



**LOUISE
OMOTO
KESSEL**

★ **STORYTELLER** ★

LOUISE ...



Eyebrows wiggle and dance, eyes squint and flash, arms reach and wave, feet lift and stomp ... she's a turtle, a river, a giant, a fool! Louise delights in welcoming audience members into the world of story ... where turtle wins the race, rivers sing, giants dance and fools are wise.



A full-time professional storyteller since 1981, Louise has performed in schools from North Carolina to Alaska, from Mississippi to Vermont and many of the places in between!

Louise tells stories for the whole school community, preschoolers on up to adults. Her solo work features small groups (up to 100 students) and the intimacy of traditional storytelling. Louise also collaborates with 3 other dynamic performing artists to present assembly programs for larger groups, up to 300.



photo by Wendy Banning

Creative collaborators percussionist Beverly Botsford, musician and wheelchair dancer Mike Hamer, or Jef the Mime – join the fun for assembly programs. The Story Bridges storytellers are ready with funny and serious stories from many world cultures.

Programs include Family and Cultural Heritage (solo or with Story Bridges tellers), Asian Heritage, Disability Awareness (with Mike Hamer), Earth Day and the Environment, Spunky Girls and Wise Women, A Celebration of Folk and Contemporary Literature.

Solo, or with friends, good things happen when you bring Louise to your school!

In addition to school programs, Louise also does a variety of programs for libraries, festivals, museums, parks, colleges, universities, faith communities, conferences, and the community at large.



STORYTELLING PROGRAMS FOR...



Preschool & primary grades

Louise invites children to join in – singing, chanting and gesturing along with

her – for a joyous experience of telling the story together. Essential lessons in “you can do it” and “everybody makes a difference” are delivered right along with the rollicking fun.



Upper elementary grades

Here characters and content deepen, the story journey matures. Thematic offerings become available: Asian heritage, environmental education, and international stories with Story Bridges; Louise provides a great addition to Earth Day and cultural diversity celebrations. Information about

storytelling and a celebration of both oral and written literature are shared in the course of a performance – a grand way to celebrate National Library Week, Children’s Book Week, book fairs, and reading. Workshops and residencies in storytelling are also offered for this age group.

STORYTELLING PROGRAMS FOR...

Middle School performances engage students with stories featuring a twist of the unexpected. Language Arts classes will enjoy this out-loud celebration of folklore and literature. Louise's diverse family background makes her a natural choice for cultural diversity events and projects.



The **Seventh Grade Social Studies** curriculum is an excellent match for many of her program offerings: Asian Heritage, Family Heritage and Story Bridges.

High School curriculum tie-ins for high school audiences are many: Literature, Speech, Drama, Comparative Religions, US History, Asian Studies, Environmental Studies, Teacher Training and Parenting Education.

Family audiences - Louise also tells stories at PTA functions, book fairs, festivals, and other special events.

Teachers, Counselors, Staff and Administrators - Storytelling provides a refreshing addition to in-service training, retreats, meetings and professional conferences.

Special Education Classes - Audience members with special needs are encouraged to join Louise and friends. Louise tells some of her stories in sign language, and her work with wheelchair dancer and musician Mike Hamer is a great choice for disability awareness programs and provides an important role model for disabled students.

COLLABORATORS...

Beverly Botsford

Percussionist Beverly Botsford creates sound-scapes for Louise's stories using bells, chimes, drums, gongs, rattles, and shakers from around the world. This is a high energy collaboration, well suited to school assembly programs, festivals, and special events.

*Performances for PreK-8.
Audience size: up to 300 students.*

"Exciting, Vibrant, Colorful... from the moment Ms. Botsford enters the performing area, the air is charged with electricity." – Pawtucket Elementary, Charlotte, NC



Jef the Mime

Jef the mime begins the entertainment before folks have even found their seats, with a "pre-show" clown/mime/juggling act that causes kids AND teachers to ROAR with laughter. And then, we begin with Stories and Mime! Jef becomes a rooster prince, a poetry reciting toad, and a BAD WORD! Louise becomes a basilisk, a grumpy frog, and all the characters at an elegant garden party! Together they tell the stories with zany humor, animated movement, and bold fun!

