

Storywalks®

A Guide for SWLS Libraries

Simply put Storywalks® are a way to bring one-on-one stories, often shared in small groups or between a parent and child, into view for a larger audience. Pages from books that an organization has purchased are pulled out and mounted – in order sequentially - on display board or signs which are often placed along side a walk trail in a garden, park, river or stream trail in the outdoors or indoors around a children's area, a library or in another indoor venue. This literacy/activity initiative can be as simple or complex as needed. There are no standards required.

The term StoryWalk® is trademarked by the originator of the concept – Anne Ferguson of the Kellogg-Hubbard Library, VT. If you use that name in your project/advertising, please include the trademark as well as the statement: *"The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. Storywalk® is a registered service mark owned by Ms. Ferguson."*

You can name the walks anything else you'd like as well without attribution to the originator. These titles might be Book Walks; Tales on Trails, Picture Book Walks; Tale Trot; Book Ambles, etc.

[This link gives you lots of information on how to set up your own StoryWalk®](#) from Anne Ferguson herself and was last updated March 2017. It includes costs, clues, laminating and signage recommendations and much more.

Inside/Outside/How Long?

Walks can be set up outside or in the library. Sometimes sturdily constructed outdoor walks are left out for a month or more along a trail. Other times, they are put out for a day. They can be done on a small scale within a library or at a community event as well. Whatever works best for your library and the durability of your signs.

Signs – What Material?

The pages can be simply laminated and placed on tag or foam board attached to stakes. They can be mounted on used election yard signs (turn them inside out for a white surface) or local scout or woodworking group can construct wood frames with plexiglass.

Cost?

You usually need to purchase three copies of the same book. If you use lamination, that is an added cost as well as the sign board and stakes. Anne Ferguson guesstimates a cost of \$250 on average per book, although they can be made for far less (\$100) if paperback books are purchased and you use donated stakes or materials.

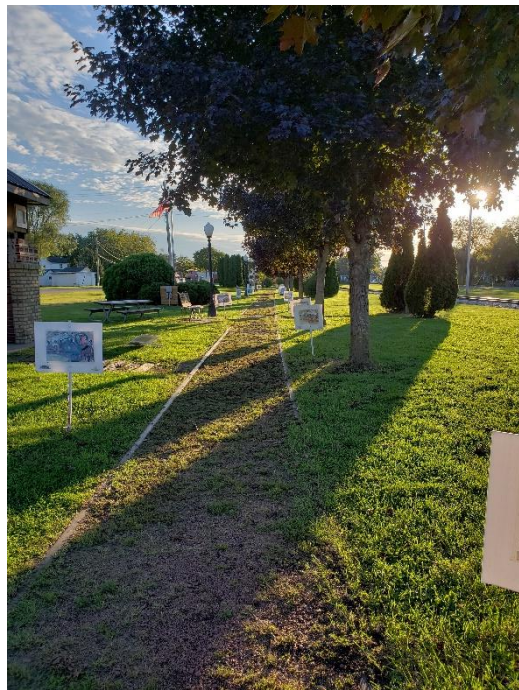
The Prefect Partnership Opportunity

Bookwalks can present an opportunity to partner with Park and Rec departments, Nature Centers; conservation and arts groups; health and fitness groups, gardeners and others interested in literacy and getting kids outside.

SWLS Member Experiences *(please contact members directly with questions!)*

Melissa at Boscobel:

"Here are a couple of pictures of what we have in Boscobel. We were able to do ours through a grant. We change the story and have them up during the farmers market season. We keep them up for weeks. Really all summer, we take the new story pages down and replace them. We do have to go down and sometimes re set them if they get loose. However that's as easy as just pushing them back in the ground. We have only had a couple that have broke. Our farmers market runs from May to October". Melissa also mentioned that storage can be an issue. They attach theirs to folamboard that is zip tied to the stakes.



Robin at Boscobel:

"The following is a compilation of storywalk feedback emails I've previously sent, which paint a fair picture of the process and some of its highlights and drawbacks. a couple of photos from our original storywalk are attached. We still use the electric fence stakes to display the storyboards, but we switched to a different backer board that was softer and less rigid than the original stiff laminate chosen.

Written to answer the questions of another SWLS director:

"We have several uncataloged storywalks, but I wanted to give you a heads up about some logistical issues you'll want to keep in mind when you're thinking about borrowing storywalks:

In short, the page dimensions of the storywalk story panels impact their ability to be mounted to the display boards. Unless you have a display system that accommodates all size pages, you'll run into issues where borrowed stories won't fit correctly on your display boards. The need to standardize the dimensions of the laminated storywalk page panels wasn't foreseen when we started doing this three years ago, but we've learned by trial and error.

