

HERSTORY WRITERS WORKSHOP, THE HUMANITIES INSTITUTE AT STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY  
PEOPLE POWER PATCHOGUE & BUILDING BRIDGES IN BROOKHAVEN PRESENT



# TESTIFY: MEMOIR AS A TOOL FOR BUILDING A MOVEMENT

## FREEDOM FORUM 2018

Saturday, October 27

Charles B. Wang Center

At Stony Brook University

9:30am– 4:00pm

Featuring poet and activist Kathy Engel



Readings by Herstory Writers



A town hall-style story-shaping meeting  
to lift our voices together for justice,  
one story at a time



A Call for Action



A Partner Gallery for Networking

Lunch will be provided

For more information / [contactus@herstorywriters.org](mailto:contactus@herstorywriters.org)

WHERE OUR STORIES  
HAVE THE POWER  
FOR CHANGE

Freedom Forums is presented by the National Parks of New York Harbor Conservancy. It is funded in part by grants from Humanities New York, and by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. Herstory's Long Island initiative is funded by Suffolk County's Office of Cultural Affairs (SCOCA) and National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

# FREEDOM FORUM 2018

**What are the cracks in the liberty bell? Can a living literature, coming from the people whose voices are least often heard, help to mend them?**

As the Long Island representative of a statewide initiative coordinated by the National Parks of New York Harbor Conservancy, Herstory Writers Workshop will partner with the Humanities Institute at Stony Brook University, People Power Patchogue and Building Bridges in Brookhaven to stage a day-long Freedom Forum, featuring grassroots literature produced by members of Long Island's most vulnerable and isolated populations.

We will begin with a large-scale gathering in the Zodiac Lobby of the Charles B. Wang Center of Stony Brook University with the goal of bringing together middle school, high school and college students; organizational leaders and human rights activists; and members of government, human services, the arts and academia to build on Herstory's two-plus decades of convening large groups coming from all sides of the power structure to hear inspirational readings and then daring them to express how they would tell their own stories.

A morning of readings will be followed with a town hall-style group interaction focused on how to shape one's personal story into a powerful literary work that will help mend the bridges in communities torn apart by violence and hatred. Each new story shaped aloud will help give voice to another, leading to a writing break and a re-convening in which the story openings will be shared. The event will culminate in a call to action.

The overarching goal is to bring together members of Suffolk County's hidden communities who are witness to or victims of the rise in hate crimes, racism and endangerment of immigrants in our current climate, and to engage them in shaping their stories into an online publication. The stories will be used as sermons in churches, mosques, and synagogues; they will be featured in local media and organizational newsletters and included in Herstory's developing digital archive.

## PROGRAM SCHEDULE

**9:30 am:** Coffee and mingling around the Partner Gallery representing the justice organizations and institutions working with Herstory to create a story-based strategy for change.

**10:00 am:** Welcome followed by a keynote reading by Kathy Engel and readings by Herstory writers.

**11:30 am:** "If Our Words Had the Power/Creating a Movement through Our Stories"—a town hall-style community story-shaping experience engaging the whole

audience in finding each person's Page One Moment that will lead into a story needing to be told, led by Erika Duncan and Herstory facilitators.

**1:00 pm:** Lunch and writing break during which people will begin to write inspired by the morning's events.

**2:00 pm:** "Listening to Our Stories/The Power of Writing in Community," a full convening during which people will read aloud what they started to write during the lunch break.

**3:00 pm:** "When Our Words Turn to Actions/ Where Our Stories Might Go," led by representatives of Herstory, People Power Patchogue and Building Bridges in Brookhaven. A call to action, this portion of the program will be dedicated to collective brainstorming to imagine how the stories can be used as testimony to address the current human rights crisis in our country, to ensure that our communities and our nation remain places of welcome, sanctuary and inclusion.



HUMANITIES INSTITUTE  
AT STONY BROOK



**BUILDING BRIDGES IN BROOKHAVEN**  
no longer strangers

