

2016 Storycare Symposium Programme

hosted by Storytelling Toronto &
Arts Health Program at Baycrest Health Sciences

Friday December 9, 2016

Registration: 8:30 am | Program 9 am – 5 pm

Baycrest Health Sciences, 3560 Bathurst Street, Toronto

8:30 – 9:00 : **Coffee/tea registration**

9:00 – 9:15 : **Introduction and welcome**

Melissa Tafler (Coordinator, Arts and Health Program, Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care)

9:15 – 10:15: **There Aren't Very Many Yous: Listening to those who can't find the words**

with Dr. Steve Sabat

Exploring the life stories of people diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease can be extremely useful in enhancing the quality of life of the people diagnosed and of their care partners. How I have pursued my research is, itself, a reflection of aspects of my own life story that I will discuss as well.

10:15 – 11:00: **Elder Wisdom in Three Cultures**

Storytelling by Louise Profeit-Leblanc (Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation, Yukon Territory), Calogero Chiarelli (Sicilian-Canadian), and Itah Sadu (Barbadian-Canadian)

11:00 – 11:20: **Coffee/tea break**

11:20 – 12:00: **These Brilliant Threads: Stories at the End of Life**

with Mary Louise Chown

Between birth and death lie all manner of tales, seemingly disparate, but actually closely related to one another. In death, as in life, stories are always relevant, helping us realize that we have so much in common and that we are not alone. Mary Louise Chown will tell us how she has taken storytelling and music to people in palliative care and hospice settings.

12:00 – 12:20: **Laughing on the 4th Floor – humour and depression among the elderly**

with Jim Rennie

For several years Jim has been compiling a collection of jokes and anecdotes from members of the Baycrest community. He will share some of his favourites and invite the audience to share theirs.

12:20 – 1:15: **Lunch** (included in registration fee)

1:15 – 2:30: Session 1 Workshops**1) Storycare Live at Baycrest**, with Dan Yashinsky

With participants from some of the story-circles I lead as Baycrest's storyteller-in-residence, we will share stories and thoughts about the value of storytelling in a healthcare setting.

2) I Remember When. . . Stories in the Family, with Celia Barker Lottridge

We all have family stories. Some we have heard from older relatives, some we have lived ourselves. This workshop will give you the pleasure of finding and giving shape to bits of family history and experience that will surely disappear if they are never passed on as stories.

3) Village of Storytellers – an approach to intergenerational community-building through storytelling, with Dinny Biggs and members of the Village of Storytellers: Regent Park project

The Village of Storytellers project produced by Storytelling Toronto strives to rekindle the oral tradition of story listening and storytelling in group settings. In this workshop, examples will be shared from Regent Park community projects over the last four years involved in multilingual and intergenerational storytelling. Elder VOS participants will add their perspectives on the importance of seeking and listening to stories, and the strength cultural diversity brings to build a storytelling community.

2:30 – 3:00: Coffee/tea break**3:00 – 4:15: Session 2 Workshops****1) Storytelling Projects for and by Seniors**, with Lorne Brown, Lynda Howes, Marylyn Peringer

In this highly interactive workshop, three of Toronto's veteran storytellers share their experiences and best practices from their many grassroots storytelling projects with seniors.

2) Witnessing the Brilliant Threads of Life - Storytelling in Palliative Care, with Mary Louise Chown

Have you ever wondered if you could broaden your practice to include storytelling in all of its forms? In this workshop we will explore storytelling and storylistening as a way of nourishing connections, especially when we find ourselves, our friends and family, or our co-workers experiencing difficult times.

3) Honor and Respect – Storytelling as a Way of Life in First Nations, Caribbean, and Sicilian Culture, with Itah Sadu, Calogero Chiarelli, Louise Profeit-Leblanc

When do "seniors" become "Elders"? How is the wisdom of the aged valued in cultures around the world? Three storytellers give their own perspective on how their cultures honor and respect their wisdom-keepers.

4:15 – 5:00: Closing Discussion, with Dan Yashinsky and Melissa Tafler

Presenter Biographies

Author and storyteller **Celia Barker Lottridge** grew up in a family where memories of childhood experiences, anecdotes about relatives both near and far, and accounts of the activities of long-ago ancestors were woven into daily life, especially during long car trips. Celia took these stories for granted until she became a writer and realized that they gave real insight into the lives and times of people she would never know or not know when they were young. Having discovered this treasure she has woven family stories into her storytelling and into her writing. She loves to hear other people's family stories as they open windows into places and experiences she could never know herself.

Dinny Biggs works with professional storytellers to coordinate projects for all ages using storytelling to build auditory skills, social inclusion and community engagement. Dinny is currently vice president of the Storytellers of Canada-Conteurs du Canada.