For example, our laminated story panels attach to the stake mounted display boards with velcro, so that the stories can be changed out several times during the summer. The problem comes up in aligning the velcro on the new page panels with the velcro on the existing display boards. A small book won't span the velcro mounts that originally held much larger pages. We built our first storywalk from scratch, and then participated in a grant started in Crawford County by Healthy Roots WI that provided all the needed materials and a wide laminating machine to create the pages. Since then we've chosen and laminated our own storywalk pages.

Other unexpected influences: Sun! If the story walk is outside in direct sun for several weeks, the pages fade. A lot. Wind! pages do blow away in spite of using industrial strength velcro. So: if your story's going to be outside, it's good to have the ability to create duplicate pages "in-house".

Written to our original storywalk sponsor at HealthyRoots WI, as an informal second year assessment of the project: "We did reuse the material at the Farmer's Market this summer, and the walk was again a huge hit. We got positive feedback from families, kids and adult who enjoyed just watching the kids bouncing along reading. Llama, Llama was the absolute favorite. We also used The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry and the Big Hungry Bear, an an Eric Carle book. We use a story every 6 weeks or so. Materials hold up well, even in wind that spins the boards like windmills. Some pages blew off the backer boards, but we made new copies and replaced. Sometimes storms bend the backing board, but still useable. The step in stakes are beginning to bow from exposure to the elements. Biggest change is in the color of the pages, which fade quite a bit in the sun, but remain readable.

Storywalk has been a big hit here and should continue to be supported. It would be amazing if someone premanufactured the page boards, as it is quite the commitment to select and create the individual pages, laminate, perforate, assemble, attach install and maintain the storywalks. Consistency of size and orientation have to be considered, as well as the number of pages. Well worth the effort but we could do more if the walks were easier to install and maintain replacement pages.

Many thanks again for providing the resources to realize this project, it's been amazing to see the interactions between adults and kids and the joy it's produced and a great publicity tool for the library also."

Sarah Kyrie at Argyle:

"Regarding our storywalks, they have been a consistent program hit! We host them at the Erickson Conservation Area in Argyle so its fun to get out to a new site and also to introduce the community to these trails that are truly Argyle's best secret. The trails are behind the school so we specifically invite the teachers and have had a couple hundred students walk through. In the summer, we have both hosted walking-through programs and completely passive walks that are up all weekend. We have probably done half a dozen storywalks over the past few years (most geared for kids except our Aldo Leopold day adult walk. . . held in March, always cold!)

I have worked in conjunction with Driftless Area Land Conservancy's educational coordinator. It was very easy for us because they did the legwork of creating the storywalks. They actually bought 2 copies of each book, cut it apart, heavily laminated them and put them on posts (1 post works better than 2). We line these on an out-and-back trail of about 1 mile all together. Unfortunately, Driftless may be eliminating that position so while the storywalk boards are still available to us but I will have to go to Dodgeville to retrieve and set up myself.

I would add that any library is probably welcome to use the storyboard signs. . . only that Argyle reserves the Leopold ones first weekend in March! Just contact Driftless Area Land Conservancy

Ps- We did have some vandalism a few years back where the storyboards were thrown in the pond. I retrieved them and they were ok but it was disheartening. When the storywalks are up, I try to check in on them every day."

Erin Isabell of Platteville:

"We have done 2 storywalks. One was outside at our kick off for our summer. The other was inside and was at our final party. We borrowed the materials from a very enthusiastic local master gardener. The outside one was up for the day of the program. The inside one was up for about a week."

Jen Bernetzke at Schreiner (Lancaster):

"I actually just finished assembling a new Story Walk. I have an icloud photo sharing link with pictures of the process. We usually don't leave them up more than a day at a time because of the inconsistencies of WI weather. In low wind, they'd be okay for a week.

