



# HEALING STORY ALLIANCE ANNUAL REPORT 2021

## INTRODUCTION

Healing Story Alliance (HSA) is a Special Interest Group of the National Storytelling Network (NSN), with a membership of close to 200 individuals.

HSA's mission is to explore and promote the use of storytelling in the healing arts and professions. HSA develops resources to share and increase knowledge of stories and how best to use them to heal individuals, organizations, or the entire planet. HSA strives to reach beyond the storytelling community to engage those in other professions or on personal paths who can see the benefit of story as a vehicle for healing.

In 2021, HSA maintained its services to both members and the broader community. HSA continued to provide opportunities for gathering on Zoom in order to foster community and offer healing story experiences. HSA also maintained its Listserv and reconstructed its website.

## Program Offerings

### OARS in the WATER

Initiated at the height of the COVID 19 lockdown in April of 2020, we named our bi-monthly program with this metaphor in mind: *When a small boat meets turbulent water, the best way to maintain balance and stay upright is to keep your oar in the water. It will become your stabilizing rudder, enabling you to maintain course and steer your vulnerable craft towards safety. We are each like that small boat. HSA hopes that sharing our experiences, stories and ideas might be another stabilizing oar in the water for each of us.*



During 2021, Oars in the Water met twice a month on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month from 7:00-8:30 pm and provided a place to listen and to be heard. These gatherings attracted thirty to sixty participants. Our participants joined us from across the United States as well as a number of countries outside of the United States, including India, Korea, Canada, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Mexico and Australia. Each evening opened with an initial sharing by the co-hosts. This was followed by opportunities for all to be heard

in small and large group settings. The emphasis has been on creating a safe and welcoming community where all can find inspiration and resilience.

During 2021, approximately 25 Oars programs were conducted. We refined our basic program to maximize audience participation and community building. During this time, hundreds of participants benefited. We met our goal of expanding the number of individuals hosting Oars, inviting members of our OARS community to host for the first time, each teamed with an experienced facilitator. More than twenty people served as facilitators or hosts for these evenings. Heather Forest, Program Committee Chair, also trained a number of Board Members to master the needed skills to be the “behind the scenes” technical support needed for these Zoom sessions to run smoothly.

## OARS Themes 2021

OARS hosts designed each gathering around a theme for reflection and conversation. The following themes were explored in 2021

Jan. 13 *Place and Memory based on the book Your own Best Secret Place*  
Bob Kanegis and Liz Mangual

Jan. 27 *Mending Brokenness: Where do we go from here? Kintsugi has some answers.*  
Sara deBeer & Kristin Pedemonti

Feb. 10 *Durga - Durga's story has relevance to our times and can strengthen our response, raise the Life Force. Energy to enable us to collectively "slay the demon at our door".*  
Sangitaa Sehgal & Poonam S. Joshy

Feb. 24 *Exploring Sankofa: Looking back...Moving Forward*  
Heather Forest & Onawumi Jean Moss

March 10 *Hope. Spring. Eternal.*  
Katie Hereld & Joe Doolittle

March 24 *The Practice of the Pause*  
Laura Simms and Lani Peterson

April 14 *Anniversary Gathering for Oars – From the Boat: A Year of Pulling Together*  
Lani Petterson & Heather Forest

April 28 *Held By Nature: Honoring how our Connections with the Natural World Helps to us Keep our Oars in the Water*  
Elisa Pearmain & Diane Edgecomb

May 12 *Memorial for Sangitaa Sehgal*  
Laura Simms Poonam Joshy

May 26 *Small Steps*  
Sara deBeer & Wally Scott

June 9 *Resilience*  
Karianna Rosenberg & Mike Seliger

June 23 *Solstice: Celebrating Summer's Heat and Light*  
Regina Ress & Bruce Markow

