

# SPARKING CHANGE: A STORYTELLER INITIATIVE

**“SPARKING CHANGE”** is a storytelling and leadership development initiative that centers the voices and experiences of women or nonbinary people of color closest to the intersecting issues of income insecurity and child caregiving. Ten storytellers from New Mexico and South Carolina, all of who are mothers and have experienced being the primary caregivers of their families, are sharing their expertise with the greater public and decision-makers so that policies and initiatives are grounded in lived experience and needs. In Year One, Sparking Change focused on reinforcing the professional skillset of the storytellers, promoting personal healing, and developing their network and immediate supports in advocacy.

## One Woman and Her Family

“Each class had something that taught us. And it’s being able to [copy] those strategies...and be able to help someone else... I did it with my own son because...he couldn’t say, for example, what happened to him [when he testified against a boy who shot him]... Now he’s said everything and was calm. He didn’t have anxiety attacks... he was able to hold back his feelings to be able to speak...with that same security that you taught me in the trainings, I know I transmitted it to him.” **-Merline, Olé**

## One Woman and Her Community

Christine was hired as a community organizer with Metanoia this past year. She has also become the secretary of her neighborhood Council, and is currently starting a “village” for women to share resources. Additionally, she led a petition and co-led a successful campaign against the county’s plan to develop a manufacturing plant on land designated for a neighborhood park.

## Ten Women and a Movement

The storytellers have shared their voices in local, state, and federal spaces to improve childcare access and income security for primary parents. Storytellers from New Mexico participated in multiple advocacy days, speaking with legislators at the state capitol. During the 2024 National Day Without Childcare, multiple storytellers spoke at a virtual press conference hosted by Community Change Action. In January, storytellers shared stories on Capitol Hill and with the White House Education Team after presenting at the NWLC Annual Child Care Advocates Meeting.

## SUPPORTING THE JOURNEY

The National Women’s Law Center provided multiple resources to ensure the storytellers’ needs were met. That way, they could focus on their learning goals and personal development. This includes:

- ››› Steady monthly compensation
- ››› Child care stipends for trainings and meetings
- ››› Gift cards to purchase meals when trainings or meetings take place after work or during a time caregivers would be providing dinner to their families
- ››› Five-week trauma-informed public speaking and storytelling training
- ››› Monthly meetup and educational sessions
- ››› Funding for partner organizations to hold quarterly community-building events
- ››› Mentors, as well as funding for partner organizations to provide a supportive staff member

# GOALS & OUTCOMES

**PRIORITIZE AND INVEST IN THE LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN AND NONBINARY BLACK, INDIGENOUS, AND PEOPLE OF COLOR**

**CONTRIBUTE TO NARRATIVE SHIFT AND CENTER THE VOICES AND EXPERIENCES OF THOSE CLOSEST TO THE INTERSECTED ISSUES OF INCOME INSECURITY AND CHILD CARE.**

Survey data and focus group feedback strongly support that this outcome was achieved in Year One. Comparing their initial survey versus their 6-month survey, storytellers showed a **28% increase in feelings of support in their advocacy work.**

## 143 ENGAGEMENTS

Over the course of the year, storytellers participated in a range of engagements related to income security and child care team goals, building or educating their communities, and speaking with political leaders.

After receiving these supports and training, the storytellers were surveyed. On a scale of 1-5, where "5" indicates strong agreement, storytellers indicated:

**4.6** I feel increased comfort sharing my story on public platforms.

**4.8** This training deepened my understanding of how to make an impact on policy and practice with my voice.

**76** number of times storytellers shared their stories with media outlets, focus groups, researchers, advocacy days, panels, blog posts or op-eds, and for NWLC/Olé/Metanoia social media

**6** storytellers acquired higher paying jobs or received raises in the past year.

**20** number of times storytellers engaged with representatives in their state legislature as well as on Capitol Hill

**All** felt that Sparking Change directly impacted their ability to acquire these new jobs

**27** number of times storytellers were interviewed by or featured in print or televised news, as well as radio

**WITH STORYTELLERS FEATURED IN** The Washington Post, Forbes, The New York Times, NPR's This and Now, Albuquerque Journal, The Cut by Vox, Voz de America, Telemundo, Univision, The New Republic, and local radio.



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