

**Jennifer Potts**  
**Grant Writing Sample 2: Jennifer Potts—Artist Statement**

*Personal artist statement included with grant applications*

I am a storyteller. I am a storyteller who cannot live without stories.

Storytelling is not a choice for me—it is who I am. I tell stories. I write my own story, including the many twists and turns that constantly dance with the world's stories. I see stories—in every person, in every situation. From a park bench, characters and their stories fill the space around me. From my window, as people walk on the street below, stories unfold. From new social interactions, newly met people—strangers—become the threads in new tales that my mind weaves. Stories. I live to discover new stories.

I mostly tell stories that are fiction, but fiction that is grounded in truth. A truth I have witnessed. A truth I have experienced. When I see something that may appear ordinary on the outside, my inner storyteller sees ordinary people doing extraordinary things, living extraordinary lives that inspire my storytelling. These nuggets of nonfiction enrich every fictional story I write and direct.

My storytelling is part of a universal art form shared by all humans. Every culture in every corner of the world tells stories. Pictures in ancient caves dating back more than 30,000 years tell stories. All ancient civilizations told stories through the tradition of oral storytelling. I am a storyteller, but I am not unique; I am one link in the universal human chain that communicates through story.

As a storyteller who tells her stories through film, I think stories told through film defy language barriers, even without subtitles. Because my stories are visual, most people can watch my film story and understand it without comprehending the language of the characters. I can stream my stories almost anywhere in the world. My stories as films are powerful tools for human understanding, bringing human beings together to experience a point of view they may have never experienced, to cheer on a character in a movie, to safely step into their shoes and laugh and cry with them. Storytelling through film builds bridges between cultures, develops understanding between people, and establishes empathy for people who may be very different from us.

So, like all humans before me and all humans that will come after me, I am part of a long tradition of human storytelling that continues to evolve and progress with our world. Someone once asked me—What will happen if the lights go out and we can no longer communicate through modern technology? My answer comes easily. We will once again gather in caves (maybe our houses) around candlelight and tell

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stories. Because human survival requires more than food, shelter, and love—it requires stories. We cannot live without stories. I am a storyteller who cannot live without stories.