July 14 *Joyful Emergence*  
Laura Simms & Heather Forest

July 28 *The Moon's Light: Awe & Comfort*  
Joe Doolittle & Galen Brandt

Aug. 11 *Refuge: Place, Memory, and Imagination*  
Bob Kanegis & Liz Mangual

Aug. 25 *Crossroads and Perspective*  
Elisa Pearmain & Ai-Lin Chuah

Sept. 8 - No Oars -

Sept. 22 *Renewal*  
Heather Forest & Lani Peterson

Oct. 13 *An Evening of Seasoning: Reflecting on life's Sweet and Savory Moments*  
Sara DeBeer & Jean Hale

Oct. 27 *Memory & Rememberance*  
Joe Doolittle & Mike Seliger


Nov. 10 *Coming Alive*  
Laura Simms & Elisa Pearmain

Nov. 24 *Gratitude*  
Heather Forest & Karianna Rosenberg

Dec. 8 *Healing Power of Song*  
Wally Scott & Carol McCormick

Dec. 22 *Solstice: Darkness and Light*  
Kristin Pedemonti & Galen Brandt


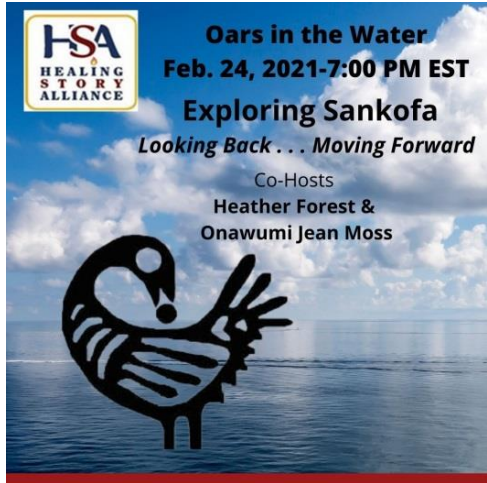

# OARS Themes 2021



**Oars in the Water**  
Feb. 24, 2021-7:00 PM EST

**Exploring Sankofa**  
*Looking Back . . . Moving Forward*


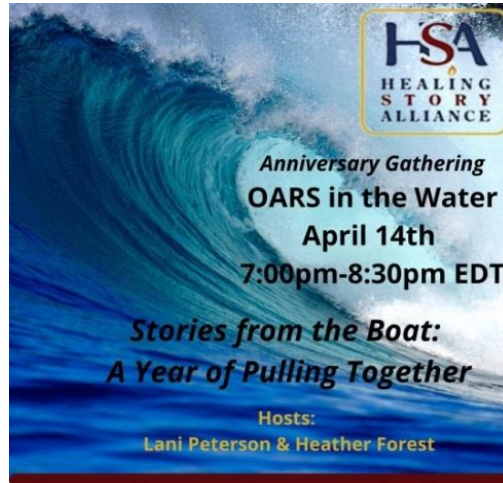
Co-Hosts  
Heather Forest &  
Onawumi Jean Moss



