



Silk Road Rising is one of a handful of organizations designated as a **"2018 Top-Rated Great Nonprofit."**

This designation is earned through our supporters publicly sharing stories about the value of our work in their own lives and importance

of Silk Road Rising's impact in Chicago's arts ecology.

[You can read all the stories HERE.](#) In today's e-newsletter, we are excited to share Ryan's story with you.



## ***"Stories Create our Identities"***

### **Ryan's Story**

Silk Road Rising Patron Since 2005

#### **HEARING ONE'S STORY IS LIFE CHANGING**

Silk Road Rising tells stories. People sometimes think stories are entertainment; but, if they think about it, they realize that **stories create our identities.**



My family are Arab-Americans.

**For most of my life, I never heard anyone outside my family circle tell stories about Arabs or Arab-Americans.**

After 9/11 there were a lot of stories, but they were pretty much all

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**Silk Road Rising filled that gap for me** and for many others whose ethnic heritage comes from the Silk Road countries.

**Hearing one's stories is life changing. It teaches me that my personal history and identity matter, that I am part of something bigger than myself, and that everyone in the community has a story.**

We all grow when we share those stories.

Even more important in these times, I think, is the fact that **Silk Road Rising is about showing what we have in common and showing that even where we are different, we are not separated by our differences but enriched by them.**

Through its EPIC program in the city's schools, **Silk Road Rising is moving this experience of empathy into the coming generation**, ensuring that they will have a head start on creating a vibrant, integrated, and diverse community for the future.

*Ryan LaHurd is Chair of the Silk Road Rising Board of Directors. We are honored to be led by Ryan and other volunteers who willingly give their time and treasure to advance our mission: to shape conversation about American identities and pluralism.*

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