

RELAY





Relay Basics

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Introduction:

Relay of Voices: The Great River Run is an applied arts research project aiming to

- build a culture of listening around the communities along the Mississippi River, the cultural ecological thread that runs through the country,
- use new methods in the field of dance that take on art as an applied methodology for use in real life situations, deepening the understanding of the environment around the river and its human dimension,
- bring this research data into conversation with fieldwork from applied research fields such as anthropology, ecology and social geography that are currently at work along the River, &
- use physical activity to amplify health and wellness effects on the whole body, with researchers and residents running downriver, traveling a collective 2,300 miles on foot.

Relay is the product of over eighteen months of research and development by Artistic Director Victoria Bradford and her team. Victoria has been awarded foundational support for the project by the Chicago Dancemakers Forum (\$15,000), the Bradford Family Foundation (\$15,000), 3Arts (\$1,666) and donors to 3AP (\$3,333) (3Arts Projects), as well as other individual donations. Relay is pursuing additional flagship funding from national, regional and local sources as well as launching a 10-state “virtual race” series to raise additional funds and promote involvement from constituents along the river route.



Get Involved

Partner with Relay

INVEST IN THE HUMAN REALITY OF THE
GREAT RIVER THAT CONNECTS AND DIVIDES US

Relay would like to invite you to become a Community Partner and support the community events we will create along the Great River in 2019, as well as the ongoing research we are undertaking through preparation and execution of this expedition. There are several benefits to partnering with our activities:

Contribute to a collective effort to build greater understanding and strengthened communities along the regions of the Mississippi River—a vital corridor of our United States in cultural, environmental, and economic legacies. Relay this message further through a presentation to the 2020 MRCTI Mayor's Conference.

Link yourself or your organization with the well being and lifelong fitness associated with a practice of running, walking, and dancing. By putting running and dancing, sport and art, side by side, Relay is embracing the evidence that movement of all kinds is a whole body benefit to individuals and communities.

Be involved in a growing body of research, integrating new methods in choreography focused on listening with the body with fieldwork from anthropology, ecology, and social geography through partnerships with the Water Institute of the Gulf and the Center for River Studies in Baton Rouge, LA. Relay is working to set up research convenings along the route with individual researchers from various fields. Data gathered will be coded with community feedback before being connected to new and ongoing real world applications.



The Vision

A Day in the Life of Relay

In Summer/Fall of 2019, six women and men will begin a 100-day journey on foot from the Headwaters to the Mouth of the Mississippi River.

Our vision for Relay is contingent on each community's involvement and invitation.

Below are starting points for envisioning the ideal engagement between Relay and your community:

SCENARIO 1: We'll arrive in your community around 3 o'clock in the afternoon and invite local contacts to gather or host an event in a public park or open space to welcome us. We will invite those gathered to join us in our final laps, walking and running. Together we will keep moving as we "listen" to the voices from our previous destination along the route.

SCENARIO 2: With the help of our local contacts, we'll connect with specific, individual residents in each community whose voices can connect us to the River. We are looking to spend a few hours with them, watching and witnessing their everyday lives through "movement interviews."

SCENARIO 3: Each community will send us off to our next destination with a collective energy. At our "morning movement," your community can come warm up with us around 7 o'clock as we process the stories gathered the day before from their citizens. Then we'll invite you to join us as we walk, jog, and run further downriver.

BONUS: Some communities may invite us for an extended stay, or perhaps a late night, where we will create a performance that relays the many stories from communities upriver of your own. In collaboration with local partners, we'll create an event that connects your arts community with our new body of research, similar to work we are creating for the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.



The Expanded View

How You Can Make Relay Your Own

Use Relay as a platform to present your community and your causes to a broader audience. Join forces with us and our voices will reach farther:

SOCIAL MEDIA: Through social media we will be putting a spotlight on each community we stop in and run through letting the whole country see the frontier spirit of the communities that call the Mighty Mississippi home. See *The Details* for our full Social Media Strategy.

INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS: We invite you to run or walk in this relay connecting with others down the River OR sponsor a person who does participate! Read more in *The Details*.

COMMUNITY CAUSES: Partner with your community and offer a platform to run with us for a cause or charity of your choice to benefit your local community. Emphasizing how movement/exercise through running, walking, and dancing will strengthen your community's well-being and mental outlook. Read more in *The Details*.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER CITIES AND TOWNS INITIATIVE (MRCTI): Relay has been invited to run another leg of its journey to the MRCTI Conference in September 2020 located in Bemidji, MN. Here, 124 main stem river cities will gather with representation by mayors and civic government leaders working toward "protecting and restoring the Mississippi River as a natural system that can support human culture and economies, as well as the River's unique ecosystem and wildlife." At the 2020 Conference, Relay will share your voices, the collective, unjudged, human story of the River through a culminating exhibition including film, visual displays and performance. We invite you to not only help shape this finished product but participate in how it comes to life in your own communities.