**OARS in the Water**  
April 14th  
7:00pm-8:30pm EDT

**Anniversary Gathering**  
*Stories from the Boat:  
A Year of Pulling Together*

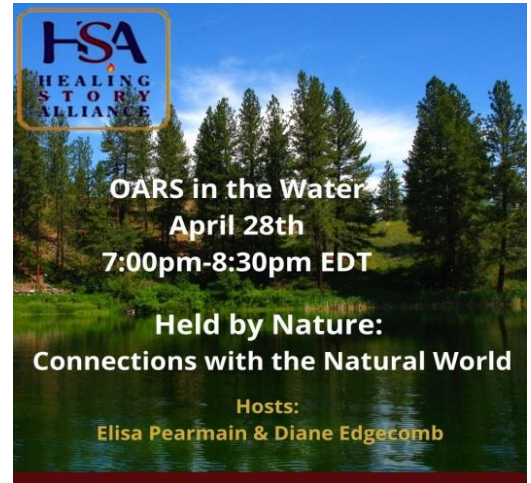
Hosts:  
Lani Peterson & Heather Forest



**OARS in the Water**  
April 28th  
7:00pm-8:30pm EDT

**Held by Nature:**  
Connections with the Natural World

Hosts:  
Elisa Pearmain & Diane Edgecomb



**OARS in the Water**  
May 12th  
7pm-8:30pm EDT

*In Honor of Sangitaa Seghall*  
**We Are in the Same Boat**

Hosts:  
Laura Simms  
& Poonam Joshy



**OARS in the Water**  
May 26th  
7pm-8:30pm EDT

**Small Steps**

Hosts:  
Sara deBeer &  
Wally Scott



**OARS in the Water**  
June 9th  
7pm-8:30pm EDT

**Resilience**


Hosts:  
Michael Seliger & Karianna Rosenberg



**OARS in the Water**  
June 23rd  
7pm-8:30pm EDT

**SOLSTICE**  
Celebrating  
Summer's Light  
& Heat

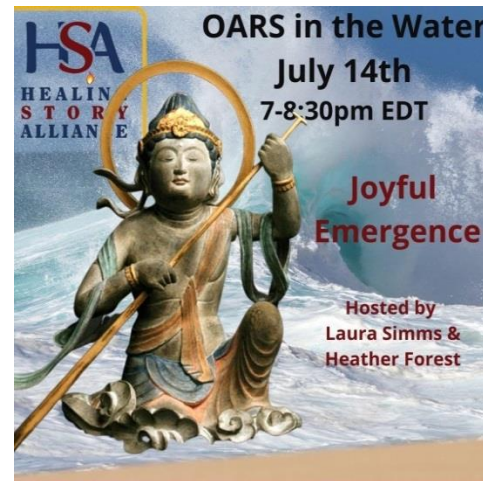
Hosts  
Regina Ress &  
Bruce Markov



**OARS in the Water**  
July 14th  
7-8:30pm EDT

**Joyful  
Emergence**

Hosted by  
Laura Simms &  
Heather Forest



**OARS in the Water**  
July 28th  
7-8:30pm EDT

**The Moon's Light:**  
Awe & Comfort

Hosted by  
Joe Doolittle & Galen Brandt



**OARS in the Water**  
August 11th  
7-8:30pm EDT

**REFUGE**  
Place, Memory and  
Imagination

Hosted by  
Bob Kanegis & Liz Mangual



**OARS in the Water**  
August 25th  
7-8:30 EDT

**CROSSROADS**

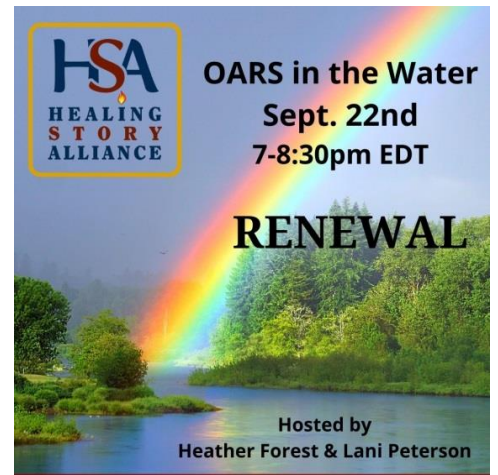
Hosted by  
Elisa Pearmain & Ai-Lin Chuah



