



TOMODACHI Story Jam for Youth with Disabilities WE'D LOVE TO HEAR YOUR STORY!

ARE YOU A STUDENT OR A YOUNG PROFESSIONAL WITH A DISABILITY?
JOIN TOMODACHI STORY JAM AND SHARE YOUR STORY WITH OTHER
JAPANESE AND AMERICAN YOUTH!



WHAT ARE DIGITAL STORIES?

Digital Stories are true, first-person video stories — not essays, presentations, or journalistic reports. You will use the "I" voice to tell your personal story. Stories like these can foster connection with people all over the world!

WHAT IS TOMODACHI STORY JAM?

In Story Jam, you will identify a moment or moments when you felt empowered to advocate for yourself and others as a college student or young professional with a disability. You will learn how to **write and create a 3-4 minute digital story**.

Our facilitators from StoryCenter will guide you through the steps of how to write your impactful story, record your narrative, create visuals, and edit everything together to create a short video.

We will invite **guest speakers** to help you engage more deeply with your story. We will also pair you with a participant from the opposite country for **cross-cultural peer mentoring**.



WHY PARTICIPATE IN TOMODACHI STORY JAM?

REFLECT.

Discover and think deeply about your personal life experiences.

SHARE YOUR STORIES.

Collectively explore experiences of empowerment. Learn how to use digital storytelling to advocate for yourself and others!

BUILD COMMUNITY.

Meet other Japanese and American students and young professionals with disabilities and learn about each other's cultures.

PRACTICE LEADERSHIP SKILLS.

Apply cross-cultural communication and digital skills in your day-to-day disability advocacy.

WHAT DO TOMODACHI STORY JAM STORYTELLERS TALK ABOUT?

- Tell us about a moment when you **witnessed or experienced injustice**. How did it change you and the trajectory of your life?
- Have you ever **questioned your sense of belonging** as a person with a disability? How did you overcome this feeling, and what did you learn about yourself?
- Share about a time when you have **advocated for or shown solidarity with your peers**. What sparked your feeling of solidarity?
- What are some **ways you've advocated for yourself** at college or work?

WHAT DOES THE TOMODACHI STORY JAM PROGRAM INVOLVE?

TOMODACHI Story Jam is a nine-week digital storytelling program. We will accept 10 Story Jam participants for Fall 2024.

The Story Jam program includes:

- Nine 2-hour group sessions from September through November
- 3–5 hours of individual support from facilitators, as needed
- 8–10 hours of independent work on script, audio recording and editing, capturing or creating visuals, and video editing

We will host group sessions on Zoom on Tuesdays from 7–9pm Eastern Standard Time, which is Wednesdays, 8–10am Japanese Standard Time.

SESSIONS	US Dates	Japan Dates
Session 1	September 10	September 11
Session 2	September 17	September 18
Session 3	September 24	September 25
Session 4	October 1	October 2
Session 5	October 8	October 9
Session 6	October 15	October 16
Session 7	October 22	October 23
Session 8	October 29	October 30
Session 9 – Final Event	November 5	November 6*

*Because of US Daylight Savings, the November 6 session will be 9–11 AM Japanese Standard Time. We will provide English live captioning and American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation upon request.

WHO CAN APPLY FOR TOMODACHI STORY JAM?

To qualify for Story Jam, you must:

- Be a Japanese or American person with a disability between the ages of 18 and 35
- Be a student enrolled at a Japanese or American college, a young professional working part time or full time, or a self-employed young professional, or a volunteer engaged in community service
- Have basic English language skills (conversation, reading, and writing), or if you are Deaf, have basic English language reading and writing skills and basic ASL skills
- Have a compelling story about your experience of breaking down barriers at college, work, or other areas of life (e.g., relationships, family, community), and lessons learned
- Commit to participating in all scheduled group sessions and adhere to storytelling deadlines and reporting
- Give permission to have your digital story shared at a final online event

WHAT THE 2023 STORY JAM PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

"Receiving feedback on experiences and stories that may seem ordinary to me helped deepen my understanding, enabling me to articulate them more effectively to others."

AYAMI



"I think it is important to tell stories about how we cope with discrimination and bias when navigating the world with a disability. I'm a firm believer that sharing stories openly can lead to social change when it comes to how disability/mental health conditions are treated."

ESPI



"Talking about your own experiences allows you to look back on the past and gives you a deeper understanding of your personality...I think this will give me hints about how I want to live and how I should act in the future."

SENA



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Heike Boeltzig-Brown, Program Director
Heike.Boeltzig@umb.edu

Saori Kusumoto, Program Coordinator
Saori.Kusumoto@umb.edu

HOW CAN I APPLY FOR TOMODACHI STORY JAM?

Apply online – or QR code

<https://tinyurl.com/22py94b3>



DEADLINE: JULY 31, 2024



The program is part of the TOMODACHI Initiative, a public-private partnership between the U.S.-Japan Council and the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. The program is supported by Northrop Grumman Corporation, and implemented by the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at UMass Boston and StoryCenter, through partnership with TOMODACHI. Since the 1960s, the ICI has been a leader in disability inclusion and advocacy.