Community Partnership

Seeking Your Ideas and Support

The Advance Party will be visiting each community in April/May of 2018, seeking:

- Time to meet and have a conversation
- Brainstorming participation, helping us shape Relay to respond and adapt to your community
- A platform to help build engagement—some ideas: Direct Contacts, Social Media, Collaborative Programming, etc.
- Practical and logistical support, for example...
 - Shape and strengthen our research—connect us with specific, individual citizens whose voices can connect us with the River
 - Help us locate/secure space to launch our morning movement before we run to the next town
 - Share local rules, permits, and policies for public events and arts/social programming
 - Connect us with groups and individuals who might be willing to volunteer on the ground, including running support (aid stations) and technical support at public events



The Places 100 Communities*

*LOCATIONS TENTATIVE, TBC SUMMER 2018

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Lake Itasca, MN | 26 Harpers Ferry, IA |
| 2 Bemidji, MN | 27 Clayton/Guttenberg, IA |
| 3 Cass Lake, MN | 28 North Buena Vista, IA |
| 4 Bena, MN | 29 Dubuque, IA |
| 5 Deer River, MN | 30 Bellvue, IA |
| 6 Grand Rapids, MN | 31 Sabula, IA |
| 7 Jacobson, MN | 32 Clinton, IA |
| 8 Palisade, MN | 33 Port Byron, IL |
| 9 Aitkin, MN | 34 Quad Cities, IL/IA |
| 10 Crosby, MN | 35 Muscatine, IA |
| 11 Brainerd, MN | 36 Oakville, IA |
| 12 Little Falls, MN | 37 Burlington, IA |
| 13 Rice, MN | 38 Nauvoo, IL |
| 14 St. Cloud, MN | 39 Warsaw, IL |
| 15 Monticello, MN | 40 Quincy, IL |
| 16 Elk River, MN | 41 Hannibal, MO |
| 17 Minneapolis, MN | 42 Ashburn, MO |
| 18 St. Paul, MN | 43 Clarksville, MO |
| 19 Prescott, WI | 44 Winfield, MO |
| 20 Bay City, WI | 45 St. Charles, MO |
| 21 Nelson, WI | 46 St. Louis, MO |
| 22 Fountain City, WI | 47 Arnold, MO |
| 23 Trempealeau, WI | 48 Festus, MO |
| 24 La Crosse, WI | 49 Ste Genevieve, MO |
| 25 New Albin, IA | 50 Chester, IL |



The Places 100 Communities*

*LOCATIONS TENTATIVE, TBC SUMMER 2018

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 51 Neunert, IL | 76 Lake Providence, LA |
| 52 Wolf Lake, IL | 77 Tallulah, LA |
| 53 Tamms, IL | 78 Vicksburg, MS |
| 54 Cairo, IL | 79 Rocky Springs, MS |
| 55 Columbus, KY | 80 Port Gibson, MS |
| 56 Hickman, KY | 81 Fayette, MS |
| 57 Tiptonville, TN | 82 Church Hill, MS |
| 58 Ridgely, TN | 83 Natchez, MS |
| 59 Hales Point, TN | 84 Deer Park, LA |
| 60 Cherry, TN | 85 Black Hawk, LA |
| 61 Garland, TN | 86 Innis, LA |
| 62 Quito, TN | 87 New Roads, LA |
| 63 Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park, TN | 88 North Baton Rouge, LA |
| 64 Memphis, TN | 89 South Baton Rouge, LA |
| 65 West Memphis, AR | 90 Plaquemine, LA |
| 66 Anthonyville, AR | 91 Darrow, LA |
| 67 Hughes, AR | 92 Gramercy, LA |
| 68 Marianna, AR | 93 Reserve, LA |
| 69 Helena-West Helena, AR | 94 Kenner, LA |
| 70 Clarksdale, MS | 95 New Orleans, LA |
| 71 Deeson, MS | 96 St. Bernard State Park, LA |
| 72 Rosedale, MS | 97 Myrtle Grove, LA |
| 73 Scott, MS | 98 West Pointe a La Hache, LA |
| 74 Greenville, MS | 99 Buras, LA |
| 75 Eudora, AR | 100 The Mouth of the River, LA |



Background

Mission | History | Activities

Project Name: Relay of Voices: The Great River Run
Website: relayofvoices.com / thegreatriverrun.com
Parent Organization: A House Unbuilt
Website: ahouseunbuilt.com
Date Formed: 2012
Location: Chicago, IL / Lake Charles, LA

Mission: A House Unbuilt (AHU) uses movement and the body to engage and investigate the social fabric of rooted communities. Drawing on vocabulary from dance, sport, regiment, and everyday life, A House Unbuilt seeks to un-build the learned architecture of the body to reveal the insights and knowledge housed only there.

