



MY STORY MATTERS

A Catalyst for Lasting Transformation



MY STORY MATTERS

IMPACT REPORT 2024

WHAT IS...



CAPTAIN YOUR STORY

→ WHO WE ARE

Welcome to Captain Your Story, an innovative program developed by My Story Matters, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to inspiring hope, fostering healing, and celebrating resilience. This transformative initiative is designed to empower individuals through a guided curriculum that facilitates deep reflection and personal growth.

At My Story Matters, we believe in being a catalyst for lasting transformation. Captain Your Story provides a personalized and structured journey, offering participants from all backgrounds, experiences, and identities the tools to take ownership of their lives and their narratives. Through an adaptable, step-by-step curriculum, individuals gain the skills and resources to envision and create a future that aligns with their true values and aspirations.

This program is your invitation to take the helm of your story, giving you the power to design a life full of purpose and meaning. Participants in the Captain Your Story program are guided to uncover their "why"—the driving force behind their purpose—and to cultivate an identity rooted in motivation and growth. As they navigate the curriculum, they are encouraged to let go of harmful behaviors and relationships, embrace healthy communities, and take intentional steps toward self-improvement.

The process empowers individuals to move beyond a victim mindset and into a position of control, opening the door to possibilities,

"Your new life is going to cost you your old life....you owe it to yourself to become everything you've ever dreamed of being, to achieve more than ever before, and to love yourself more than you ever have."

-Amy Chandler

change, and a readiness to utilize available resources. This journey offers hope and a renewed sense of agency, teaching participants to find fulfillment within themselves rather than relying on external validation.

Adolescents in the program gain a new perspective on past risky behaviors and begin to see the value in building a brighter future, free from the limitations of their upbringing. They learn to face challenges head-on and take charge of their lives. Over time, participants develop the willingness and strength to seek professional help to address underlying trauma, setting them on a path toward healing, growth, and lasting transformation.

→ OUR PRINCIPLES

Each class combines group activities, reflection time, and instruction time centered around these principles.

- *Principle 1: The Harbor of Vision*
- *Principle 2: The Harbor of Choice*
- *Principle 3: The Harbor of Focus*
- *Principle 4: The Harbor of Language*
- *Principle 5: The Harbor of Surrender*
- *Principle 6: The Harbor of Community*
- *Principle 7: The Harbor of Help*
- *Principle 8: The Harbor of Identity*
- *Principle 9: The Harbor of Response*
- *Principle 10: The Harbor of Learning*
- *Principle 11: The Harbor of Action*
- *Principle 12: The Harbor of Story*

SOCIAL IMPACT

Serving the Community



➔ THE NEED

In a time of extraordinary global challenges, our organization serves as a source of hope and positive change. The progress we've made addressing critical societal issues highlights the growing importance of our mission.

Our achievements so far reflect the dedication of individuals and the power of our initiatives.

To continue and expand this impact, we need greater financial support and community engagement. Together, we can overcome today's challenges and create a brighter, more equitable future for everyone.

| | PROJECTS/DETAILS | 2024 OUTCOMES | EXPANSION |
|--|--|---|--|
| 904 Individuals taught & Mentored in the community | Classes held at USCF and CUCF, Food & Care Coalition, Foster Care partners, Community organizations and businesses. 479 incarcerated and 425 in the community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained 16 Guides • Mentor training • Held 116 classes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 12-18 week cycle for participants | Increased classes Mentor training Guide certification |
| 114 Justice Involved family members taught | When a new class starts in the prison we invite the residents to invite their families to sign up for the class. Taking the class simultaneously has great benefit. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases communication skill • Learn and grow together • Strengthens families and relationships | As the number of classes taught in the prison increases so does the reach on the outside. |
| 250+ Digital resources | We have added to the digital resources available to the justice involved participants and in our community classes to increase their learning and ability to concentrate on the work. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased sustainability with continued support • Greater understanding of material | Development of additional resources for sustainability and additional learning and support |
| 37 Supported in RE-ENTRY | We are committed to supporting individuals transitioning out of corrections and homelessness by providing education, resources, and tools for lasting success. Our programs emphasize continued learning and personal growth, empowering participants to rebuild stable, fulfilling lives. We offer a comprehensive network of services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment counseling • Housing partnerships • Mentorship • Therapeutic support | We are continually looking for community partners to expand our network of opportunity |

We also started working with 1192 students in secondary schools in rural communities in 2024. They will complete the program spring of 2025.