*Performances for grades PreK- 12.
Audience size: up to 300 students.*



Mike Hamer

"People are still talking about you and Mike. Everyone comments about how the group was drawn together by Mike's sing-alongs and how warm and happy it all felt." – Lynn Houser, Fairhope Alabama Public Library

Musician and wheelchair dancer Mike Hamer plays hammered dulcimer, harmonica and synthesizer along with Louise's stories. Songs and stories swap off as Mike sings (and gets us ALL SINGING!) folk songs and his own original tunes.

*Performances for grades PreK- 5.
Audience size: up to 150 students.*



CULTURAL HERITAGE ...

"Kessel is a walking, talking, storytelling United Nations!"

– Maggie Wilson, Chatham Crossroads

"My grandparents on my mother's side came to Hawaii from Japan. My grandfather came first, to work in the sugar cane and pineapple plantations. My mother grew up on the island of Oahu, in the town of Wahiwa, on Mango Street. On Mango Street there were families from all over Asia. There were other Japanese families, as well as families from Korea, China, and the Philippines. So my mom got to learn about lots of different parts of Asia, just growing up on Mango Street!

My grandparents on my fathers side were Jewish, from Russia. One of my mom's sisters married a man from India. Another married a first generation Italian man. . . ."

Growing up with all these cultural influences has had a big impact on Louise's life and work.



CULTURAL HERITAGE STORYTELLING PROGRAMS

• **Asian Heritage – "Stories from Mango Street"** Louise tells stories from many parts of Asia, and provides a personal doorway into the Asian-American experience as well. This program can also focus on stories from Japan or Religions of Asia on request.

• **Family Heritage – "Mixed Blessings"** This program includes stories from the cultural traditions of both sides of Louise's family background– Japanese-Buddhist and Russian-Jewish.

• **International – "Story Bridges"** Louise can bring community storytellers from a wide range of countries and cultural traditions to your school – including Turkey, Chile, Colombia, Liberia, Egypt, Japan, Pakistan, India, Laos, and Native American. These storytellers are a unique resource for cultural diversity programs, international festivals, etc. Social Studies teachers can use Story Bridges to bring the textbook to life, right in the classroom.



EARTH DAY & ENVIRONMENTAL ED...

"Louise Omoto Kessel tells stories, saves rivers, and make us heroes of our own lives."



Louise's passion for celebrating and honoring the earth make her the perfect choice for Earth Day events and program supporting environmental education and science curriculum. Louise's "earth stories" celebrate the wonder of rivers, land, and earth's creatures, and they remind us of our power to make a difference. Louise has worked to share her delight in the natural world and to protect the places she knows and loves.

- In 1989 Louise started the Haw River Festival, a month-long traveling "learning celebration" that travels the length of the Haw River, working with school children and riverside communities. Nearly two decades later, the festival continues! In recognition of her work with the Haw River Festival, Louise received the NC Woman of Environmental Action Award and the NC Independent's Citizen's Award in 1990.
- From 1978 to 1989 Louise worked for the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, "the flagship of environmental action," the Nature Conservancy in Maine, and the Circle of Water Circus on the Mississippi River. She was also part of the Soviet American Sail, a citizen diplomacy project in which a group of Soviets and Americans took a large sailboat across the Atlantic Ocean, from Lenin-grad to New York.
- Now, Louise lives on Clapping Hands Farm in Pittsboro, NC with her husband Holmes, an organic farmer, and their two young children. The farm is "off the grid" (uses no public utilities) and relies on solar power for all its electrical needs.

When Louise comes to your school to celebrate the earth, the stories ring with the depth of her commitment and experience.



MORE THEMES & CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS...

Speech, Drama, Language Arts, Reading, Traditional and Contemporary Literature A storytelling program is ideal for engaging children in the LOVE of story, inspiring creative expression, motivating readers, and celebrating books.

Spunky Girls and Wise Women Louise collects stories with strong, active, intelligent women as main characters.

Character Education Louise carefully selects stories that uplift and inspire. Stories are by nature embedded with values and guidance about how to live well and get along.

Disability Awareness see collaboration with Mike Hamer (see page 4).

Mike is disabled as a result of a diving accident and uses a wheelchair. A disability awareness discussion guide for teachers, time for discussion at the end of the performance, and a "lunch date" with any students who use wheelchairs or have other mobility related special needs are included with this program.



WORKSHOPS FOR ADULTS...

Louise is a master storyteller AND teacher. Her in-service workshops for teachers consistently receive excellent evaluations. Tailor-made workshops and lecture-demonstrations are available, drawing from a menu of tried and true options.