**OARS in the Water**  
Sept. 22nd  
7-8:30pm EDT

**RENEWAL**

Hosted by  
Heather Forest & Lani Peterson





**OARS in the Water**  
**Oct.13th**  
**7-8:30pm EDT**

An Evening of Seasonings:  
 Reflecting on Life's Sweet  
 and Savory Moments

Hosted by  
 Sara deBeer & Jean Hale



**OARS in the Water**  
**Oct.27th**  
**7-8:30pm EDT**

**MEMORY & REMEMBRANCE**

Hosted by  
 Joe Doolittle & Mike Seliger



**OARS in the Water**  
**Nov 10th**  
**7-8:30pm EDT**

**COMING ALIVE**

Hosted by  
 Laura Simms & Elisa Pearmain



**OARS in the Water**  
**Nov 24th**  
**7-8:30pm EDT**

**GRATITUDE**

Hosted by  
 Heather Forest &  
 Karianna Rosenberg



**OARS in the Water**  
**Dec 8th**  
**7-8:30pm EST**

**THE POWER of SONG:**  
*Singing as Healing*

Hosted by  
 Carol McCormick &  
 Wally Scott



**OARS in the Water**  
**Dec 22th**  
**7-8:30pm EST**

**SOLSTICE:**  
**Darkness & Light**

Hosted by  
 Kristin Pedemonti & Galen Brandt



# HSA KIND STORIES IN CONCERT 2021

**‘Kindness is having the ability to speak with love,  
listen with patience, and act with compassion.’**

-Random Acts of Kindness Foundation

During 2021, four *Kind Stories in Concert* programs and one *Kind Stories Workshop* were conducted. All programs were free to members. We had between 60-150 people sign-up for each concert. We were able to raise money from contributions made by non-members and by additional memberships from those who wished to attend each event for free. All performers volunteered their time and talent with our gratitude.

Through folk tales and personal stories, we dove deeply into multiple experiences of kindness. What is it? How does it impact us and our relationships to ourselves, to each other, to the world? Each story program opened with a concert of seasoned tellers and community tellers sharing stories with themes of kindness. During the second half of the gathering, audience members were invited to share a story, moment, or reflection about kindness that emerged for them as listeners.

**Purpose:** We all need a little more kindness in our lives. Perhaps a story can take us there.

THE HEALING STORY ALLIANCE PRESENTS

## KIND STORIES IN CONCERT



LISTEN, SHARE, AND REFLECT ON STORIES  
OF KINDNESS GIVEN, KINDNESS RECEIVED

**SUNDAY  
FEBRUARY 7  
4:00PM -5:30PM EST**

**Free for HSA members  
Donations Welcome from  
Non-members**

**Emcee**  
  
ELISA PEARMAIN

**Community Tellers**

 MEHREEN BUTT

 ARIEL BROWN

 SARA deBEER

 JO RADNER

 LACONIA THERRIO

THE HEALING STORY ALLIANCE PRESENTS

## KIND STORIES IN CONCERT



LISTEN, SHARE, AND REFLECT ON STORIES  
OF KINDNESS GIVEN, KINDNESS RECEIVED

**SUNDAY  
MARCH 7  
7:00PM-8:30PM EST**

**Free for HSA members  
Donations Welcome from  
Non-members**

**Emcee**  
  
SARA deBEER

**Community Tellers**

 JEANETTE MILLARD

 LOUIS BICKFORD

 LANI PETERSON

 LAURA SIMMS

 MICHAEL MCCARTY

THE HEALING STORY ALLIANCE PRESENTS

# KIND STORIES IN CONCERT



LISTEN, SHARE, AND REFLECT ON STORIES OF KINDNESS GIVEN, KINDNESS RECEIVED

SUNDAY

APRIL 4TH

7:00PM-8:30PM EST

Emcee

Community Tellers



LANI PETERSON



YVONNE BAUER



JUNE COOPER



HEATHER FOREST



DAN YASHINSKY



SANGITAA SEHGALL

Free for HSA members  
Donations Welcome from  
Non-members

THE HEALING STORY ALLIANCE PRESENTS

# KIND STORIES IN CONCERT



LISTEN, SHARE, AND REFLECT ON STORIES OF KINDNESS GIVEN, KINDNESS RECEIVED

SUNDAY

MAY 2ND

7:00PM-8:30PM EST

Emcee

Community Tellers



ELISA PEARMAIN



FLORISE NEVILLE-EWELL



SKY LLOYD



ALTON CHUNG



MARGARET READ MACDONALD



KRISTIN PEDEMONTI

Free for HSA members  
Donations Welcome from  
Non-members

Be kind whenever possible. Fortunately it is always possible!

