

Investing in Local Journalism, Public Media, and Storytelling

EXAMPLES FROM PLACE-BASED FOUNDATIONS



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Introduction

Place-based foundations have strong ties to their communities and strive to address the distinctive concerns of the people who live there. Major national media funding efforts responding to misleading, fake, or rampantly commercial media are not always of the highest practical interest or relevance, as important as they are. Rather, local and regional funders have a unique capacity to complement such national efforts by supporting the creation and discovery of media that reports and listens, engages local communities, and elevates local voices and culture. It is media carried out by people who live and work in these same communities.

This report offers short profiles of nine place-based foundations—including community foundations and independent and family foundations rooted in place—that have chosen to fund journalism, media, creative storytelling, and the related community engagement activities that inform and amplify these efforts.

Each of the selected grantmakers supports media in a different place and for different reasons. They share the belief that funding media can reinforce their grantmaking priorities and strategies, illuminate community life in new ways, and lift up the stories and voices of people who are less visible within mainstream and commercial media outlets.

The inspiration for this work comes from our own experience in media funding, detailed on pages 12 and 13. Over the past seven years, Wyncote Foundation has supported media projects in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania where we are based, as well as nationally in instances where we believe our support can result in field-wide learning. Through our ongoing conversations with journalists, media makers, policymakers, and leaders of media organizations, we see the impact of public interest media across our own community and in the broader society. Expanding this work in collaboration with other place-based grantmakers is both our intent and our passion.

In choosing the grantmakers to profile we looked to span geographies, types of foundations, and strategic intent. For the most part these are not among the most well-known media funders. We sought out place-based funders whose media initiatives relate directly to their community grantmaking strategies, are multi-faceted, and are shaped by place. Through call-outs to Wyncote Foundation grantees, inquiries to field leaders, and research support from Media Impact Funders, the national network of media grantmakers, the resulting nomination list could then be culled for a range of examples. Our goal is to show a variety of approaches to supporting media that place-based funders can access for ideas, information, and inspiration. We include contact information for each foundation and a list of resources for further exploration.

Local and regional media, journalism, and storytelling can enrich community life, build empathy, and strengthen democracy. We hope you find this report's examples compelling, and urge you to consider ways in which you might join in helping to grow a responsive and vital local and regional media ecosystem across our country.

David Haas

Vice Chair, Wyncote Foundation





Ensuring broadband access in rural communities

After leaving home penniless at age 12, Charles K. Blandin worked on farms, taught school, and managed weekly newspapers, eventually serving as publisher of the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*. The Saint Paul newspaper depended on a paper mill that harvested wood from the forested lands surrounding Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Blandin purchased the mill and led it to profitability. His career is evidence of his motto: *be progressive, try new things*.

In 1941 he established the C.K. Blandin Foundation, dedicated to the vitality of Itasca County and Minnesota's rural communities. Blandin is one of only a handful of private foundations in the U.S. that exclusively focuses on rural areas.

The foundation's measure for success is healthy, vibrant communities that work across differences and design and claim ambitious futures. Media plays a role in each of the foundation's three giving areas: commitment to home, investing in community leadership, and expanding opportunity.

Blandin regularly funds community and ethnic media in small communities in Minnesota and nonprofit journalism organizations like *MinnPost* and Minnesota Public Radio for coverage of rural stories and public affairs. As part of its community leadership investments, the foundation supports training for the Editors & Publishers Community Leadership Program of the Minnesota Newspaper Association, which encourages newspapers to recognize their role "to frame issues...and mobilize action."



*Broadband in use in a rural Minnesota classroom.
(Photo courtesy of Blandin Foundation)*

The foundation is also recognized for its longstanding advocacy for rural broadband access. Many communities across rural Minnesota lack the access that urban dwellers take for granted. Without the ability to buy and sell goods, connect to educational and civic resources, and create and distribute media content, rural communities are held back from full participation in the global economy and civic life.

“You probably won’t see us on a list of media funders,” says Allison Ahcan, director of communications, “but media investment, well placed, is a way to reach the outcomes we hope for in other ways.”

