

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Planet Word and Award-Winning Correspondent Emily Hanford Partner for Public Dialogues Exploring Literacy and Literacy Instruction as Part of a New, Two-Year Museum Residency

WASHINGTON — [Planet Word](#), the museum of language, announces that **Emily Hanford**, the acclaimed host of the influential podcast “Sold a Story: How Teaching Kids to Read Went So Wrong,” will serve as its first **Journalist-in-Residence**. Through this new initiative, Hanford and Planet Word will curate dynamic public dialogues that address low literacy in America, a problem that [impacts approximately 1 in 3 children](#) and [influences every aspect of American life](#).

“As a journalist covering education, I’ve seen firsthand how a lack of literacy holds many children back. But I’ve also witnessed the power of individuals and institutions working together to create meaningful change. That’s why I’m thrilled to partner with Planet Word,” said Hanford, whose work has been credited with [spurring policy change in 15 states](#). “Together, we can help more educators, parents and policymakers understand the science behind how kids learn to read, equipping them with the knowledge necessary to ensure all kids become skilled readers.”

“Emily’s groundbreaking reporting on the state of literacy instruction proves that words have the power to spark change,” said **Planet Word Founder and CEO Ann Friedman**. “With this residency, Planet Word and Emily are working together to ignite new conversations and promote the goal of literacy for all.”

As Journalist-in-Residence, Hanford will curate and moderate conversations with prominent figures in literacy science, policy, pedagogy and more. These public dialogues are the cornerstone of the residency, designed to foster informed discussions and highlight evidence-based solutions to low literacy. The two-year residency comprises three live events annually, each ticketed and open to the public. Events will be recorded for future distribution.

Hanford’s residency begins **Saturday, April 27**, with a conversation featuring French neuroscientist [Stanislas Dehaene](#), one of the world’s foremost experts on the neuroscience of learning and the author of more than 100 scientific [publications and books](#), including *Reading in the Brain*. *Event details and ticket information are below and [online HERE](#).*

“Any conversation about reading must start from a place of evidence, which is why I invited Dr. Dehaene to open this residency with Planet Word,” explained Hanford. “His extraordinary research clarifies the high stakes of literacy and illiteracy and provides an evidence-based roadmap that can set the stage for future conversations with educators, policymakers and others.”

In addition to her curatorial role, Hanford will advise Planet Word on literacy-related topics and programs, including projects at the nexus of civics and literacy. She will also continue as senior correspondent and producer at APM Reports, the national documentary and investigative journalism team at American Public Media.

(more)

The Journalist-in-Residence initiative builds upon Planet Word's mission to inspire a love of language and reading, which includes a major programming stream dedicated to topics of literacy. In the past year, the museum introduced "[Eyes on Reading](#)," a series delving into the science of reading, and "Meet the Researcher," a collaboration with The Reading League's Washington, D.C., chapter, facilitating dialogue between literacy scholars and educators. In the Fall of 2023, Planet Word debuted "[Inside Look: Dyslexia](#)," an interactive touchscreen display that sheds light on the science and lived experiences of individuals with dyslexia.

"Advancing literacy in America is so important: Reading is a civil right and a bedrock of democracy," said Friedman. "We look forward to Emily leading us through essential dialogues about shaping a world where every child can thrive as a joyful, skilled reader."

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Planet Word's Journalist-in-Residence Program is made possible thanks to support from the [Ibis Group](#).

Emily Hanford is a senior correspondent and producer at APM Reports and host of the transformative podcast "[Sold a Story: How Teaching Kids to Read Went So Wrong](#)." Emily's work has won some of the highest honors in journalism, including two duPont-Columbia Awards, an Edward R. Murrow Award, an IRE Award, the Scripps Howard Impact Award, the Third Coast Impact Award, the EWA Public Service Award and a Peabody nomination. She has covered education for American Public Media since 2008 and is best known for her [groundbreaking reporting](#) on how children learn to read. In 2017, she won the American Educational Research Association's award for Excellence in Reporting on Education Research. Emily has been working in public media for more than 30 years. She is a frequent speaker and moderator and serves as the journalist-in-residence at [Planet Word](#), the museum of words and language in Washington, D.C. Emily is the mother of two adult sons. She lives in Maryland and is a graduate of Amherst College.

Planet Word is the only museum in the country dedicated to renewing and inspiring a love of words and language. Located in the historic Franklin School on the corner of 13th and K Streets in downtown D.C., Planet Word opened in 2020 as a new kind of interactive and self-guided museum. Using the museum's state-of-the-art technology, visitors determine their experience through their own words and choices. Planet Word is a bold and imaginative response to the life-long importance of literacy and to the challenge of growing a love of language. As a private, non-governmental museum, Planet Word is free for visitors and supported primarily by the generosity of donors.

[Eyes on Reading: Stanislas Dehaene with Emily Hanford](#)

Saturday, April 27 at 10 a.m.
Planet Word, 925 13th Street, NW

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased online at www.planetwordmuseum.org. Space is limited and advanced purchase is strongly encouraged.

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