



**THINK
LOCAL**

**NH NEWS PHILANTHROPY SUMMIT
MAY 12, 2022**

NH News Philanthropy Summit Summary

Full Event Recording: [NH News Philanthropy Summit](#)
[Link to Story about the event \(Please feel free to share/republish with attribution\)](#)

Opening Remarks

- **Laura Simoes, Executive Director, Nackey S. Loeb School of Communication, “Why Local News Partnerships Matter.” (0-0:7:00)**

Keynote Speaker

- **Lauren McKown, Senior Vice President for Development, Report for America, “All News is Local” (0:7:00-0:20:31)**

Lightning Talks:

Steve Leone, The Concord Monitor: “How One Door Opens Another: How to identify community need” (0:31:00-0:39:14)

Key Points:

- Engage with your readers. What are they interested in? What do they want to learn more about?
- Engage with stakeholders. Why is this important to them? What do they feel is missing?
- The importance of filling a community need. Based on this engagement, at the Monitor, we’ve identified four topics that will be supported by community-funded journalism – health, education, disparity and the environment.
- There are many approaches and it’s not a one-size fits all. Work with your local news organization. This approach can work in for-profit media. At NNE, we’re a family owned collection of local news publications. We’ve been with our communities through the thick and the thin. The money we have received has been 100 percent dedicated to paying for reporters that otherwise wouldn’t be reporting for the Monitor.

Mike Cote, Union Leader and NH Sunday News: “Story Seeks Solutions to State’s Challenges” (0:39:14-0:50:03)

Key Points:

- Reporters who have worked on these projects were able to devote their full-time energies to reporting on some of the most pressing issues in New Hampshire: workforce challenges, mental health and substance abuse, and issues of aging.
- Funders, which have included foundations, corporations and private individuals, have invested in high impact journalism that we would not be able to undertake otherwise.
- Through a solutions journalism lens, these projects have elevated the discussion of important topics and helped drive change. For example, a What’s Working story about Massachusetts taxing remote workers in New Hampshire sparked a battle that reached the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Raising the funding for these projects takes time and requires building relationships and trust, especially with funders who have never before granted money for journalism projects.
- Journalists who work on these projects become experts on their subject areas, leading to stories beyond when their official projects end.

Daniela Allee, NH Public Radio: “ ¿Qué Hay de Nuevo, New Hampshire? : How NHPR sought to reach a neglected audience when they needed them most.” (0:50:32- 0:58:16)

Key Points:

- Relationships are central to figuring out community needs and building something that is responsive to those and can find ways to grow with them
- Building relationships and a new audience takes time; moving at the speed of trust and rethinking what success looks like
- Taking risks -- on a project that was on a different platform with a community we hadn't spent much time or resources focusing on
- Who are you making news for? How do we think about information, access to it, and the importance that plays in people's day to day lives.

Terry Williams, The Keene Sentinel, "Journalism is key to healthy communities, literally." (0:58:16-1:05)

Key Points:

- There is a unity of purpose among donors, readers and local news organizations in making their communities more sustainable and better places to live.
- Tackling significant impediments to that sustainability or quality life takes more than superficial coverage of problems.
- But most small news operations can only cover these root issues in a superficial way. Capacity is needed; collaboration is needed; constant focus is needed; and solutions are required. When these align, when the resources to do that work are available, a community improves. But when months lapse between this work, momentum stops.
- Readers and donors can fill the gaps, provide the funding support necessary for this work and, in most cases, see impact.
- Communication among the news organization, the readers and donors is paramount and should take place in many ways - virtual, one-on-one and community settings.

