

SBDC helps one legacy expand guided story sharing program

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EDWARDSVILLE - While spending time with his ailing mother at nursing facilities, hospitals, and ultimately hospice, Mike Stith searched for a way to lift her spirits during her struggle with cancer. By asking targeted questions about people and events in her life, the conversations they had lifted her emotions and provided meaningful activity.

Upon finding that many other families and healthcare staff enjoyed participating and appreciated hearing such fascinating personal histories, Stith was inspired to found One Legacy ® in 2014. The organization is dedicated to collecting and sharing real stories from everyday people.

This year, One Legacy® began producing a free publication, [*The Family Historian Journal*](#), with distribution to hospitals, retirement communities, restaurants and building lobbies in the Metro East. *The Journal* can also be accessed online or on smartphones. Reader feedback has been outstanding.

“Our major success has been the acceptance and appreciation for our program from participants of all ages,” Stith said. “People truly enjoy reminiscing about their lives and reading stories from others.”

However, as with all businesses, they face challenges. One Legacy® is searching for businesses or groups to sponsor the guided story-sharing program and advertise in *The Journal*.

One Legacy® has a new partnership with Morningside of Troy, a senior community which offers assisted living, as well as hospice and respite care services. The program will be offered onsite for residents, along with a 1½-page ad spot in the *Family Historian Journal*. The partnership also includes sharing of selected stories in *The Journal*, recognition in online and print media, as well as special videos and materials created for community promotions.

Morningside of Troy is a Five-Star Senior Living community located in the heart of Troy. It offers a perfect community for seniors searching for all the comforts of home with the amenities of a four-star hotel. “We were excited to find a service provider like One Legacy®,” Executive Director Greta Sullivan said. “The guided story-sharing program will be a stimulating activity for residents and fits nicely with our core values.”

As a client of the Illinois Metro East Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at SIUE since his organization’s inception, Stith has met with Director Jo Ann Di Maggio May on multiple occasions to gain support and guidance. Di Maggio May has provided a review of his business model, expertise on networking resources, advice on brand awareness, marketing tools and more.

The SBDC’s goal, according to Di Maggio May, is to provide comprehensive and continuous support for entrepreneurs and small business owners at all stages of their business lifecycle. “Stith has fine-tuned his business model and vision for his company since we originally met,” she said. “We are extremely proud of his success, and we will continue to help him thrive.”

One Legacy’s® tagline is, “Each day has purpose. Every life has meaning.” Stith strives to encourage people to share personal stories that are sure to inspire others.

One Legacy® can be contacted at [618-960-7252](tel:618-960-7252). For more information visit onelegacy.com.

The Illinois Metro East SBDC assists start-up ventures like One Legacy® as well as existing businesses headquartered in the nine-county region of Calhoun, Jersey, Madison, Bond, Clinton, St. Clair, Washington, Monroe and Randolph. It is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and [SIUE](http://siue.edu) as a service to Illinois small businesses.

By aiding entrepreneurs and companies in defining their path to success, the SBDC network positively impacts the Metro East by strengthening the business community, creating and retaining new jobs and encouraging new investment. It enhances the region's economic interests by providing one-stop assistance to individuals by means of counseling, training, research and advocacy for new ventures and existing small businesses. When appropriate, the SBDC strives to affiliate its ties to the region to support the goals and objectives of both the [SIUE School of Business](#) and the University at large.

To learn about the SBDC, contact the [IL Metro East SBDC at SIUE](#) at [\(618\) 650-2929](#).