The foundation supports rural communities to “not only be ready with the wires and the technical

infrastructure but also be ready in terms of community leadership and understanding what the community needs and how it will benefit.” Blandin’s broadband grants support technical assistance, feasibility studies, and community vision-building, and have leveraged more than \$25 million in federal and state grants. “Access denied is opportunity denied,” Ahcan says. “We stand with communities wanting to remove this huge barrier.”

LINKS:

Foundation website: blandinfoundation.org

Broadband program: blandinfoundation.org/programs/expanding-opportunity/broadband

Broadband impact report: blandinfoundation.org/programs/expanding-opportunity/broadband/report-measuring-impact-broadband-5-rural-mn-communities

Blandin on Broadband blog: blandinonbroadband.org

FOUNDATION TYPE:

private, independent foundation

ASSETS:

\$417 million as of December 31, 2016

CONTACT:

Sonja Merrild, Director of Grants
smerrild@blandinfoundation.org



A sustained and creative approach to building New Jersey's news and information ecosystem

The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation was endowed in 1973 by the daughter of one of Standard Oil's founding partners. In its home state of New Jersey, the foundation supports nonprofit organizations and initiatives in the arts, education, the environment, poetry, and "informed communities."

Concerned by the elimination of state funding for public media, the stark cutback of coverage and staff at local newspapers, and the impact these forces and others were creating on civic engagement and democracy, in 2011 the foundation launched a new focus on funding media.

Dodge brought together local and national news leaders, funders, and academics to reimagine local news. This dialogue sparked the creation of the Center for Cooperative Media (CCM) at Montclair State University. Today CCM serves as a central hub for news and journalism research, training, and collaboration around the state. The center also develops reporting partnerships among news organizations to expand coverage, such as the recent *Voting Block* project that brought 30 news outlets together to report on the 2017 gubernatorial election through the lens of neighborhoods.

Dodge has learned the importance of building citizen engagement activities into news and information projects. "Projects like *Voting Block* include ways for people to organically engage," says Meghan Jambor, communications director and interim informed communities program officer.



Voting Block's election-themed game show, "NJ Electorama," at WFMU, Jersey City. (Photo by Cole Goins/Reveal)

“Through 30 potluck dinners, an election-themed game show, and crowd-sourced texting campaign, *Voting Block* demonstrated new ways journalists can report on issues by putting their communities at the center of their work and reaching new audiences.”

In another example, Dodge supports *Free Press News Voices Project*, which brings together journalists, community leaders, and residents in forums across the state to ask, "What do you hope journalism in your community could look like?" After the sale of state airwaves in the 2017 FCC spectrum auction, this initiative is building support to use a portion of the \$300 million in proceeds to create the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium that can support innovative local news projects.

"The future of this work is much broader than journalism," Jambor says. "There are many community assets such as libraries, local government, and nonprofit organizations that play a role in a community's news and information ecosystem." Jambor cites Dodge support of storytelling initiatives, civic tech projects, and new technology platforms that help newsrooms and others inform and interact with residents. "When we ask, where are the state's needs, we see access to information as a critical factor."

LINKS:

Foundation website: grdodge.org
Informed Communities program: grdodge.org/what-we-fund/informed-communities
Center for Cooperative Media: centerforcooperativemedia.org
Voting Block: votingblocknj.com
Free Press News Voices: newsvoices.org/new-jersey

FOUNDATION TYPE:

private, independent foundation

ASSETS:

\$274 million as of December 31, 2015

CONTACT:

Meghan Jambor, Communications Director
mjambor@grdodge.org



Expanding coverage of Louisiana's sinking coastline

Founded by community leaders in 1983, the Greater New Orleans Foundation (GNOF) serves 13 parishes in Southeast Louisiana. The coastline is a hallmark of the region, with 44 percent of residents living in coastal communities and New Orleans serving as the area's cultural and physical anchor. The foundation offers grants in multiple focus areas ranging from health and social services to arts and culture, LGBT issues, disaster recovery, and the environment, in addition to donor advised funds.

