**CONTACT**

Alana Weiner

alana@storyfile.com

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 23, 2020

**FREEDOM WRITER TURNS TO AI DURING QUARANTINE WITH STORYFILE**

Erin Gruwell turns to StoryFile’s virtual platform to create a virtual classroom to reach students, parents, and teachers around the world and offer learning and teaching resources

Los Angeles, CA, April 23 2020 – Erin Gruwell of Freedom Writers debuted her StoryFile this week as a resource for students, parents, and teachers around the world. Erin talks about her work with Freedom Writers, the online virtual educational reality, the environment we are all facing, and new ways to communicate and teach children and the public.

In a time of virtual learning and social distancing, the whole world seems to be in need of connecting with others in some capacity. StoryFile can be the North Star in today’s New Normal – allowing people to connect and share stories in authentic, meaningful, and real ways. StoryFile provides a platform for intimate and natural conversation using state-of-the-art artificial intelligence, innovative technology, and a new platform ConversaTM.

Erin Gruwell remarked, “US Navy Admiral William McRaven said something that still inspires me each day: ‘The only thing more contagious than a virus is hope.' I think this speaks to what StoryFile has the ability to do – to provide an opportunity to speak to parents, students, and teachers when they aren’t feeling hopeful, or to be the light in a dark place and provide a feeling that you are connecting with someone when you are disconnected from everything you know.” Erin continued, “I am humbled and honored to have the opportunity to be a teacher and stand in front of a class. To be a teacher and be in someone’s home is truly a blessing and a gift. StoryFile gave me this gift, and I am so excited to share my own StoryFile with the world for people to interact with!”

The Freedom Writers Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that works directly with educators, students, and schools to help improve the lives of young people from around the world. The Freedom Writers’ New York Times Bestselling book, The Freedom Writers Diary, was adapted into the 2007 feature film Freedom Writers, starring Hilary Swank, and they were the subjects of the 2019 PBS documentary, Freedom Writers: Stories from the Heart. While the Foundation usually runs large-scale in-person events for the schools and educators in their network, they have started to create free virtual online curriculum for all educators as a response to the COVID-19 crisis. The idea for Erin’s StoryFile originated with the desire to create something for teachers to engage with students virtually, or for students and parents to interact with and learn from. Erin’s StoryFile is available on the StoryFile App, now available on the Apple App Store, and online through a web link.

StoryFile CEO and Co-Founder Heather Maio-Smith expressed her excitement to release Erin’s StoryFile to the world. “We wanted to connect one of America’s most beloved educators with the community – locally and internationally – to provide her perspective on online education, how to deal with virtual learning, and how to help children cope with anxiety surrounding the pandemic. We are extremely proud of this StoryFile – from a content and quality perspective – as we remotely interviewed and recorded her.” She continued, “ Even in this time of physical distancing, connecting with others through natural and intimate conversation does not need to stop. StoryFile provides an opportunity to create real connections and preserve stories and legacies for all time. We are looking forward to hearing the positive feedback from Erin’s StoryFile!”

StoryFile’s advanced technology is important, innovative, and extremely timely. The ability and opportunity for human emotional connection has never been as great, as people around the world are striving for connections, conversations, education, and ways to unite. Everyone has a story to tell. StoryFile’s commitment to reimagining storytelling and giving a platform for these stories and experiences is at the core of their work, and will continue to create community among us and strengthen us as a whole.

About StoryFile:

StoryFile is changing the way people interact and communicate with each other and the world through user-led, voice-activated video that leverages AI to enhance engagement. StoryFile provides a platform for intimate and interactive natural conversation, which allows individuals (through direct participation) to preserve, share, and consume stories and experiences through a proprietary and innovative legacy capture system. StoryFile is reimagining storytelling by preserving memories in a meaningful way that empowers the storyteller and you.

Additionally, StoryFile is creating an archive of front-line responders, health care professionals, and others involved with the global COVID-19 pandemic to share their stories and experiences. These stories will be a resource for the global community in the future.

For more information, visit [www.storyfile.com](http://www.storyfile.com).

About the Freedom Writers Foundation:

The Freedom Writers journey began in 1994 when Erin Gruwell taught English to 150 at-risk students in Long Beach, CA. With the use of Gruwell’s engaging teaching techniques, 100% of her students, affectionately known as the Freedom Writers, graduated from high school, became co-authors of the New York Times bestselling book, The Freedom Writers Diary, and exceeded expectations by pursuing higher education and advanced degrees. In order to replicate the success she had with her students, Gruwell founded the Freedom Writers Foundation.

For more information, visit [www.freedomwritersfoundation.com](http://www.freedomwritersfoundation.com).

For interview or media requests, contact Alana@storyfile.com.

###