*"She is, without question,
one of the finest trainers
I have ever met."*

– Mary Snow Crawley,
Training/Resources Coordinator,
Project Enlightenment,
Wake County School System

Tools of the Storyteller - A storytelling lecture-demonstration. Can cover a variety of topics depending on the needs of the group. 1-3 hours.

We are All Storytellers - A hands-on, in-depth exploration of the storyteller's art. This class focuses on developing performance skills and guides each participant in choosing and developing a story to tell in his/her own style. The workshop culminates with a "recital" where everyone performs. We Are All Storytellers is a 20 hour class that has been offered for CEU credit.

Story Bridges Cultural Heritage Storytelling Workshop - This workshop guides people in preparing and performing a story from their own cultural background and results in a team of storytellers for your school who are prepared to perform stories from many cultural traditions. All the adults in the school community – faculty, staff, parents, and community volunteers – are encouraged to participate. 20 hours plus 4 hours planning and performance time.

Our Stories, Ourselves - In this workshop we look at the events of our own lives as stories worth telling, and we create new stories as a way to enrich and inform our lives and work. Sharing stories is an excellent way to build connections in a group and pave the way for further work together. Highly recommended for faculty and staff retreats. 2-20 hours.

Printmaking - A fun and accessible introduction to the printmakers art. Teachers learn to carve handmade rubber stamps and then design a project using their stamps that can be used as a teaching tool with their students. Each teacher produces several sets of their project and we "swap" at the end of the workshop, so each teacher goes home with several new learning games for their classroom. 4-10 hours.

Art Party - Louise leads "Art Party" workshops and camps for preschool through middle school grades. She has a terrific collection of creative projects for this age range. In the "training" version of this workshop, parents, youth groups leaders, teachers, or anyone who longs to finger paint, make their own stomp rockets, weave a rag doll, build a balloon powered car, etc. have the opportunity to try a myriad of projects. Participants create their own Art Party notebook for easy reference whenever the impulse to get creative strikes. 1-20 hours.



WORKSHOPS FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES...

Storytelling Games

- A lively exploration of movement, drama and imagination! Works well as a one session workshop in conjunction with a performance. 1-5 hours. Grades 3-12. Also available as an intergenerational Family Workshop.



Art Party - Louise leads "Art Party" workshops and camps for preschool- middle school grades. Make old-fashioned clothespin dolls, decorate rockets that truly soar, make shimmery pictures from tinfoil and tissue paper. . . there are literally hundreds of projects to choose from, and 3-6 different projects can be offered in any workshop session. 1-5 contact hours. Grades PreK-8 and also available as an intergenerational Family Workshop.

Tools of the Storyteller - An introduction to the storytellers craft. 1-5 contact hours. Grades 3-12.

We are All Storytellers - An in-depth look at the storytellers art. Available only when there is an enthusiastic sponsoring teacher who can lead follow up activities between artist visits. 10 contact hours. Grades 4-12.

Story Bridges Workshop leads students in finding stories, crafts, and traditions from their own cultural heritage. Culminates in a "heritage festival" where these activities are shared. Available only when there is an enthusiastic sponsoring teacher who can lead follow up activities between artist visits. 10 contact hours. Grades 5-12.

Rubber Stamp Printmaking - An accessible introduction to the principles of printmaking. Students carve handmade rubber stamps and use them to create a variety of projects. 2-10 contact hours. Grades 5-12.

Japanese Heritage Workshop includes classes in origami, cooking and tasting Japanese Food, games, and some information about Japanese-American history. 3-5 contact hours. Grades 2-12. Especially recommended for 7th grade Social Studies classes.



FEES & LOGISTICS...

Louise Solo

up to 100 students/show

Chatham County discount: \$100 off
(applies to solo fees only)

Within 50 miles of Pittsboro

- First Show \$300
- Two Shows \$450
- Three Shows \$600

Beyond 50 miles from Pittsboro
add \$25- 50 depending on distance



Louise with Mike Hamer

up to 150 students/show

- One Show \$600
- Two Shows \$800
- Three Shows \$1000

Louise with Beverly Botsford

up to 300 students/show

In Triangle Area

- First Show \$700
- Two Shows \$1000
- Three Shows \$1200

Beyond Triangle Area:
minimum two shows



Louise with Jef the Mime

up to 300 students/show

\$1300-- up to 3 shows
same day/same school
or 2 shows in two locations.

LOUISE OMOTO KESSEL
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★ STORYTELLER ★ WORKSHOP & RETREAT LEADER ★