Environmental influences are rapidly reshaping the region. Louisiana's coastline is sinking and the sea level is rising. The shoreline is an attraction, but the concentration of population along the coast is also a challenge. The situation, deemed by geologists to be a worst case scenario, has led to the nation's first "climate refugees:" residents of Isle de Jean Charles.¹ The changes along the coast affect millions of GNOF constituents, some of whom live outside levee protection and are particularly at risk.

In response to rapid coastal transformation, GNOF sought to grow the reach of its environment program's educational efforts. In mid-2014, the foundation funded the creation of a coastal news desk for local public radio station WWNO to better inform constituents about developments already affecting the region. The foundation's support of the coastal desk has enabled expanded coverage of land loss, preservation, hurricane protection, the state's coastal master plan, and the imminent challenges facing communities in precarious zones.

Describing the success of this partnership, Carmen James, vice president of programs, emphasizes that the news media has become a critical partner in educating the community. Beyond informing, she recognizes public media's potential role in facilitating, having recently witnessed a journalist's ability to distill and highlight different perspectives during a foundation convening.

“In multiple ways, we see the media as an important connector as well as a vehicle for bringing issues to light,” James says.



WWNO Coastal Desk reporter Tegan Wendland on location in Plaquemines Parish, LA. (Photo by Jacques Hébert)

Beyond its environment initiative, GNOF partners with media outlets on disaster relief fund drives as well as the annual GiveNOLA fundraising campaign. Through these partnerships, GNOF encourages constituents to engage with and invest in Southeast Louisiana. James stresses the relationship between this media work and GNOF's role as a place-based foundation, explaining that, "A core part of our strategy is to educate the community about the environment in which we all live and call home."

1. Harvey, Chelsea. "Scientists say the rapid sinking of Louisiana's coast already counts as a 'worst case scenario.'" *The Washington Post*. June 15, 2017. Accessed December 22, 2017. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/06/15/scientists-say-the-rapid-sinking-of-louisianas-coast-already-counts-as-a-worst-case-scenario>

LINKS:

Foundation website: gnof.org

WWNO Coastal Desk: wwno.org/programs/coastal-desk

GiveNOLA: givenola.org

Washington Post Article on Louisiana Coast: tinyurl.com/y78bhokg

FOUNDATION TYPE:

community foundation

ASSETS:

\$324 million as of December 31, 2016

CONTACT:

Carmen James, Vice President of Programs
carmen@gnof.org



Using a solutions journalism approach to community engagement

LOR stands for livability, opportunity, and responsibility and represents both the values of the LOR Foundation's founders and their approach to building thriving communities in the Intermountain West. Working in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and New Mexico, the LOR Foundation strives to be a community-driven funder that "listens first, acts second."



Rocky Mountain Metals, featured in a Solutions Journalism Network story on community economic reinvention in Raton, NM. (Photo by Jane Phillips/Taos News)

When LOR polled communities to learn how residents were seeking out and consuming news and information, the results showed that Facebook was the number one news source in the region. Further, the poll showed that people were mainly reading about problems, not solutions, and that local communities often described themselves in terms that were problem- or deficit-based.

In researching ways to respond, LaMonte Guillory, LOR's executive leader and chief communications officer, reached out to the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN). They brainstormed about ways that small newsrooms across the region could collaborate to develop stories about solutions as opposed to problems.

A pilot first year had promising results. Twelve newsrooms participated and created a total of 50 stories. About the quantity of stories, "We were aggressive," says Guillory. "We really pushed the newsrooms for what we thought was possible." Journalists were reportedly skeptical, particularly because more time is required to produce solutions-focused stories. But the stories won awards, were widely distributed and discussed across the region, and have continued to be shared and cited.

Asked about the community engagement process to establish the issues that the SJN collaborative would cover, Guillory said, "You ask, then listen. Sit down in a local coffee shop and talk to people, or invite a few people to breakfast. Then listen." Through this process, the newsrooms identified community concerns that were not previously covered, such as mental health, drug abuse, and citizen perspectives on the need to adapt to economic shifts. Stories about solutions could then be developed.

LOR now plans to launch the *Intermountain Newsroom Collaborative* to expand the SJN work by involving more small news outlets and increasing the number of people reached.