➔ THE CREATORS FRAMEWORK

Embodying the essence of innovation and reliability, the verity of our framework stands as a testament to what tangible tools coupled with vision and intention can do. In an emotional landscape where results and trust are paramount, our framework not only meets but exceeds the highest standards, providing a robust foundation for transformative solutions and unlocking a new era of possibilities for humans everywhere.

PEOPLE PROVEN

"I took Captain Your Story last summer after being intrigued for some time. With a background in Mental Health and Holistic Nursing, I sought tools for true healing. Though familiar with many concepts, I committed fully to the program when life got messy—and it transformed both my personal and professional growth. Week by week, I gained new perspectives, worked through past and present challenges, and felt supported throughout the process.

Nine months later, I joined Level Up, which took my growth even further. It helped me redefine my identity, purpose, and past struggles as stepping stones for impact. My coaches challenged and supported me, and I learned radical honesty with myself. This isn't a one-time fix—Level Up is now my lifestyle. I face challenges with confidence, knowing I have the tools to overcome and rise higher."

"Captain Your Story helped me find my voice. I now understand how to respond and react to situations appropriately. It helped me to have safe and healthy boundaries."



"It has been really hard trying to forgive myself for the things I've done, and since coming to Captain Your Story, I have begun to realize I am capable of forgiving myself. I just need to put in the effort and believe it. It's a slow process, and that's okay. I have a lot of time to work through it."

"This course has helped me boost my self-esteem tremendously. I don't worry so much about labels other people have imposed on me. In fact, I hardly care at all anymore. The tools have allowed me to gain back some control over myself, to compartmentalize different struggles and stressors in my life. Thank you for coming and giving your time to us and caring about us, changing our lives."

"I want to let you know in all my years till now struggling with drug addiction and programs, Captain Your Story is the best program for recovery hands down. The methods and the skills I've learned are deeply impactful and life changing. For the first time in 20 years, I feel real hope and that I really will be able to conquer addiction and the anger issues that keep bringing me back to incarceration. Lisa is the most inspiring person and she is so genuine and authentic. She has inspired me to get custody of my son back and that I actually have a chance to keep custody. I look forward to class every week when I've never felt hope in other programs that are mundane and not authentic. Thank you with all my heart for this program and for truly caring about us and our recovery."

This class has helped me so much. I had always asked for something to help me. They never offer any classes for someone in my situation. This class was an answer to my prayers. This class has helped me with a lot of tools I am going to use in my daily life and future. It has given me hope for a future. For a while, I thought I couldn't have a future, but now I have HOPE! All these tools are amazing; I wish I had these years ago :)

"Each one of these [tools] has helped me tremendously in all aspects of my life, and my outlook on my future now is one of hope and of a love of life and people around me. I want to be better every day, and I know nothing changes overnight, and all these tools are only helpful if I use them like I was taught to and I am so grateful for this class."

"I would recommend this course for anyone who wants to make a difference in their life, personal and professional. If you DON'T want life to be better—don't sign up. Otherwise, run don't walk to the next class."

"This class was a self journey of understanding myself and defining what is important to me and the team I lead. It's been a game changer in every area of life!"

"I have absolutely no doubt that the curriculum and the instructors are inspired. This class supercharged my path of learning and growth! It supplied me with and instructed me in how to use tools that will be crucial in my future success and development of character. I was blown away by the caliber of the instructors and the amount of sincerity and care that they displayed each week. The value and positive impact that this course has had in my life is incredible and I'm very grateful that I was fortunate enough to be a part of it. I consider it to be a God send and would recommend it to anyone from any walk of life who is looking for growth and improved functionality and navigation of this crazy life, world and our relationships and understanding of self."

"CYS helps us find and pursue our own individual vision, one that is positive, is dear to our hearts and is so powerful that we evolve our identities to align with that vision."

"Participate in Captain your Story. It has lit a fire in my life, fueling me to strive for greatness, giving my life a greater purpose."

