



During the 2014-15 school year students at Grisham Middle School in Austin, Texas, created audio stories to document a wide range of community traditions, such as Norwegian and German family recipes in the U.S., the lives of community musicians and poets, and artisan soap making. Their English Language Arts teacher Jennie Tidwell attended Texas Folklife’s 2014 Stories from Deep in the Heart Summer Institute, [[texasfolklife.org/event/ssi2015](http://texasfolklife.org/event/ssi2015)] a five-day workshop for Austin-area teachers to learn how to make audio documentaries with professional producers, journalists, and cultural workers. Texas Folklife encourages teachers who complete the summer institute to implement the indepth version of our program in their classroom the following school year.

Tidwell’s students worked with Stories from Deep in the Heart Project Director Marcelo Teson and audio producers throughout the multi-week program to craft audio stories related to themes of folklife and local traditions. To prepare, students considered personal experiences, cultural traditions, and their connections to Grisham Middle School and Texas. They developed proposed story topics and pitched them to the Stories from Deep in the Heart team, who accepted the proposals or offered feedback to improve concepts.

Groups of three to five students organized around each topic and set out to interview community members, record and transcribe audio footage, script and edit the documentary using Audacity audio editing software, and produce a cohesive, polished audio documentary. Students learned the importance of teamwork and to appreciate the unique traditions found in their own families and community. They presented their audio documentaries to their peers and families at a Grisham Middle School public Listening Party event in February. Texas Folklife makes finished stories produced by youth and teachers available for public radio stations to license via Public Radio Exchange. One story from Grisham Middle School, “Reptiles in the House,” was recently picked up by the nationally syndicated program PRX Remix.

Hear the stories at <http://texasfolklife.org/article/grisham-middle-school-2014-2015-finished-audio-pieces>  
 Stories from Deep in the Heart on PRX [http://www.prx.org/group\\_accounts/118054-storiesfromdeep](http://www.prx.org/group_accounts/118054-storiesfromdeep)  
 Texas Folklife on SoundCloud <https://soundcloud.com/texasfolklife>



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