-Dalai Lama



## Kind Stories Workshop

Sunday June 6th

7:00pm-9:00pm EDT

Workshop Leaders



Lani Peterson



Elisa Pearmain

Free for Healing Story Alliance Members  
Donations from from Non-Members Welcome!  
Registration Required

## KIND STORIES WORKSHOP

The Healing Story Alliance sponsored four Kind Stories Concerts this past Winter/Spring. We have heard a wealth of moving stories from our featured tellers and from our listeners. These sharing experiences inspired and uplifted us during this difficult time. They have also deepened our understanding of the need for kindness in its many guises and have clarified the complexities that kind urges and actions can bring.

As a culminating activity, we offered the HSA community an opportunity to work with several prompts to explore the personal and family stories of kindness in their lives at more depth, with the assurance that every story will be heard, whether in a small breakout group, or in the large group as time allowed. Approximately 60 attended.

# NSN Pre-Conference 2021

For the 2021 NSN Conference HSA offered the storytelling community an opportunity to hear Kind Stories in Concert from stellar storytelling artists and offered a Kind Stories Workshop conducted by Lani Peterson and Elisa Pearmain where participants could work with several prompts to explore the personal and family stories of kindness in their lives at more depth.



THE HEALING STORY ALLIANCE PRESENTS

# KIND STORIES IN CONCERT

LISTEN, SHARE, AND REFLECT ON STORIES OF KINDNESS GIVEN, KINDNESS RECEIVED

**WEDNESDAY**  
**JULY 21**  
**6:00PM CDT/7:00PM EDT**

Emcee: **LANI PETERSON**

Community Tellers: **ASHIMA SITULA**, **RABBI DONNA BERMAN**, **ANTONIO ROCHA**

Guests: **MEGAN WELLS**, **ETH-NOH-TEC**

NSN NATIONAL STORYTELLING NETWORK  
PRE-CONFERENCE!



*Be kind whenever possible.  
Fortunately it is always possible! -Dalai Lama*

## Kind Stories Workshop

**Wednesday, July 21**  
**2:00pm-3:30 CDT**

Workshop Leaders  
**Lani Peterson**  
**Elisa Pearmain**

HSA HEALING STORY ALLIANCE

Pre- Conference!

NSN NATIONAL STORYTELLING NETWORK

## HSA ANNUAL Meeting 2021

NSN hosted HSA’s Annual Membership Meeting at their Virtual Conference as we have done for many years during the NSN conference. Lani Peterson and Heather Forest gave the Annual report, and invited members to join our Board and to help with our many projects and tasks. The formal meeting was followed by a “Social Hour” in which participants and HSA Board members broke into small groups by area of interest, including a generic social time, OARS interest, Kind Stories interest, Healing Story Website Resources Development, Applied Healing Story, and Social Justice.



# The HSA Website

<https://storynet.org/groups/hsa/healing-story-alliance-hsa/>



During 2021 the HSA website, which is currently a segment of the NSN website, was revitalized with reorganization and new graphic images. The site offers a wide array of resources, guidance and practical applications for storytelling. Users can locate specific stories that address a variety of issues. In addition, the website contains a video archive of all the Kind Stories in Concert programs that HSA has presented. HSA's journal, *Diving in the Moon: Honoring Story, Facilitating Healing*, is available from 2013-2017 as an e-journal.

# The HSA Listserv

The HSA listserv is a valuable resource for communicating to other HSA community members, asking for resources, including story ideas and sources, and finding out about HSA programs. It is open to members and non-members alike. People frequently request ideas for stories on specific themes or to meet healing story related program needs, and always receive responses from other generous members. There is a page on the HSA website with instructions for joining our Listserv graciously hosted by HAS member Jo Radner.

To learn how to subscribe see: <https://storynet.org/groups/hsa/hsa-listserv/>

# Financial Summary Report

## Financial Report Jan –Dec 2021

HSA is currently in the black: .....	\$16,174	
Previous end of year 2020 .....	\$9,567	
Where is income coming from?		
Membership Dues .....	\$5,875	(Current members: 233)
Donations .....	\$2,638	(From Kind Stories)
Program Fees .....	\$1,884	(From ticket sales at NSN Conference)
Major Outflow:		
NSN service fees .....	\$2,539	(30% of Membership & Program Fees and 8% of contributions)
Presenter fees at NSN conference: .....	\$1,000	
New Upcoming Expenses .....	\$2,000.00	(Performer and Workshop Leader fees for Fall of 2022)

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Executive Committee meets once a month to oversee the work and mission of the organization and to review and develop plans for the future. Committees share reports of ongoing work.