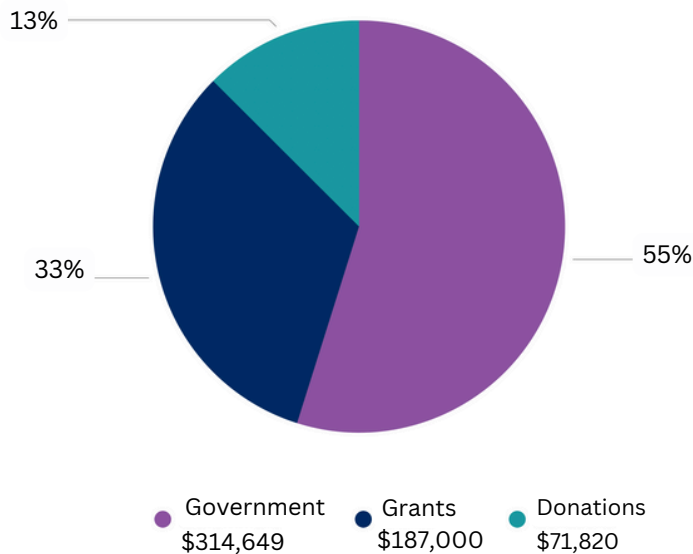
"Captain Your Story improved my life by teaching me how to create vision and purpose. Their model is helping me change the course of my life with real principles and proven techniques."

"This class offers you tools to give you an opportunity to take over the direction of your life. It helped with every area of my life."

"This course will help at home just as much as at work. It's amazing to see the growth I've seen in myself and want to keep that momentum."

"The tools are powerful. Truly powerful. I tell all my friends and family about Captain Your Story, and I will continue to participate in it, live its precepts, share it, and teach it the rest of my life, because it is based on principles that are universally and eternally true."

FINANCIAL GROWTH & EXPANDED IMPACT



From 2023 to 2024, we saw a significant increase in government funding and some grant support, allowing us to expand our impact like never before. While donations remained a vital part of our funding, these additional resources have enabled us to reach more individuals, enhance our programs, and create lasting transformation in the communities we serve. With this growth, we've been able to provide more opportunities, expand outreach, and offer sustainable support where it's needed most.

Text MSM to 53-555 OR Scan
QR Code below to donate



See the Impact Your
Donations are Making



**FOLLOW US ON LINKEDIN
FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM:
MY STORY MATTERS**

HELP US CLOSE THE GAP

We are at a critical crossroads, facing two funding gaps. Recent legislative cuts threaten the momentum we've built within the Utah prison system, putting our ability to reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and change lives at risk. At the same time, while new government grants have opened doors, their reimbursement-based structure leaves us unable to fully utilize them. Donations and key corporate partnerships are vital to bridging these gaps, sustaining our impact, and expanding our programs where they are needed most. Now, more than ever, we need our community to stand with us. Please consider donating or connecting us with individuals and companies who can help. Together, we can rise to the challenge and build a brighter, safer future.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



Meet Bobbie, she's a LCSW and owner of Crossroads to Wellness—she's one of our Guides who teaches our course inside the prison. She has a unique perspective as she's seen the course work in multiple spaces.

"The program Captain Your Story has become a beacon of hope and transformation for incarcerated individuals. Through my experience teaching at the prison in Gunnison, Utah, I have witnessed a profound shift among participants as they engage in our course.

The program fosters a sense of community centered on accountability, progression, and self-betterment. This unique environment encourages participants to take ownership of their actions and their future. I see individuals working collaboratively to build each other up, creating a supportive network that emphasizes growth and responsibility.

One of the most remarkable transformations is the development of emotional awareness. Participants learn to recognize, process, and navigate their emotions in mature and intentional ways.

This growth goes beyond intellectual learning—it transforms their approach to relationships, challenges, and self-perception.

Beyond data and statistics, the true impact of our program is visible in the hope and purpose that radiates from the individuals involved. Their eyes, their demeanor, and their posture all tell a story of renewal and possibility. This newfound hope empowers them to carry themselves with confidence, knowing they are building a better path for their future.