Julie Hirshan Hart, The Laconia Daily Sun, "Building Community One Conversation at a Time." (1:05-1:08)

Key Points:

- Grant funding came with training for newsroom on solutions journalism
- Grant funding also came with intro to SJN
- SJN partnership branched into other aspects of our work, including civic discourse/letters to the editor/events

Johnny Bassett, Granite State News Collaborative Data: "Out of the silo and into the light: Collaborative aims to sleuth out hard to find data for public use and reporting." (1:09-1:18)

Key Points:

- Data is critical to many of the most important stories we now tell
- In short, data journalism provides context and detail in a way that anecdotal reporting cannot
- Many of the stories we all read every day are excellent just with traditional reporting
 - Examples: Stories about community events, hometown heroes, political intrigues, etc.
- But some stories – like the ones that shine a light on statewide issues – are fundamentally data driven.
- The problem is that in NH, this data is often difficult to find
- In response, we are quickly developing new data-driven reporting techniques, and we've already made some significant progress

Anna Berry, Founding Board member, Granite State News Collaborative: “Mother of Invention: How 20 NH news outlets innovated to create systemic change in local journalism” (1:19-1:24) [Transcript of Full Remarks](#)

Key Points:

- In March of 2020, just as our communities needed us most, it was also when our industry was hit the hardest. The first pandemic waves had a crushing impact on newsrooms across the state. But we wouldn't, we couldn't give up. Our communities needed us and we knew it.
- So we innovated; we came up with a new way of providing news to our communities, a way to do more with less without sacrificing quality.
- Within an hour of a small group of partners deciding to work together to cover the pandemic, we had all 20 media, community and educational partners in agreement and had stood up an infrastructure to share all partner stories relative to the pandemic and its impacts with each other for distribution.
- In addition to managing the coordinated coverage, the Collaborative as an organization put to work its team of investigative freelance reporters to fill coverage gaps by producing statewide, in-depth, solutions-focused stories, packages and series that all of our partners could distribute across any platform and out to their communities.
- The impacts of our efforts were almost immediate.
- We soon realized that rather than having a story live and die in just one corner of the state, through our network, it could live and grow legs potentially reaching more than 3.8 million people through print, online and broadcast.
- Together in just the first 10 months of the pandemic we shared more than 1700 stories with our readers, viewers and listeners that they otherwise wouldn't have had, of those, Collaborative freelancers produced more than 500.
- Together, we were able to start a digital public affairs show with NH PBS and help NHPR with the first ever Spanish news broadcast in New Hampshire. As the 2020 election came into view, we expanded our efforts and worked together to produce stories that would dispel misinformation and— just as important— provide Granite Staters with trusted information on the issues as well as the facts they needed to feel safe, secure and

confident in voting. We even coordinated to cover the election itself. Something that had never happened in New Hampshire before.

Panel Q&A

- Leah Todd-Lin, Solutions Journalism Network
- Karen Ager, Endowment for Health
- Katie Merrow, NH Charitable Foundation

Key Points:

- Funding local news advances engagement and understanding of all the issues that the organization cares about
- Coverage of an issue an organization cares about amplifies the issue and can act as a catalyst for the public and policy makers to take action
- Funding journalism is a high leverage investment
- Metrics for success doesn't have to include "solving the crisis" it can be measured in the number of stories produced, tracking changes in public conversation and/or policy among other tangible deliverables
- Don't be afraid to have a candid conversation with a local news leader about how a partnership or underwriting might work
- Research best practices of how existing local and national funders of journalism do it.
- Journalism is the antidote to the threats we're seeing to democracy and civic engagement

Further Reading and Resources:

- [Civic engagement declines when local newspapers shut down](#); *Studies show that areas with fewer local news outlets have lower levels of civic engagement, voter turnout and political accountability.*
- [The Decline of Local News and Its Effects: New Evidence from Longitudinal Data](#)
- [As Local News Goes, So Goes Citizen Engagement: Media, Knowledge, and Participation in US House Elections](#)
- [When local papers close, costs rise for local governments](#)

- [The Hidden Costs of Losing Your City's Newspaper](#)
- [Financing Dies in Darkness? The Impact of Newspaper Closures on Public Finance](#)
- [Trust in National versus local news Pew Research August 2021.](#)
- [For Local News, Americans Embrace Digital but Still Want Strong Community Connection](#)
- [22 Impact Examples to Watch For \(Page 13\)](#)