

TELLING My STORY

Where have we come from,
and where are we going?

TMS Newsletter Volume 1

It's an exciting time for Telling My Story. With new projects springing up and our alumni base growing with each collaboration, TMS has become a network of collaborators, activists, and listeners bringing the work to new places to create change, **"TMS has given us a community within the college and beyond,"** says TMS founder Pati Hernandez. "It brings people to a place where they have to deconstruct the way they think and act. **It's been crazy and wonderful and quite effective."**

*"For the first time since I have gotten in trouble, I was able to tell my story. People heard my voice and listened to what I had to say. It was an opportunity I don't think other inmates have."
-Inmate Participant*

What is Telling My Story?

Telling My Story is a non-profit organization that uses writing, performance, and voice as a medium for social reflection and relationship building. We bring Dartmouth College students together with groups behind the visible and invisible social walls of incarceration, addiction, and poverty, to create original theater performances. By creating together, program participants from both "inside" and "outside" find common ground and discover opportunities to shift deep patterns of social exclusion. TMS tests theoretical propositions against real-life experiences to build an understanding of issues based on personal experience rather than statistics and stereotypes.

The Model Theory

Mentally prepare to interact with those different from us

+ Collaboration

Create a platform to explore and question assumptions

+ Performance

Share with the public to spark conversation

+ Reflection

Critique thoughts, actions, and place in society

*"This is the most profitable class I've participated in since being incarcerated. It required inner change, patience, compromise, sacrifice and commitment. Just when it seemed easiest to give up, someone in the class would say something to rejuvenate the energy."
-Matt, Inmate Participant*

"This is a place of intellectual and experiential vulnerability, a place to practice humility and challenge our tendency to control the situation. We are not here to implement an agenda but to build one together as we move forward. It is not a place to speak for one another but to speak with the other." - Pati Hernandez

Reflecting on her experience with Telling My Story in her 2013 valedictory address, Anna Morenz said,

"There's something powerful and irreplaceable about hearing stories from people in person. I believe in change happening at that level- between two people talking and listening. It's something that we can actually work for in the face of the daunting structures of oppression and inequity."

2013

TMS develops a campus workshop, *Telling My Story on Campus*, to address social stratification at Dartmouth

2012

Dartmouth students join TMS in Chile for a collaboration at the Women's Correctional Facility Talca, Chile

2009

TMS collaborates abroad for the first time at Guayama 945, Puerto Rico

2008

TMS becomes a nonprofit organization and establishes a dedicated and talented Board of Directors

2007

TMS comes to Dartmouth as one of the College's first community-based learning courses, "Inside Out: Women and Performance," in collaboration with the Southeast State Correctional Facility

2005

First collaboration with Dartmouth College students at Southeast Correctional Facility, Windsor, VT

2000

TMS's first public performance at Northern State Correctional Facility, Newport, VT

1999

After relocating to Vermont, TMS collaborates to empower those behind social walls: inmates, people on parole, rehabilitation patients, and survivors of domestic violence

1995

Pati Hernandez begins the program that will become Telling My Story-- a project at the University Settlement on the Lower East Side of Manhattan teaching literacy to Latin American women through theater