A House Unbuilt has two fundamental goals. The first is to operate as a movement laboratory to explore and effect incremental change in performers and audience alike. The second is to serve as an archive of public movement in past projects that can be openly accessed, explored and creatively utilized. A House Unbuilt aims to produce work resulting in a cumulative movement of community and culture.

A House Unbuilt defines dance as any action or instruction setting body and mind together at work. Whether in the form of running or gesturing, dancing is about the idea that making or doing is thinking. Our bodies as an immediate physical presence have the power to intervene in systems much larger than themselves and to bring the incomprehensible paradoxes of our times to a human scale.



(background, cont.):

Company: A HOUSE UNBUILT IS ORGANIZED FOR CHARITABLE AND EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES UNDER SECTION 501(C)(3) OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE, OR CORRESPONDING SECTION OF ANY FUTURE FEDERAL TAX CODE.

Upcoming Workshops & Performances:

Relay Testing at the Chicago Artists Coalition, Chicago, IL
(June 1, 2018) - collaboration with resident “Bolt” artist Brent Fogt to create performance and installation to test Relay movement methodologies.

Great River Run Virtual Race Series
(July 2018 Launch) - platform for connecting with the running community via virtual 5K series featuring the 10 States of the Mississippi River

Relay Testing at the Museum of Contemporary Art Performance, Chicago, IL
(Aug 24-25, 2018) - two-day performance focused on public participation and collective movement, in conjunction with five other 2017 Chicago Dancemakers Lab Artists.

Relay Testing at Hull House Museum, Chicago, IL
(September/October 2018) - Workshop and performance focused on one-on-one participatory performance research methods as well as use of the Hull House archive to study everyday movement vocabularies of the past.

Other Activities:

Outreach Tour, Mississippi River Trail, Minnesota to Louisiana
(Apr 27-May 31, 2018) - drive down the Mississippi River to gather community connections in order to create greater community participation. Also mapping the Mississippi River Trail for foot travel while on the road.

(background, cont.):

- Other Activities:** **Participation at nationwide running and multisport races.**
(Spring-Winter 2018) - Races include The Louisiana Half Marathon in Baton Rouge, LA; The Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle, The Chicago Triathlon and the Chicago Half Marathon in Chicago, IL; the Grandad Half Marathon Relay in LaCrosse, WI; the Run-4-Troops Marathon Relay in Dubuque, IA; and the Get-in-Gear Half Marathon in Minneapolis, MN
- Community involved group workouts**
- Weekly company meetings, rehearsals, and movement classes**
- Peer observation and review with local artists**
(ongoing)
- Current Partners** Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative
- & Supporters:** The Water Institute of the Gulf - Baton Rouge, LA
 Center for River Studies - Baton Rouge, LA
 Coastal Sustainability Lab - Baton Rouge, LA
 3Arts - Chicago, IL
 Chicago Dancemakers Forum - Chicago, IL
 High Concept Labs - Chicago, IL
- Current Community** Bemidji, MN; Grand Rapids, MN; Jacobson, MN; Brainerd, MN; Little Falls, MN;
Connections: Minneapolis, MN; St. Paul, MN; La Crosse, WI; Dubuque, IA; Quad Cities;
as of 3/30/18 Burlington, IA; Nauvoo, IA; Chester, IL; Southernmost Illinois; Ste. Genevieve, MO; Baton Rouge, La, and more to come!





Relay Details

SOCIAL MEDIA

RUN WITH US

COMMUNITY CAUSES

MOVEMENT INTERVIEWS

MORNING MOVEMENT

Social Media Strategy

#theriveriscalling

Current:

Instagram Focus

@relayofvoices account piggybacking @vebradford (established personal/artist account) with regular posts about development of the project.

Instagram posts push to @ahouseunbuilt Facebook Page (A House Unbuilt is the 501c3 organizing body of the Relay of Voices initiative)

Starting April 2018:

A Facebook Event will be created for the “Relay Advance Tour” — We will send out invites, share with constituent groups along the route, and update daily with posts and reflections from our visits to communities such as Grand Rapids.

We will also make a daily post to the @relayofvoices Instagram feed documenting our tour experience that day. We'll be using tags: #relayofvoices #theriveriscalling #mississippiriver #advancetour and geolocating in your town. We will also tag you or other individuals in a photo or video if we know the appropriate screen names. If there are other community-specific tags you would like us to use, let us know and we'll try to incorporate them!

These daily Instagram posts will push to the general @ahouseunbuilt Facebook feed as well. We are considering changing the name of the Facebook account to @relayofvoices for simplicity and overall branding.

