



CLOSE TO HOME
MAKE HOMELESSNESS HISTORY IN COLORADO

STORYTELLERS NETWORK Invitation

STORIES ARE POWERFUL. They take us on a journey, help us understand others' challenges, consider what we would do in similar circumstances, and move us to think about how we can make a difference.

CLOSE TO HOME is a campaign to raise awareness, increase understanding, and encourage Coloradans to speak up and take actions that make a meaningful difference in addressing homelessness.

SHARE YOUR STORIES. Whether you prefer to record your story, write it down, or speak to a live audience, if you have personally experienced homelessness, we invite you to join the CLOSE TO HOME Storytellers Network.

SPEAKING UP “opens doors to new opportunities and provides healing and empowerment.”

-Marsha Brown

Marsha Brown's life was going great until one fateful night when she received a phone call with news that her teenage son had been hit by a drunk driver and was severely injured.

Marsha is passionate about sharing the story of how this unexpected event ultimately led her family to experience homelessness.



“My upbringing led me to believe I just needed to keep plugging along and keep my mouth shut and everything would eventually work out. Now I think differently. Speaking up, naming the challenges, expressing our needs, and talking about homelessness is so important. I realize it can be difficult to share personal stories, but my experience has been that it opens doors to new opportunities and provides healing and empowerment. I'm convinced we need to stand on the highest mountain and get our stories about homelessness out!”

OUR GOAL is to increase understanding that losing a home can happen to anyone. Job loss, high housing costs, family break-ups, domestic violence, and illnesses are among the most common causes of homelessness. Sharing personal stories helps move people away from thinking of homelessness as an abstract problem that affects “someone else” to understanding these circumstances happen to “us and ours” in the towns and cities we live in. Ultimately, a shift in understanding will lead to better informed, more compassionate public discourse, paving the road to change public policies and sustain solutions.

STORYTELLER SUPPORTS. All members of the CLOSE TO HOME Storytellers Network are provided with:

Trainings: Group trainings help storytellers feel comfortable and ready to share their story. Professional speakers share tips and techniques on how to deliver effective presentations. Members of the CLOSE TO HOME network provide information to help storytellers confidently link their personal experience to the goals of the campaign.

Bookings: The CLOSE TO HOME network actively looks for speaking opportunities in educational, community, faith, and business forums, and in media interviews. Each opportunity is offered to storyteller whose profile best matches the forum, and storytellers can choose whether or not to accept each opportunity.

Supports: Members of the campaign team are also available to provide support to you in other ways, such as helping you to prepare for a presentation, providing materials or visual supports, providing transportation to the engagement, and debriefing with you after your presentation. *Each trained storyteller is eligible to receive a \$50 stipend for each presentation made on behalf of the campaign.*

Respect: The CLOSE TO HOME team respects the differing situations and comfort levels of our storytellers in sharing personal stories. Some storytellers may only want to speak personally to a group. Others will want to – and be able to – share their stories more broadly, such as on the campaign website, through our social media, or even through news outlets. We will support your wishes as to how you want to share your story. However, please keep in mind that many audience members have cell phones and other means to record and share your story on their own.

Safety: If you are a survivor of violence, you may have concerns about current or future safety risks of sharing your story. Campaign members can connect you with an advocate with whom you can explore your concerns and also to provide support in processing the range of feelings that might arise for you in sharing your story.

PLEASE NOTE:

- **Non-Partisan:** CLOSE TO HOME is a nonpartisan campaign committed to the shared belief that everyone needs a safe place to call home. By changing the conversation about individuals and families experiencing homelessness and supporting solutions that address the root causes of homelessness, we can break through the divisive arguments that have come to dominate our political discourse. All storytellers are asked to provide information in a non-partisan manner, encouraging audiences to thoughtfully consider how challenges and potential solutions may affect housing and homelessness.
- **Release:** All CLOSE TO HOME storytellers are required to sign a release indicating their agreement to share their personal story on behalf of the campaign. This form is attached to the participant interest packet.

Thank you for your interest in CLOSE TO HOME! If this opportunity is a fit for you, we encourage you to contact CLOSE TO HOME – Stevi Gray, sgray@ccadv.org, 303-832-7067. Please also visit www.closetohomeco.org to learn more.