

# PUBLIC LIBRARIAN'S GUIDE TO MICRO-STORYTELLING

Libraries make a difference every day, but those moments of impact are often small, quick, and easy to overlook. A patron finds their first book they truly enjoy. Someone gains confidence after a resume workshop. A parent gets a few peaceful moments during storytime while their child falls in love with reading. These moments may seem simple, but together they tell the powerful story of a library's value.

Micro-storytelling is a simple way to capture these everyday successes. Instead of long reports or detailed case studies, micro-stories focus on brief, personal moments that show how the library helps people. Often just one or two sentences long, these stories are easy to collect and easy to share. When combined with data and statistics, they help community members, boards, and funders understand the real, human impact of library services.

**Micro-stories are short snapshots of library impact. They are:**

- **Short:** often just 1-3 sentences
- **Personal:** focused on one patron, one moment, or one experience
- **Memorable:** they show a small change or benefit
- **Flexible:** they can be shared in many formats

Because they are so concise, micro-stories can be used almost anywhere: newsletters, social media, board reports, presentations, displays, or even casual conversations with community partners.

### Here are a few examples of what a micro-story might look like:

- “A teen who said they ‘don’t read’ left the library with their first graphic novel and asked when the next one in the series would be available.”
- “After our resume workshop, a patron told us, ‘I finally feel confident applying for jobs online.’”
- “One parent shared, ‘Storytime is the highlight of our week. My kids can’t wait to come back.’”
- “When a patron used the library’s Wi-Fi to attend a virtual job interview, they later told staff they wouldn’t have been able to apply without the library.”

### Capturing micro-stories doesn’t require a complicated process. Often, the best stories come from everyday interactions with patrons.

Try these simple strategies:

- **Listen for “thank you” moments.** Patrons often share their appreciation in passing.
- **Write down direct quotes.** Authentic language makes stories more powerful.
- **Ask simple follow-up questions.** For example: “What difference did this make for you?”
- **Keep a shared story log.** A small notebook or shared digital document allows staff to quickly record stories when they hear them.
- **Remember that small wins count.** Even simple moments can show meaningful impact.

In busy libraries, it can be easy to focus only on statistics and daily tasks. Micro-stories help remind both staff and stakeholders that behind every number is a person whose life was improved in some way.

### These short stories:

- Show the human impact of library services
- Help community members understand why libraries matter
- Strengthen communication with boards, funders, and partners
- Celebrate the everyday successes happening in libraries

**Over time, a collection of small stories becomes a powerful record of how the library supports its community.**