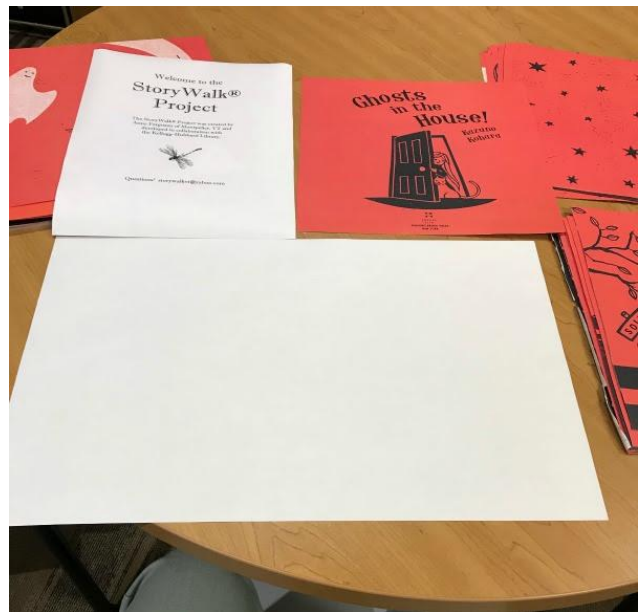
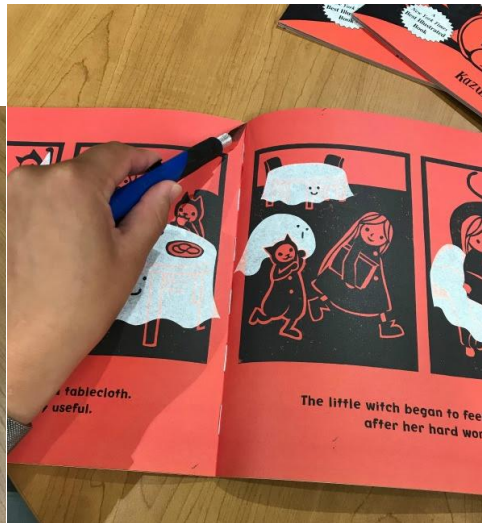
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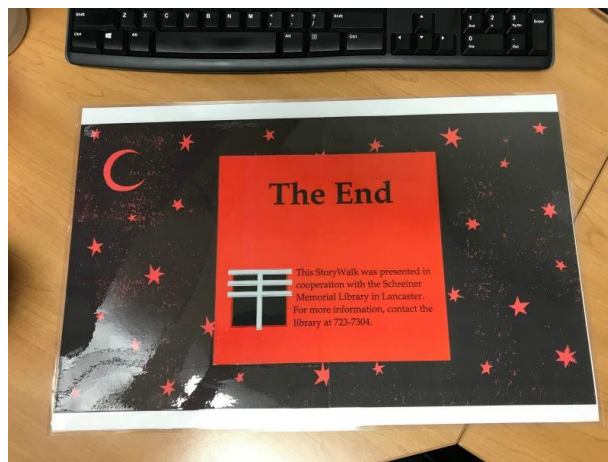
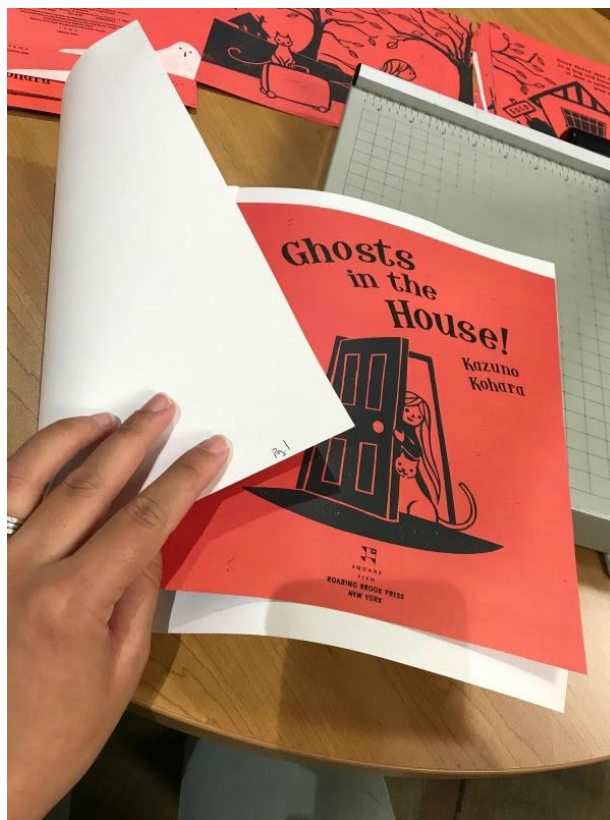
- 3 copies of the book (two to cut up, one to keep with the Story Walk to make sure the book is in the right order, or to use if you need to replace a page)
- 11x17 paper (I just use copy paper, but some prefer posterboard-- but since it's getting a heavy laminate, rigidity isn't an issue)
- double sided tape for mounting pages on the 11x17
- a nice paper cutter to trim your pages straight
- a place that will use a rigid weight and laminate for you (We use Wolf's Grantland Graphics in Lancaster)
- industrial strength velcro
- canvas bag for storage/circulation
- patience

For the posts, we use plastic fence posts with corrugated plastic zip tied to them. We ran two horizontal strips of velcro across the corrugated plastic about 10 inches apart (so the 11x17 signs will fit).

The Posts and corrugated plastic are a one-time investment, for the most part. They were originally donated to us, so I don't know the exact cost. The laminating for a 14 page story walk was about \$50 (and of course, add the cost of the books and velcro, etc)."

Jen shares her process through photos:







Resources

[Information on the origin of StoryWalk®](#) with great FAQ

[The Second Annual Summer Reading/Picture Book Walk Kick-off Event](#). Show Me Librarian blog. June 4, 2012.

[Thinking Outside the Book: Partnering to Offer a Picture Book Walk](#). Show Me Librarian blog. June 3, 2013.

[Take a Hike! Building Literacy Skills Through StoryWalk®](#) Boston Children's Museum.

[Waupaca StoryWalk®](#). Youth Services Shout-Out blog. Wisconsin Library Association. April 25, 2012.