



## Capturing Story: Qualitative Data Story Spine



### Why stories are important:

With storytelling we learn about people, our world and ourselves. Story is a powerful communications tool, and a way to engage people to get them to participate or to help them learn about your project or mission. People connect with their hearts; stories make this possible.

### Examples of types of food and health stories you could capture:

A specific example of how a mobile market has transformed an individual's or community's health; how the availability of cultural crops is building community capacity and equity; an innovative partnership; increased demand for food literacy; milestones for your organization such as increased percentage of food grown and donated, or increase in number of people served

**Data** provides clarity and amplifies images. Use numbers and **specific examples**.

The **story spine** commonly used in the film industry offers a guide in writing a compelling story that is useful to your organization communications, fundraising, and in evaluation analysis. We encourage you to use these suggested phrases as a structural guide to organize your story - not necessarily literally or verbatim. **Here is the story spine framework:**

1. Once upon a time there was a...
2. And every day...
3. Until one day...
4. And because of that...
5. And because of that...
6. And because of that...
7. Until finally...
8. And ever since that day

### Criteria to consider when choosing a story:

Outcomes that contributed to measurable impact on health; increased distribution of healthy, fresh local food; partnerships that are generated by the program; increased visibility for your organization and/or Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare Foundation; compelling impact numbers.

### Note:

1. Why would anyone care? What is the compelling need or motivation, and how is it related to a universal or mundane theme?
2. Highlight a character that is strong, eloquent, and resilient in the face of opposition. Remember that every character has someone who helps, and that is usually the organization. Please do not place the organization as the main character in your story; ideally they are the helper.
3. What changed in the community or who was impacted?
4. Know your main audience and tailor your story appropriately.