Calogero Chiarelli As a tribute to living this long, his work has been a Sicilian-Canadian roller coaster ride, nationally and internationally: Calogero is a bowling alley pin-setter; hustler of newspapers on Hamilton streets; storyteller; writer of prose, poetry, plays, librettos and screenplays; musician; actor (stage and screen); and Mental Health and Addictions Consultant.

Mary Louise Chown has taken storytelling in many innovative directions from her base in the Manitoba storytelling community. She co-founded the Manitoba Storytelling Guild, was Artistic Director of the *Magic of One* concert series, and served as the first Storyteller-in-Residence at the Winnipeg Public Library. Once a little prairie chicken, now a full-fledged crone, over the years she has been a teacher, hospice storyteller and visual artist. She has performed at storytelling festivals across Canada and in Australia and Great Britain. She is the author of *Now I know the World is Round: Stories at the End of Life*.

Lynda Howes, Lorne Brown, and Marylyn Peringer, all veteran storytellers, have spent many years encouraging seniors from diverse cultures and language groups to remember and share stories. Where there are several languages represented in one group, they have worked with translators. In instances while working with people who have memory loss, they have used the tunes and the words of old-time songs. They have also observed that when they use finger plays and nursery rhymes with people who have end-of-life dementia, everyone joins in the fun.

Louise Profeit-Leblanc is from the Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation in Northeastern Yukon. She comes from a long line of storytellers and is now the keeper of many of these stories of the ancient and not so distant past. For 15 years she has worked with her people all over the Yukon to ensure that the oral histories and stories of the First Nations people were recorded and transcribed for posterity. Co-founder of the Yukon International Storytelling festival, Yukon and the Society of Yukon Artists of Native Ancestry, Louise has attempted to ensure the voice of her people is heard and will be protected for the future generations. This voice and information is a gift that her people must share for the betterment of the world.

Jim Rennie graduated from U of T in political science and economics in 1965. He worked in journalism after graduation, including almost 10 years with Maclean-Hunter on several business

publications, and has written twelve childrens books in the early 1970's before launching his own publishing company in 1977. He combined his love of sports and business as founder and editor of Jim Rennie's SPORTS LETTER, and for 25 years this publication followed international trends in the sports and leisure markets. Over those years, the company diversified into magazines, directories and market research (all focused on the sports and leisure markets). The company was sold in 2002 and Jim is now semi-retired in Collingwood, Ontario.

Steven R. Sabat is the great grandson of a silk merchant from Jaffa, grandson of the owners of a kosher restaurant and delicatessen, and son of a button salesman. Born in the Bronx, New York, he moved to Astoria, New York as soon as he heard about it, and learned some of his first lessons in Psychology while playing stickball and touch football on Astoria's streets, and playing pocket billiards in a pool hall under an "El". He attended Public School 5, Junior High School 126, and Long Island City High School before earning his B.A. and M.A. at Queens College and his Ph.D. in Neuropsychology at the City University of New York. His research for the past thirty-five years has been focused on the subjective experience of having Alzheimer's disease and the cognitive and social abilities that remain intact in people who have been diagnosed as being in the moderate to severe stages of the disease. He has worked with professional and family caregivers of people with dementia so as to improve interpersonal communication while taking advantage of remaining abilities found in the latter group. He has explored these topics in numerous journal articles, in his book, *The Experience of Alzheimer's Disease: Life Through a Tangled Veil* (Blackwell, 2001) and in his co-edited book, *Dementia: Mind, Meaning, and the Person* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

Itah Sadu is an award-winning author, storyteller and owner of Toronto bookstore, A Different Booklist. She shares the rich oral traditions of the Caribbean, Africa and North America with students and teachers. Her stories, workshops and keynotes often address issues of racism and equity as well as demonstrating the wealth of knowledge, experience and wisdom gained from oral traditional cultures of the African Diaspora.

Melissa Tafler is the Coordinator of the Arts and Health program at Baycrest. Her work involves leading the development and operationalization of initiatives that integrate the arts across clinical programs, education and research in health and aging. After over 15 years of clinical experience as a geriatric social worker, Melissa began exploring the use of creative, arts-based approaches with older adults with neurodegenerative disease, and became passionate and determined to expand this work across the healthcare sector. Melissa also provides consultation on the integration of arts-based learning and curriculum development for clinical staff through Baycrest's Centre for Learning, Research and Innovation.

Dan Yashinsky works as Baycrest's storyteller-in-residence. He is the author of *Suddenly They Heard Footsteps – Storytelling for the Twenty-first Century* and *Swimming with Chaucer – A Storyteller's Logbook*. He edited the *Baycrest Wisdom Book*.

2016 Storycare Planning Team: Debra Baptiste, Dinny Biggs, Melissa Tafler, and Dan Yashinsky