

IU East launching 'One Book' initiative

Indiana University East is preparing to launch a communitywide project to inspire positive civic engagement and improvement.

The "One Book, Many Voices" project launches Aug. 20 with "Listening Is an Act of Love" as the featured book. Edited by Dave Isay, the founder of National Public Radio's StoryCorps Project, the book is a collection of his most memorable oral histories.

"The thing about this book is you can open it to any oral history and read it. You don't have to read this from cover to cover," said Katherine Frank, IU East's Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. "Of course, we want everybody to read it cover to cover.

"The book is also tied beautifully to the StoryCorps website so people can go to the website and actually watch and listen to other oral histories and get more information about the project," she said.

Frank says the hope is the book, which is available for rent at local libraries and for purchase at local bookstores, will create conversation about the people and places that make Richmond and Wayne County a special place.

"As the project begins to the evolve, the

community begins to evolve," she said.

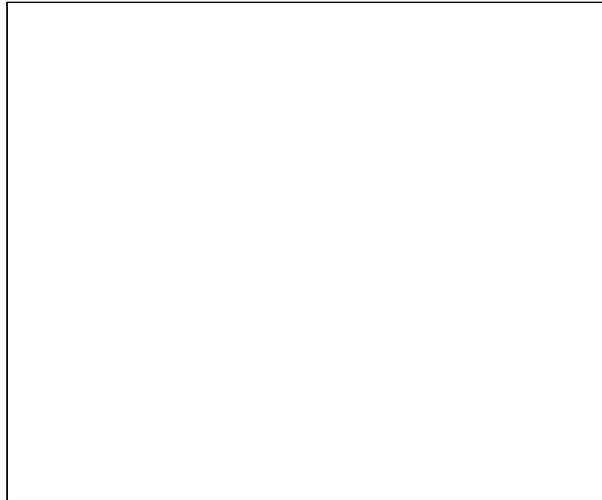
The website, www.iue.edu/onebook, will feature a calendar of community events, book discussion groups and community stories for people to participate. The site goes live Aug. 20.

"The idea is truly to provide the central location for this project that ultimately pushes people back out into the community to see the connections," Frank said. "That's the idea."

The project complements the Positive Place initiative, one of several efforts undertaken by the Mayor's Council on Economic Vitality in recent years to improve the community's self-esteem.

"The subject of the book is really appropriate for what the Positive Place has been doing because it relates to people's stories and their personal stories and the idea that everyone has a gift to give," said Steve Borchers, executive director of the **Wayne County Foundation** who has been

Advertisement



the leader of the Positive Place steering committee. "One of those gifts can be your own story.

"We all have a story to tell," he said, "and those stories help create what community is."

All IU East freshmen will read the book as part of required reading in first-year seminar. During the class, students also will meet with senior citizens who volunteer to share their stories.

"Part of what we stress is the building of community in a very broad sense," said Lee Ann Adams, a first-year seminar instructor. "We're trying to help them make the transition to college-level thinking."

During the first week of October, students will collect stories and share them with others.

"What I thought would be really cool is if we had some way to get parts of these stories out in some way," Adams said. "I want to focus on listening. Does listening still have a place in our culture? Does it have enough of a place?"

IU East senior Kraig Rose, one of two student-leaders on the "One Book" committee, said students will videotape new faculty while they share their stories. Once the fall semester begins, students will film other students doing the same thing.

"The idea is to get everyone to tell their story," Rose said. "We're hoping that

getting to know the faculty members will be advantageous to the new students and the general student population."

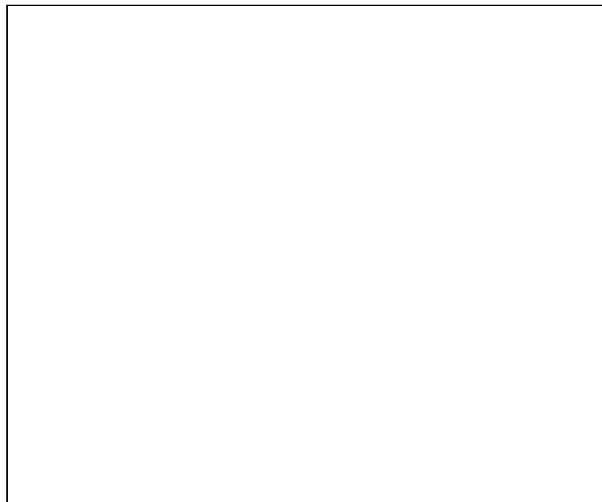
Rose said he believes the book will resonate with students.

"There's a number of different stories in it about different things," he said. "What a lot of people will find interesting is you can pick out stories that are applicable to your life.

"It has a lot of potential to be successful on campus," he said. "We're really working hard to get a lot of people involved. The challenge, for us anyway, is to get that spread out to all the students who aren't required to read it as part of a class."

This is IU East's first "One Book" project and the second in which Frank has participated. Frank worked for Colorado State University-Pueblo, which partnered with civic leaders on a project she said was successful.

Advertisement



“I’m excited,” Frank said. “You already see the start of that here. This started with small discussions, and now we’re building this community calendar and we’re recognizing all of the connections that make this truly a community effort.

“That would be my main hope for the project, that it follows this same sort of long-term trajectory, and it’s a sustainable project that gives back to the community.”



Dave Isay / Supplied photo

Hear Dave Isay speak

- Dave Isay, founder of NPR’s StoryCorps project and editor of “Listening is an Act of Love,” will speak at Indiana University East’s Vivian Auditorium at 6 p.m. Oct. 16. His appearance is free and open to the public.
- On Oct. 17, Isay will be the keynote speaker for IU East’s annual scholarship luncheon.

More

Advertisement