Outreach and Publicity Committee creates and disseminates information about HSA programs, maintains correspondence with members and other interested parties. It is also responsible for HSA's Facebook page.

The Program Committee is responsible for developing new programs, managing existing programs such as *OARS in the WATER*, *Kind Stories in Concert*, and creating a way for assuring that new programs address existing community needs and are consistent with HSA's mission.

The Kind Stories Committee, a sub-committee of the Programming Committee, books professional tellers, emcees, and Community Tellers for each Kind Stories Concert. The members of that sub-committee rotate who is the teller liaison for each month with the responsibility for sending bios and photos to the graphic designer(s) for publicity.

Graphic Design In 2021, Heather Forest designed graphics for each of our OARS gatherings to help publicize the theme for the evening. She also produced the graphics for the Kind Stories in Concert series. We are hoping that she will have an intern helping her in the fall of 2022.

HSA liaisons to NSN, meet monthly with other SIGS and members of NSN administration to coordinate our needs and solve problems.

HSA Financial person, receives and reads financial statements from NSN, is responsible for sending invoices for performers and workshop leaders, and administrative support.

Website – In 2021 Heather Forest and Lani Peterson began work to resurrect the website previously developed under HSA. Under NSN management, the extensive information and resources that had been available through HSA's website became unavailable. This process should be completed in the coming year.

Scope and Sequencing Heather and Lani have been writing up these descriptions for each of our major areas of operation so that it will be easier for Board members and Administrators to take over specific roles and program management.

Publicity assistant: Chris Donald helped with publicity for our OARS and Kind Stories Concerts by getting our announcements onto Storytelling listservs throughout New England.

## PROBLEM AREAS

Ticketing – One of our major technical problems has been ticketing through the NSN website for *Kind Stories in Concert*. The NSN website continued to prove challenging for would-be audience members trying to register or make a contribution to HSA. We will continue to explore simplifying the ticketing process for future concerts and workshops.

Need for more active Committee members to better share the tasks of the HSA. We have invited interested members to attend one of our Executive Board meetings on the first Wednesday of each month.

Need for an Administrator as we had in the past. This is under discussion in 2022.

We need a committee to come up with a list of duties, interview candidates, and one person to train and oversee this person once they are hired.

Need for a few more tech hosts for OARS sessions.

Communications via newsletter, blog, podcasts and or journal are being reviewed and will result in improved communication with members and with the public in the coming year.

## LOOKING FORWARD

Our intention is to continue offering OARS in the WATER on the second and fourth Wednesday evenings of each month. KIND STORIES in CONCERT which takes place the first Sunday of the Month except for during the summer months, will resume in October of 2022. We will also be adding ticketed events to our offerings.

We were planning for participation in the 2022 NSN Pre-conference when we learned, in early 2022, that the conference had been canceled. We decided to hold our planned events in the fall of 2022 either under the NSN umbrella or independently on our own. First we will hold a performance of a powerful musical/storytelling program by Reggie Lewis and Greg Greenway called, *Deeper Than the Skin*, on Sunday November 20th from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.. Then on Saturday December 10th, 2022, we will hold a keynote address and workshop called, *Two-Eyed Seeing in Relation to Life Stories* with Storyteller, and Award-Winning Author Lewis Mehl-Madrona, and (possibly) his wife Barbara Mainguy. This event will run from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST.

## CONCLUSIONS

While it has been a challenging time with the ongoing pandemic, HSA has been able to stay true to its mission, delivering needed program services, building its organizational structures, and emerging stronger to make 2022 a “very good year.”

Submitted by HSA Executive Committee- July 2022