**Telling Your Story**

In this activity, youth will learn how to tell their story to the public as a way to get support for their cause.

**Part I: The ‘what’, ‘why’, and ‘how’ of stories**

1. Begin this activity as a large group discussion by asking youth the following questions:
   - What makes something a ‘story’ rather than a speech or a statement or simply a bunch of sentences strung together?
   - What structure does a story usually take?

   Write their ideas up on a big sheet of poster paper.

2. Next, share with them the idea of a ‘story spine’. A typical story structure, or ‘story spine’ as some call it, tends to look like this:
   - Once upon a time... (set the scene)
   - And everyday... (what we assume or what normally happens)
   - Until one day... (what happened that was unusual)
   - And because of that... (emphasize the learning or impact of this unusual event)
   - Until finally... (conclusion or outcome of the event)
   - And ever since then... (how your or other’s thinking has changed.)
   - And the moral of the story is...(optional)

   Write the story spine up on the sheet of paper and put it in a place where everyone can see it.

3. Next, ask the group:
   - What makes a story, a good story?
   - What elements are needed to make a story engaging?
   - What kinds of stories make an impression on us and leave us remembering them long after we heard them?

   Write group brainstorm points up on the paper.

4. Finally, discuss:
   - How can stories be used by a leader or community group to gain support for their cause?

Ask if anyone can share an example of a time when a leader, organization, or community group used storytelling as a way to gain public support for their cause.
Part II: Practicing the art of storytelling

5. Next, ask youth to pair up with a partner. Once they are paired up, ask them to think of a time when people in their community got together to bring about a change for the common good. If they can’t think of a real example, tell them its okay for them to imagine how this might happen. Give them two minutes each to tell their stories to each other.

6. Next, give them the opportunity to practice telling their own story to their partners. They still only have 2 minutes each, but this time they will have several rounds to improve it and refine it.

7. Once their stories are refined and revised (and they’ve each told it at least three times to their partner), they can take turns presenting their story to the whole group.

8. Debrief the activity. The following question prompts might help to facilitate a quick debriefing:
   - What have you learned about the art of storytelling?
   - How can telling our stories help us as young leaders in the local food movement?

Taking It Further:

One way to take this activity further would be to have youth work together as a group or in their own organization to come up with a group or community leadership story. This story would highlight how they collectively were faced with a challenge, what choices they made in relation to that challenge, and what the outcomes of those choices were for their group and the community at large.