We will also post a weekly blog post on our website relayofvoices.com (<https://www.relayofvoices.com/travellog>) will recap and expand on daily social posts from the week prior



(social media, cont.):

and give lead in to what's upcoming for the week ahead. This will be posted to the "Relay Advance Tour" Facebook Event so all who have said they are "going" or "interested" will receive the updates actively.

Following the Advance Tour, will continue these weekly blogs based on steady weekly social media updates rooted in our ongoing preparations until the launch of the 2019 Relay.

For the 2019 Relay:

A similar system of daily social + weekly blog recapture will follow for Relay of Voices Instagram, Facebook and Website. Also, each individual Relay Team member will post daily with their personal testimony and experience of life along the Mississippi River, utilizing the same set of hashtags, amongst others.

We hope our partner communities will spread the word, just as you have offered. Possible ways to collaborate in social sharing:

- Host an introductory blog on your own website or platform (also follow up with subsequent blog posts once we are closing in on relay launch in 2019 as well as finally touching down in your community).
- Collaborate with us on a specific, shared social media campaign to promote participation and engagement in your community.
- Share and promote our "Relay Advance Tour" Facebook event with your Facebook communities.
- Make our weekly blog updates a part of your social posting program.
- Like, comment, and share our daily social posts on Instagram and Facebook.



Run with Us

Individual Participation

The Great River Ultra Endurance Run is a package designed for runners with a sense of adventure who want to take advantage of the great American outdoors to the very fullest. Participants are invited to run the entire 2,300 mile route along the Mississippi River Trail with the Relay of Voices team as a fully supported solo run. Each athlete will complete the route in 100 days, with scenic stopovers all along the great Mississippi River.

For \$4,700, this unique package includes personal support via bike and sag wagon, group lodging in the form of tent camping and hotel stays, shuttle service to and from starting/ending points along the route to evening lodging, turn-by-turn directions via app and physical map, prepared breakfast and either dinner (or meal per diem), and GPS tracking device so friends and family can follow along with your for the expedition.

Athletes will need to supply their own transportation to the run start in Lake Itsaca, MN (2 hours outside of Fargo, ND) and from Venice, LA (2 hours outside of New Orleans, LA), personal nutrition/hydration to use during the run, and multiple changes of clothing (including shoes and rain gear). Participants will also need to provide proof of insurance valid for the duration of the run.

Come experience this voyage with us and participate with America in one of the most unique way imaginable.



Community Causes

Run for the Charity of Your Choice

Partner with your community and offer a platform to run with us for a cause or charity of your choice to benefit your local community. Create a local run or race event that emphasizes how movement and exercise through running, walking, and dancing will strengthen your community's well-being and mental outlook.

More information coming soon!



Movement Interviews

Listening with Our Bodies

THE INTERVIEW: Whether you sign up in advance or we bump into you on the sidewalk, the Relay Team will ask your permission to spend anywhere from 30 minutes to three hours with you. “You” can be an individual or a small group, and the time you share with us should not be a huge deviation from the time you would normally spend and the things you would normally do during that time. We don’t want to extract you from your day and talk to you in isolation, rather we want to engage with you in your everyday life, to observe, to witness, and to document how you move through your life.

A movement interview is much like a regular interview, in that one person asks another person if they can spend some time with them, maybe asks some questions, makes some observations, notes, possibly records the encounter. However, the “movement” aspect privileges the interviewers attunement to gestures, rhythms, behaviors, actions, routines, and rituals that become evident during the interview. Also, our practice of movement interviews is meant to focus more on following along in the interviewees everyday activities rather than taking them out into a staged environment for the questions and answers. The following someone in their day, the observation of their movements, these are in themselves a kind of questioning that can take precedence over verbal questions and answers. We believe what is witnessed in these residual spaces hold important truths about our human reality.



Morning Movement

Relay of Voices

Each morning the Team will rise and invite the community to gather with them in a public space—a field, a park, a parking lot. The goal of this morning invitation is to begin the day's relay—a relay is a device or a process that transmits or passes information from one point to another. This Morning Movement takes shape as a relay of voices as well as a relay of bodies running toward the next town.

VOICES: After having gathered material from individuals in your community the night before, the Relay Team will now process and transmit what was heard, what was witnessed, through their bodies. Using a process of repetition and entropy, the Team will move through and develop a movement vocabulary from each interview. This process often involves participation or feedback from viewers to help clarify vital components of the lives of the Mississippi River. Through this deep, investigative work into the human reality along the River, the Relay Team will be able to share and invite collective participation in the story of the Mississippi River today.

BODIES: After an hour of warming up with this Relay of Voices, the Team will begin the first leg of the day's relay run to the next town. Those assembled from the community are invited to run or walk with the Team to the relay point approximately 5-7 miles away. Circle back from there to your hometown, or run even further!

Contact Us: **Victoria Bradford**, Director - victoria@ahouseunbuilt.com
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