
Stony Brook University Students
“Goumen Batay sa a Ansanm”
by Rosena Petite Homme
“Warrior’s Blood”
by Hannah Solis

Testify: From Civil Rights to Black Lives Matter
Helen Dorado Alessi and Erika Duncan model the Page One Moment with Hassan Baalbaki
Clifford Seide

Transition into Call for Action
“Shape of my Heart”
by Renata Anqa

2023 Freedom Forum Call to Action
Led by Hon Judge Fernando Camacho, Ed Pichardo, representing ERASE Racism, Erika Duncan and Helen Dorado Alessi, with full audience participation to brainstorm the actions that arise from the stories, toward a future community action plan.

A CALL TO ACTION

For five years, Herstory Writers Network has partnered with the Humanities Institute at Stony Brook University to stage large-scale public gatherings featuring grassroots literature produced by members of Long Island’s most vulnerable and isolated populations, followed by a call to action that guides the vision and programming for the years to come.

Some of the outcomes include the call for a book of newcomer students stories, when they were first shared in 2017, leading to the publication of Brave Journeys which now has sold nearly 10,000 copies nationwide and is being used as text in schools throughout the country. It led to the beginning of Herstory’s work connecting racism and environmental justice and to the Elephant in the Room project and website in partnership with Wyandanch High School, plus the formation of “Herstory in Southern Sun,” a sister chapter of Herstory in the Gullah Geechee Corridor in South Carolina, supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Jacob Volkman Human Rights Fellowship Program, bringing together North and South.