

## Communities for Immunity: Stories about COVID The Peale, Baltimore | 2022

**Mama Linda Goss (00:07):** My soul is singing. Well, oh, well, well. It's storytelling time. (Bells shaking) Gather around my people. Well, well. Gather around my people. Well, well. Gather around my people. Well, well, well, well, well.

**Mama Linda Goss (00:39):** It's storytelling time. Well, well. It's storytelling time. Well, well. It's storytelling time. Well, well, well, well, well, and indeed it's storytelling time.

**Mama Linda Goss (00:56):** So friends gather around and listen to the stories. Mmm. When spiders unite deep in the forest, an enclave of spiders lived in an idyllic paradise, bliss and blissfully bliss. Mm. Until one day a herd of elephants came strolling through Baba, big Baba elephant, big mama, elephants, little big baby elephants came bobbing and bouncing through the idyllic kingdom of spiders, which was idyllic no more. The elephant's weight made the ground shake. They blew their trumpet. They flapped their ears knocking over leaves. They swayed their hips from side to side, knocking the spiders homes, their webs far and wide. Now the elephants weren't trying to be destructive. This is who they were. They were elephants. And the biggest of the Baba elephant said, this looks like a nice place to rest and camp out for a day or two where you think big mama.

**Mama Linda Goss (02:45):** Oh yes. Big Baba. This will do well. We will be swell. Look at all this rich food we can eat here. Good, healthy grasses to eat. Ooh, we got coconuts, bananas and our favorite and they all shouted out. Jack fruit, Jack fruit. We got lots of Jack fruit to eat Jack fruit, Jack fruit. We got lots of Jack fruit. Ooh, Ooh. One of the baby elephants said, Hey mama, Hey Baba, what are those stringy things hanging down? Oh, it looks like some old vine said, Baba, don't worry about them. Yes, said big mama. We'll just tear them down and wash them out. And with their trucks, they washed the spiders homes away. They broke off tree branches and swept leaves from the forest floor so they could have a nice, smooth spot to rest in the shade. They dug into the earth for roots to eat. They ate bamboo shoots and shrubs and twigs, and they ate strips of bark from the trees. They ate bananas, coconuts act, Jack fruit, Jack fruit. We got it. Eat that Jack fruit. Needless to say the spiders were shocked. Stunned. Flabbergast, dismayed bewildered frightened in less than a few minutes. They had been displaced and their community was in disarray. The spiders hid in the crevices of trees, old logs rocks. The earth itself. Spider families had been separated. Mothers separated from children. Fathers separated from their families. They were in such disbelief. Oh my goodness.

**Mama Linda Goss (04:36):** A group of Baba spiders and mama spiders came together to discuss what to do. The elephants have intruded on our community. They have destroyed it. We must speak to them, but who will go and talk to them? How will we go and talk to them? A delegation of spiders volunteered that they would go and talk to the elephants. They strung a web on the elephant's leg, one of their legs and tried to talk to one of them. But they were just it'sy bitsy spiders. The elephants could not hear the it'sy bity spiders. The elephants could not see. They shattered Baba elephant, mama elephant. It was to no avail. The elephants didn't hear them. So the spiders went back to the other spiders. I know what to do. Said one of them, we need to amplify our voices. Let's get a large banana leaf, make it into a comb-like shape.

**Mama Linda Goss (05:44):** Hopefully they will be able to hear us. If we shout a little louder. Well, the spiders took a banana leaf, shaped it into a comb and they tried to address the elephants: Baba elephant, mama elephant. But they still could not be heard instead. A big baby elephant shouted out, Baba mama, a banana leaf is moving toward us. It's alive. It's alive. Oh, that's nonsense said mama elephant. And she swayed to leave away with her trunk. The spiders clung onto the leaf and crawled back into the crevices. In the meantime, the elephants played coconut ball. Oh, they played catch ball, dodge ball and coconut ball. Oh, they had had good time. We gotta eat that, Jack fruit. Hey, Hey, Hey (singing). They had walked many miles to find this spot. And so now they were tired after eating and playing and working to make this space theirs. So they realized it was time to just lay down and rest. And so finally they all went to sleep. Oh, thank goodness. Said Baba spider, they are sleeping. Yes. Said Mama spider peace at last. Well, that's what they thought until the elephants began to snore.

**Mama Linda Goss (07:25):** (Snoring sound). No, said the spiders, but you know what? We are not going to let that snoring bother us. We have work to do. We don't have time to sleep or rest. Yes, yes. To all agreed. And finally, after much discussion, they agreed on a plan, they would spin and weave a large strong, sticky web, something like a fishnet. And they would take this web and wrap it around the biggest Baba elephant. And when he pulls on it, it will become tighter. He won't be able to pull out of it. All the spiders agreed to participate. And so they used their silking threads and the work began spinning and weaving making the web strong, spinning and weaving working all night long, spinning and weaving, making the web strong, spinning and weaving working all night long. They laid webs and webs of threads on top of webs of thread. While big Baba slept, they covered him from toe to head. They laid webs of threads on top of webs of threads. And while big Baba slept, they covered him from toe to head. This was the largest thickest stickiest web the spiders had ever made. The spiders finished the large netted web just before dawn, just as the elephants were beginning to wake up. Whoa. Wow.

**Mama Linda Goss (09:11):** Baby elephant began shouting. Look, look at big Baba. What's happened to him. The other elephant stood up and looked at big barber. Big Baba tried to move. He tried to stand up. He tried, but he couldn't. The elephants came toward him, but he shouted at them. Stay back, stay back. Don't come near me. Run, run, go away from this place. Go to the river. I will try to catch with you later. Listen for my trumpet sound, but go, go mama, elephants. And the other big Baba elephants and the baby elephants moved away quickly. Leaving big Baba elephant behind. Big Baba still tried to move. Then he noticed a large curved up, but now coming toward him. Oh, no said Baba, what's going on? The leaf touched his ear. Oh, that tickled. He laughed. Hello, Barbara elephant. Can you hear us? Who is that? Talking to me?

**Mama Linda Goss (10:09):** It is us. We are delegation from the spider community. He rolled his eyes at and saw thousands upon thousands of spiders. He had seen them before, but he never really thought about them. Do you eat elephants? He asked them, oh no, don't worry, Baba. We're not going to hurt you. We just want to talk to you. We want you to know who we are. The spider delegation took turns, introducing themselves to big Baba, elephant, big Baba elephant. They said, this place, this space you and your families came to is our home. You destroyed our community. You frightened a, our families and our children. You destroyed our ancient artifacts. Our ancient webs. We have lived here for over 400 million years.

**Mama Linda Goss (11:12):** Big Baba elephant listened intently to Baba, spider and mama spider. As they recall the history of their species. Once the spiders finished big Baba elephant said, oh my what a great history. What a great culture you have. I had no idea this was yours. We meant no disrespect. Please

forgive me and my family at that moment, the spiders begin to untie and unwind the netted web. Once untied big Baba elephant sounded his trumpet. Let his family know that it was safe for them to return. When they came big barber elephant said, be careful, be careful where you walk, be careful where you stand. This is the home. This is the kingdom of spider. We must respect it. The elephants help the spiders rebuild their kingdom. And so it last, it was the community of spiders once again. The elephants and the spiders exchange remedies for aches and pains. The spiders realized that their webs blended in with nature Browns and green colors and their webs did look like vines. So it was possible that the elephant didn't really mean any harm. They were looking for a place to stay. So from then on their webs became transparent and translucent. So they could be seen. Their silken threads were still sticky and still stronger than steel. And as the saying goes, united spiders can wrap up an elephant.