Our program is not just about education; it's about creating a culture of positive change that reaches beyond the prison walls. These individuals are proving that with the right tools and support, they can become contributors to society, shaping a brighter future for themselves and their communities."

Bobbie G. Pugh, LCSW

"At Crossroads to Wellness, we have seen incredible benefits from integrating the Captain Your Story framework into our therapeutic approach. The simplicity and visual components of the tools make them highly accessible and resonate deeply with our clients, helping them engage more effectively in their healing journey. This structured framework also provides essential support to our therapists, guiding sessions with clarity and purpose to maximize effectiveness and ensure the best use of the session. We have found that clients who actively use and apply these tools make significant progress toward living a life of intention and empowerment, fostering lasting growth and resilience."

~Bobbie G. Pugh, LCSW

UDC STAFF

We taught 80 of the UDC staff last year in the 3rd quarter and have begun new classes already this year teaching an additional 50 staff.

“

“I took this class at a time where life was unbelievably overwhelming. I was about to become the next UDC statistic in the wrong direction. My marriage was struggling and barely hanging on. I felt like a failure as a father. I had lost the passion for what I used to love. I was severely depressed and losing my desire to be at work. I found myself suicidal. I signed up for this class as a last ditch effort to try to learn something to help. I leaned in and really went to work. I did everything they suggested and I can’t even begin to tell you the effect it has had on my life. My health is better than ever. My wife is taking the course too now and we are beginning to heal. I am reconnecting with my kids. I LOVE my job. I have found passion and hope for the future. **This class literally saved my life.** I am using these tools in so many ways with those in my housing unit as well. These tools help me be a better leader, a better team member, a better human. Everyone should take this class.”



PRISON TOUR



Our team—staff, guides, and interns—had the incredible opportunity to tour the Salt Lake Prison, including the S.O.L.I.D unit in Bear II. It was a powerful experience, bringing two communities together in unity to learn and grow. The Captain Your Story course is creating real change, offering hope and a fresh perspective to those committed to doing the work. For many, it’s opening the door to transformation they once thought was impossible.



See how Captain Your Story is impacting lives in prison.

OUR SOCIAL IMPACT

EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH-BACKED INDIVIDUALIZED ENGAGING SUPPORTED PEOPLE PROVEN

➡ EVIDENCE BASED

This curriculum has been designed to be evidence-based, using time-tested theories that are widely accepted across multiple generations.

➡ INDIVIDUALIZED

The curriculum is **meticulously tailored to each individual**, placing a strong emphasis on active personal engagement. Through a systematic and personalized approach, participants navigate a step-by-step process that equips them with the essential tools and resources. This journey **empowers each person to take the helm of their own narrative**, effectively navigating challenges, and ultimately crafting a future that ignites their enthusiasm and excitement.

➡ ENGAGING FOR ALL

Engages each learner in a self-reflective model that leads them to **take ownership of their story** in the past, present, and future. We empower them to design a future they can be proud of.

➡ MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Our research shows the majority of our *participants have been exposed to significant trauma in their childhood* and continued support for healing is needed. Therapists and clinicians apply our framework, **approved by NASW-UT for Continuing Education Credits**, to help ensure real and lasting progress and change with their clients. These services are made available to individuals if requested.

➡ RESEARCH BACKED

Our research-backed approach is already showing promising results. Early data reveals increased confidence under pressure, improved problem-solving, and stronger community connections. Notably, participants demonstrate more prosocial behaviors, highlighting the effectiveness of our methods. These findings reinforce our commitment to evidence-based, transformative change.

➡ THERAPEUTIC

Our therapeutic framework blends evidence-based practices, drawing from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), while uniquely emphasizing the role of community. Approved by the National Association of Social Workers in Utah (NASW-UT), it builds on ACT's principle that pursuing values, rather than fleeting pleasures, drives lasting motivation and change. Unlike approaches that see identity as fixed or conflicting, our framework empowers individuals to consciously shape their identity beyond societal roles and external influences. Our approach blends ACT's flexibility with CBT's structure, using awareness to reshape imposed patterns and intentionally craft identity. The Creator's Framework fosters growth by addressing thoughts, emotions, and behaviors while emphasizing community's vital role. By integrating boundaries, relationships, and purpose, it creates a holistic path to lasting change.



