



January 28, 2026

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"We are all storytellers. We all live in a network of stories. There isn't a stronger connection between people than storytelling."

- Jimmy Niel Smith, Past President Emetrius of the International Storyteller Center

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Happy New Year - Welcome to the January 2026 edition of the [NOW Innovation Forum Newsletter](#). We are excited to share opportunities and resources with you this month. In this edition you're invited to:

- Read about our featured partner, Monica Koller with Connecting Community of Bellingham, WA
- Save the Date for the first session of the 2026 NOW Webinar Series
- Explore the featured resource, *Dragon Fruit Oral History Project*
- Learn about the *Sankofa Infant Mental Health History Project* from the Indigo Cultural Center
- Support Our Campaign, *Give Where Leaders Grow*

Thank you for your commitment to children, families, and communities and for joining us as we journey through another year together.

Bienvenido a la edición de Enero de 2026 del [Boletín Informativo del NOW Innovation Forum](#) (Foro de Innovación NOW). Nos complace compartir oportunidades y recursos con usted este mes. En esta edición está invitado a:

- Leer acerca de nuestra socia destacada, Monica Koller con Connecting Community (Conectando la Comunidad) de Bellingham, WA
- Reservar la Fecha para la primera sesión de la Serie de Talleres Virtuales de NOW del 2026
- Explorar el recurso destacado, *Proyecto de Historia Oral de la Pitahaya*
- Aprender sobre el *Proyecto de Historia de la Salud Mental Infantil de Sankofa* del Centro Cultural Índigo
- Apoyar Nuestra Campaña, *Donar Donde Crecen los Líderes*

Gracias por su compromiso a los niños, las familias, y las comunidades, y por acompañarnos en nuestro recorrido ante otro año juntos.

Member Spotlight: Monica Koller, Connecting Community

*We are excited to highlight long-time NOW Learning Community partner Monica Koller, who serves as Owner & Storyologist of [Connecting Community](#) in Bellingham, WA. Monica, in partnership with the Bellingham Public Library, recently hosted the **Listen Deeply: Community Voices Film Fest** featuring 15 stories from local storytellers. Through the event recording you can witness the incredible stories, and hear the testimonies of storytellers in a post story sharing panel discussion about the importance and impact of community storytelling.*

"Storytelling is a means for healing, of connection and transformation...the act of telling, and the act of listening, deeply...opens pathways toward empathy and understanding." -Bethany, with the Bellingham Public Library

As Monica shares, this is an important time for us to show up for healing, connection and community. Deep thanks to Monica, the storytellers, and the Bellingham Community for sharing this impactful work of cultivating belonging through telling and listening to one another's stories.

Network Highlights

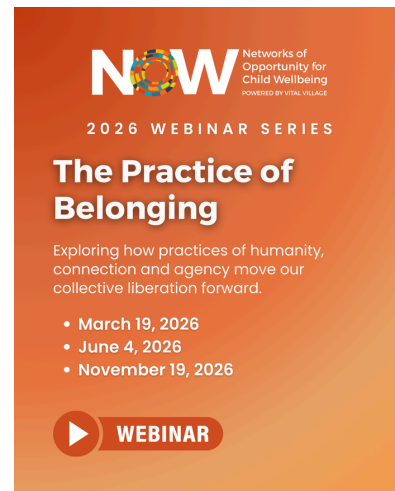
2026 NOW Webinar Series: Save the Date

We invite you to save the date for this year's 2026 NOW Webinar Series, **The Practice of Belonging!** We'll be joined by local leaders to explore how practices of humanity, connection and agency move our collective liberation forward. Please save the dates for this year's events:

- March 19, 2026
- June 4, 2026
- November 19, 2026

We are looking forward to learning with you this year.

Stay Tuned Here



Featured Resource: Dragon Fruit Oral History Project



Starting in 2007 as a Historical Preservation Project, the *Dragon Fruit Project* has grown into a community wide initiative that aims to preserve and uplift transgender and queer Asian and Pacific Islander history and organizing in the Bay Area through community storytelling. "This living archive not only preserves our stories, but builds a stronger kinship to each other, our past, and our future." Learn more about the oral history project, the podcast, and access the project zines at the digital Dragon Fruit Museum.

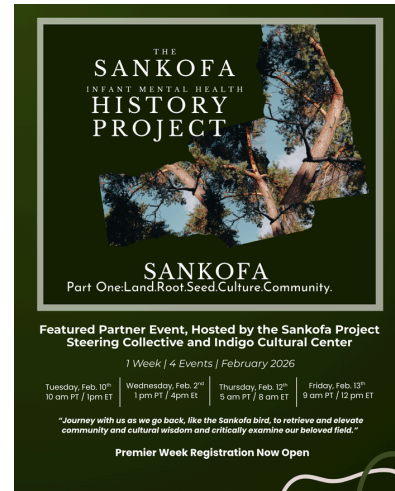
Access the Resource Here

Featured Partner Event: The Sankofa Infant Mental Health History Project

The first film of the Sankofa Project debuts in a 4-day Premiere Week celebration, February 10th -13th, hosted by the [Indigo Cultural Center](#)!

The [Sankofa Infant Mental Health History Project](#)™ is a multi-year effort focused on retrieving the healing and relational wisdom from our pasts, cultures, and communities and telling a fuller history of Infant Mental Health (IMH) – including the contributions of professionals and communities of color and the role of power and privilege in the field's development.

This project is a love letter to our field, co-created by the Sankofa Project Steering Collective and Indigo Cultural Center.



[Register Here](#)

Support Our Campaign: Give Where Leaders Grow



At Vital Village Networks, we recognize that it takes a village to nurture leaders **from the community, for the community**. Together, we have been dedicated to investing in networks and cross-sector partnerships that center the leadership of caregivers and families, and create collaborative tools, processes, and conditions that promote child, family, and community well-being.

We need you, our village, to support our work and help create lasting change together. Please consider making a gift today to support Vital Village Networks and invest in the wisdom, innovative strategies, and power of grassroots leadership that is **#VillageMade**.

[Give Today](#)

The NOW community hopes to stay connected and lift up the work and stories of all of our members. Follow and tag us so that we can virtually highlight the community-led transformation you are leading

#VillageInMind



www.networksofopportunity.org 

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