



ATLANTIC National Service Training Conference

hosted by Massachusetts Service Alliance



May 2-4, 2016
Springfield, MA

Story Slam with Massmouth!

**MASS
MOUTH**
OUR COMMON WEALTH OF STORY

THEME for Event: “Unforgettable” - a national service story to remember

We are excited to announce that the **Massachusetts Service Alliance** has teamed up with **Massmouth, Inc.** (<http://www.massmouth.org/>) to present an evening of peer storytelling on Tuesday, May 3rd at the *Peer Networking Reception* being held at the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, MA.

· **What is story slam?** Simply put, a story slam is a competition based on the art of storytelling. It puts a dual emphasis on content and performance, encouraging storytellers to focus on what they’re saying and how they’re saying it. It is an exercise in crafting stories on a particular theme within a set time limit and its great entertainment. It is very similar to the *Moth Radio Hour*

Massmouth story slams are competitive events in which storytellers perform their work and are judged by the audience as a whole.

Each of the featured 5 minute stories is judged on how well it is told, how well it is constructed, how well the story explores, connects and/or reveals some truth about the theme and how well it honors the time limit.

The 3 highest audience choice story tellers are awarded prizes. Prizes will be awarded at lunch on Wednesday.

· **Who gets to participate?** This story slams are open to ANY and ALL conference participants who have a story to tell. Since we only have a limited amount of time for the event, anyone who would like to tell a story, will either submit their name to present at any time during the conference or enter their name into a box at the event and 10 names will be selected at random from the box.

*Just as a side note, Massmouth will be offering a 90 minute workshop on the art of storytelling during conference *Workshop Session B*. During this time they will work with you on crafting/perfecting a story that you might want to share during the reception.

· **What are the rules?** The basic rules are: Each story must be of the storyteller’s own construction – Copyright laws apply to literary works, so do not tell them.

- ✓ The audience and the judges are expecting real life adventures, not fiction.
- ✓ Retelling any folktale, myth or fable is not encouraged at our slams.

- ✓ Poetry is not allowed – even if the poem is original, 5 minutes long and tells a **story**.
- ✓ Each storyteller gets 5 minutes (plus a 1 minute grace period) to tell a story. If the storyteller goes over the 6 minute time, 1 full point will be deducted from the total score.
- ✓ The storyteller may not use props, costumes or musical instruments.
- ✓ The storyteller may read from notes if needed

· **What kind of stories are told at slams?** Personal narrative, tales from real life and YOUR personal experience is the intent of this event. Real stories have a beginning, middle and end. And they have a point. You are clear about why the story is important to you and why you want to tell it.

· **How should I tell my story?** Massmouth and the Massachusetts Service Alliance have devised a theme to focus the storyteller and inspire the audience in the area of National Service.

- ✓ **Presentation:** Your story presentation is important. It tells us why and how we should listen to you. Your voice and body are instruments of your art. You use voice, gesture and movement to the best of your ability in the service of your story.
- ✓ **Theme:** Your story, not just the title or “punch line” connects in any meaningful way to the theme. This is wide open and helps you focus at the same time.
- ✓ **Practice:** You have to practice. One tip is memorizing the beginning and the ending words of your story by heart. It helps with confidence and focus. Practicing – before a mirror, into a recorder, in the car when alone, in your head before you go to sleep or before you get out of bed – all help. Do at least some of these MANY times. You will be glad you did.
- ✓ **Funny, Sad, Genuine?** Funny is good, sad is real but all must be genuinely in service to the story. That is what makes yours a story worth listening to and sets it apart from rants, stand up and what you tell your therapist or best friend.

· **How does a story slam differ from an open mic?** A story slam is a challenge to the teller and a gift to the audience, whereas a number of open mic settings are meant as a support network for storytellers. Slam performances are crafted for the audience.

· **What can the audience do?** Listen, laugh, applaud & weep. No interrupting. No heckling. Listeners will be engaged in story improv games and other interactive entertainment between each 5 minute feature.

If you would like to see some examples of past Massmouth story tellers of all ages and background, please visit their YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCz9pIfXEtVvNCBnTjpYIVSQ>

If you have any questions about this event, please contact, Lisl Hacker at lhacker@mass-service.org or 617-542-2544 x205.