CHART YOUR STORY

This past year, through the support of a grant, we successfully brought our program to over 1,500 students across four rural communities. Through engaging assemblies, hands-on student workshops, and professional development sessions for teachers, we have been able to share the principles of My Story Matters and the Chart Your Story program in impactful ways.

Our efforts were enhanced by incredible partnerships with talented presenters and the dedicated work of our own team of guides. Together, we delivered meaningful experiences that empowered students, supported educators, and fostered stronger school communities.

The schools we worked with have reported positive outcomes. One school reported, "The content of the assemblies is relevant and closely aligns with goals the counseling program has set and been working towards this year. We appreciate your presence in our school!" Another school reported, "We have a goal to help students to learn strategies for positive mental health. These assemblies have aligned perfectly." We are excited to finish out the school year helping students and supporting teachers. A principal at a school participating in our program reported, "There are times where we, as staff members, can utilize the same talk to help the students identify their feelings and assist with helping them calm down. One time a student was pretty irate and we used the term that their 'lid was flipped'. We discussed the different ideas the presenter had mentioned. This helped the student relate to what I was saying and provided skills to regulate."

Looking ahead, we are excited to begin the selection process for next year's schools and continue expanding the reach and impact of the My Story Matters tools and framework. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve these communities and look forward to helping even more students chart their unique stories.



"We have a goal to help students to learn strategies for positive mental health. These assemblies have aligned perfectly."



RURAL ASSEMBLIES

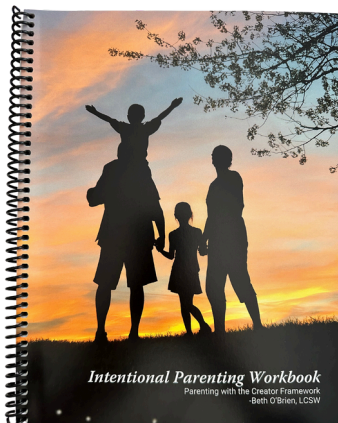




NAVIGATE YOUR STORY

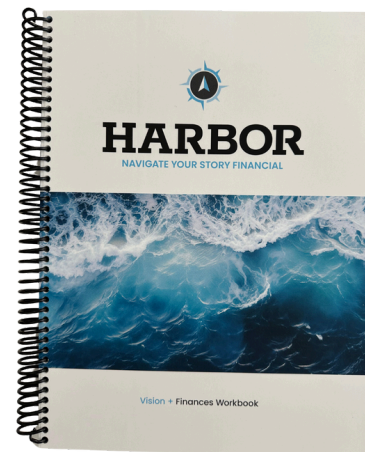
PARENTING & FINANCIAL CAPABILITY CLASSES

As part of our expansion, we introduced a parenting course designed to equip parents with practical tools for success. This included developing and producing a comprehensive workbook, as well as creating an online version of the course for greater accessibility. Additionally, we launched a financial capability course with its own workbook, designed as an add-on to our existing Captain Your Story course, empowering individuals with the knowledge and confidence to take control of their financial future. These additions allow us to serve more people in meaningful and impactful ways.



Introducing a new Navigate Your Story course! Parenting can be overwhelming, but with the Creator's Framework from Captain Your Story it can be a game-changer as you approach parenting with intentionality.

Revisit key tools, strengthen your narrative, and apply effective strategies for intentional parenting. Gain fresh insights while reinforcing familiar concepts to become the parent you aspire to be.



This class is an 18-week course that includes our Captain Your Story curriculum as well as our new Financial Capability curriculum.

This is a finance course like you've never taken before. We focus on how your finances relate to your vision and use the Creator's Framework to view how we approach our finances.



THE IMPACT OF OUR INTERNS

Our interns have been invaluable in expanding our reach and ensuring our programs run smoothly. Behind the scenes, they take on essential projects that keep everything moving—from marketing new classes to gathering and analyzing statistics. Their dedication and hard work allow us to focus on what we do best: empowering individuals to create lasting change. Whether handling logistics, brainstorming new strategies, or managing the details that make a big difference, our interns are a vital part of our mission's success. We're grateful for their passion, creativity, and commitment to making a real impact!



