

Originally called the Duluth Senior Coalition, Minnesota Citizens Federation NE (MNCFNE) was formed by 45 Duluth seniors' clubs. The organization worked for fair pricing of essentials such as healthcare and utilities. They went through several name changes and are now are The Minnesota Citizens Federation NE. Citizens Federation's mission is to provide healthcare and economic justice for all, and they have three main goals. They are to work to lobby in legislature for fair energy processes and health care reform, help members save money on Medicare, and educate citizens about the maze of healthcare reform. \

Digital storytelling is defined as “multimedia movies that combine photographs, video, animation, sound, music, text, and often a narrative voice” (Stonybrook University). One of the most prominent digital storytelling projects is the Center for Digital Storytelling. According the entry for the Center for Digital Storytelling in *The Encyclopedia of Social Media*, “the founders believed that hearing the stories of others would enrich everyone's life.” However, the Center for Digital Storytelling focuses mainly on the production of the stories, where our project follows the Community Digital Storytelling method as proposed by Sarah Copeland and Aldo de Moor in their article “Community Digital Storytelling for Collective Intelligence: towards a Storytelling Cycle of Trust.” By focusing not only on creating powerful digital stories, but also on their dissemination throughout a community, we plan to “connect storytelling with collective intelligence processes” through “focus[ing] our community activism efforts” (Copeland, de Moor 3).

Rationale

One third of people age 65 and older have had a disability (US Census Bureau). In 2014 there were over 60,000 people age 65 and older in the Northland (MN State Demographic Center). Over 750 people in the northeast MN, and northwest Wisconsin area who are on

Medicare use the Senior Partner Care Program (Senior Partner Care Program). The geographic region the Citizens Federation serves is northeast Minnesota. That covers as far north as Grand Marais, and as far south as Pine City. Going west they cover all the way to Carlton. The Citizens Federation does some work in the upper part of Wisconsin (MNCFNE).

People in northeast MN are a long way from the hub of healthcare organizations in the Twin Cities. Plus citizens with a low socioeconomic status have a more difficult time finding information on healthcare. These two factors lead to people spending more money on healthcare or avoiding it altogether. Northeastern Minnesotans need information presented to them in an accessible and understandable way.

Project Description

Through our digital storytelling project, we plan to educate the people in Duluth, as well as other areas around the city of Duluth, including the upper part of Wisconsin, about the economic complications of health care and alternative options that are available using the personal stories of people in the community. Our objectives are to show these videos to 60 to 75 people at events hosted by the Citizens Federation, and to have at least 100 views of these videos online. Furthermore, out of the people who view these videos, we aim for 65% of them to take action with affordable health care or the MNCFE, some examples of which are outlined later in the action cards.

Our project will find six people who have worked through the healthcare system and with The Citizens Federation. We will then ask them to tell us their personal story about their experience, followed up by an interview based on their story and the goals of this project. Four hundred and fifty dollars of the budget will go toward providing transportation, food, and time reimbursement for these participants on the day of the recording. As many of our participants

live outside of the Greater Duluth area, we expect to spend at least \$150 on transportation fees, based on a 54.5 cent per mile reimbursement rate. We will then use their information to create the narratives for six different digital stories. We will have the subjects partially tell their story on camera, and for the rest we will use pictures and graphics. The stories will be filmed at the MNCFNE office. A small 6 by 6 area will be used as a temporary studio. We will set up three times to work there and get two people to come to each session. After filming we would use pictures of the people, images that relate to their stories, graphs that show information about healthcare, and images that show how to navigate healthcare, all chosen to strengthen the purpose of their narrative. This would be done using video editing software, WeVideo, to which we will purchase a subscription with \$75 of the budget. When the videos are finished being edited we will distribute them on Citizens Federation Facebook, and Twitter pages. On top of social media, the videos will be on the Citizens Federation website and a new website will be created specifically for the videos, and the videos will be shown at events hosted by the Citizens Federation. In planning these events, we have dedicated \$200 of the budget toward renting event space and purchasing food, though the MNCFNE will cover the rest of these expenses out of its own budget.

Having been educated about the economic complications of health care, people will become more invested in the political processes that shape these complications in the future and spend more time engaged with these issues, both through conversation and volunteering. Furthermore, having been educated about alternative options that are available using the personal stories of people in the community, people will make better medical-related choices for themselves and for their loved ones.

To determine the focus of this project, we interviewed Buddy Robinson, the staff director. This interview led to a discussion of the proposed digital storytelling project. Through Buddy's answers to our questions, we were able to decide that the best focus is on the health care system, and that we need several stories of varying lengths.

Diane Zachor and Buddy Robinson will be responsible for reaching out to members for their stories, interviewing them, and asking for pictures that may be included in the digital story. Julia Brown will be responsible for editing the narratives of the stories to communicate the necessary information. Diane will also be responsible for hiring a videographer who will record and edit the visual and audio aspects of the digital story. In order to give ample time for response by members, this project will run over the span of 6 months. Once the information is collected, the editing of the individual narratives will take approximately one week per story. The editing of the visual and audio aspects will vary based on the length of the story, but will take approximately two to three weeks per story.

Evaluation

Success will be measured by the amount that viewers of the videos, and those who have told their stories have learned about the economic inequalities of health care in their community, as well as the ways in which this learning may positively change their actions in the future. Diane Zachor, the office manager of MNCFNE, will evaluate the effectiveness of this project as she is most familiar with its goals.

To determine who has seen the digital storytelling project it would be necessary to survey the demographic of people we are aiming the videos to. The survey would consist of simple questions like "Have you heard of MNCFNE?" "Have you seen the digital stories of MNCFNE members?" "If yes, can we contact you for more information?" These surveys would be

conducted on paper after each in person event, or digitally via a link included in the videos posted online.

After determining, through the survey, who had viewed the digital stories, contact those individuals and have them pick action cards. The action cards would also be presented to those who have watched the videos at MNFC-NE events. The action cards would read:

- Join Senior Partner Care program.
- Donate to MNCFNE.
- Care more for retirement age friends and/or relatives.
- Investigate insurance options.
- Write a letter to the government.
- Vote on healthcare issues.
- Research healthcare disparities.
- Volunteer with MNCFNE.
- Volunteer with other community organizations.
- Plan future (in terms of healthcare) more carefully.
- Engage in conversations about healthcare disparities.
- Engage in conversations about MNCFNE.
- Engage in conversations about HMOs and/or insurance.
- Share videos.

After events we will present viewers with a brief questionnaire that asks them to think about the videos that they watched and to write down what they learned from these videos and how, if at all, these videos changed their views on health care access in their community.

Don't forget a works cited page in MLA! This example does not have one attached; however it is required of you for this project!