COMMUNITY

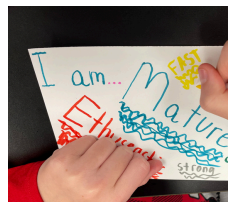
This year, in the Community space, we've continued to offer classes that serve individuals from all walks of life. These classes provide a welcoming environment for people to explore their personal goals, address challenges, and work towards meaningful change.

Additionally, we have strengthened our partnerships with various local organizations, which has enhanced our collaborations and provided valuable resources to better support those we serve.

The Community space has also played a vital role in supporting other areas of My Story Matters.

1. As part of our Education focus, we brought community classes to several rural areas across Utah, including Nephi, Annabella, Koosharem, and Logan. We held classes for adults, teens, and children alike, enriching these communities with opportunities for growth.
2. In support of the justice-involved space, we've offered classes that focus on helping families and loved ones of those incarcerated. By taking these classes together with their loved ones who are incarcerated, these families gain shared tools to navigate difficult circumstances and begin building a new path forward.
3. We partnered with small businesses and community organizations to host these courses for their employees, clients, and community.

Looking ahead, we are excited to build upon these efforts and expand the impact of our work in the coming year.



Community
Testimonials

YOUNG ADULTS

We received a donation from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for 125 young adults to participate in our Captain Your Story course. We have had great results from the young adults who have participated in our course and the word is spreading. Our interns have been a big help in advertising the course and in January 2025 we started our first classes specifically for young adults.



Why you should take the
Captain Your Story course.



GUIDE CERTIFICATION



To keep up with the growing demand for our courses, we have trained additional guides—both in the community and within the prison system.

Recognizing the need for leadership inside correctional facilities, we trained and certified 30 incarcerated individuals in the Salt Lake and Gunnison Prisons. This groundbreaking initiative, allowing inmates to teach our class, is the first of its kind. The impact has been profound, as we are already witnessing powerful transformations and meaningful change within these communities.

We trained and certified 16 community-based guides, including our first Spanish-speaking guide, allowing us to reach more people and expand our impact.

RESIDENT GUIDES

My Story Matters offers residents living in the Utah Prisons the unique opportunity to train and certify as guides, bringing their lived experience to the forefront of our program. The certification process takes nearly a year to complete and includes extensive training to ensure they are well-prepared to lead. Once certified, these residents co-guide classes alongside our team, providing an invaluable perspective that outside guides cannot replicate. Their personal experiences as residents enable them to connect deeply with participants, relate the material in a profoundly impactful way, and inspire transformation by demonstrating what is possible through dedication and growth.





MISSION & VISION

Mission

My Story Matters promotes healing, inspires hope, and celebrates courage in everyday heroes by engaging them in a process that helps them reflect, recount, record, and reframe their stories.

Vision

Our vision is to engage communities in embracing stories of all individuals as heroes of their own personal journey and, in that process, become more united in compassion, understanding, and empathy as we realize every story really does matter!

A Catalyst For Lasting Transformation

Our work is grounded in research, and we are currently conducting a comprehensive research study to further validate and enhance our approach. The preliminary data sets from this ongoing study are already demonstrating **remarkable results**.

A few noteworthy findings include:

1. Our interventions have shown a **substantial improvement in individuals confidence** to:
 - a. remain calm during difficult situations
 - b. find a solution to a problem
 - c. to see many different solutions to the same problem
2. Preliminary data reveals a positive impact on their **ability to build positive communities** of support highlighting the breadth of positive changes our approach can instigate.
3. Our data analysis reveals a compelling and consistent pattern: participants engaging in our programs experience **a significant improvement in prosocial behaviors**. The evidence underscores the effectiveness of our approach in fostering positive and cooperative interactions, contributing to the overall well-being and interpersonal growth of individuals involved in our initiatives.

These promising preliminary results underscore **our commitment to evidence-based practices** and inspire confidence in the transformative potential of our work. As we continue to delve deeper into the research, we anticipate uncovering even more insights that will contribute to the ongoing advancement of our programs.

FLEXIBLE
EVIDENCE-BASED
RESEARCH-BACKED
ENGAGING
HIGHLY EFFECTIVE