“What’s cool is that we’ve helped news enterprises realize the power of their storytelling,”

Guillory says. "It feeds their souls to do this work because they are also part of the community; they are members of the place. They, too, want to feel good and walk proud."

LINKS:

Foundation website: lorfoundation.org

Solutions Journalism Network: solutionsjournalism.org

Audit of news ecosystems in the Intermountain West:
dropbox.com/s/26t6xl9fzc84j26/Community-news-audit.pdf?dl=0

State of Change journalism project: hcn.org/topics/state-of-change

FOUNDATION TYPE:

family foundation

ASSETS:

\$330 million as of December 31, 2015

CONTACT:

LaMonte Guillory, Chief Communications Officer
lamonte@lorfoundation.org



Media organizations as vital members of the arts and culture ecosystem

James F. Miller built his career as an investment advisor in Oregon prior to moving to New York City. Near the end of his life he returned to Oregon and began his philanthropic work, establishing the James F. & Marion L. Miller Foundation in 2002. Although focused on education and the arts, the foundation was not established with a specific strategic mandate or perpetuity requirement. This openness has allowed a responsive approach and broad latitude to determine the foundation's strategies. One such development, notes Martha Richards, executive director, is that the foundation now sees that

“media is critical to a well-rounded place-based arts and culture portfolio.”

During its early years, the board noted troubling instability in the arts and culture sector in Portland. Established institutions launched successive campaigns, requesting urgent funds from Miller and others to fill funding gaps. Donors and foundations stepped in to shore up anchor organizations, but this pattern took a toll on the local arts and culture ecosystem, with small and mid-sized organizations facing strong headwinds as they worked toward their own growth and resilience.

The Miller Foundation provided funding and insights to help stabilize large institutions, thereby creating an opening for small and mid-sized organizations to successfully compete for individual donations and general support grants. The number and range of emerging organizations expanded and the foundation began to receive applications from organizations engaged in creative storytelling across a range of media. In response, the foundation broadened the scope of its arts program to encompass the breadth of creative expression, and began to support local media makers. Standing by its emphasis on a healthy arts ecosystem, the foundation sought to support organizations with solid business plans and began following the careers of emerging leaders.

One example of this approach is a three-year capacity building grant for Open Signal, a media arts center that grew out of local cable access television. Open Signal combines access to high quality production equipment and training with a commitment to uplifting marginalized and less heard voices. Through Open Signal, audiences don't just consume stories, they are invited to create their own. Richards notes that astute media organizations are tapping into a growing appetite to participate, thereby building engaged audiences and earning respected positions within their local arts and culture communities.



Open Signal instructor with adult students. (Photo courtesy of Open Signal)



Using media to change social norms

Rasmuson Foundation is Alaska's largest private grantmaker, funding education, arts and culture, leadership, housing, healthcare, and economic opportunity. Major initiatives range from support for individual artists to a rural dental health training program to capital funding for institutions and communities. The foundation's programs reflect the diverse interests and extensive involvement of the Rasmusons in Alaska. Elmer Rasmuson, a civic leader and advocate for Alaska statehood, left his personal fortune to charity, primarily to the family foundation established by his mother. Today, the foundation is led by the third and fourth generations of the family.

Within the wide-ranging scope of the foundation's work, alcohol overuse has arisen as a persistent challenge to wellbeing and prosperity. In addition to devastating individuals and families through injuries and premature deaths, excessive drinking also diminishes job productivity, inflates health care costs, and increases rates of juvenile delinquency, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, imprisonment, and divorce, resulting in a statewide economic impact of approximately \$1.2 billion annually.¹ Curbing this crisis requires both expanded access to treatment and nuanced prevention efforts.

Rasmuson Foundation has invested in a collaborative, media-focused strategy to increase awareness, shift narratives, and inform behaviors to create substantial and sustainable change.

Recover Alaska emerged from a Rasmuson convening of funders and stakeholders. Six partner organizations now run the initiative, each leading efforts based in their expertise. Diane Kaplan, Rasmuson president and CEO, describes the foundation's primary effort as "using media in different ways...to reset the social norms around



Sarah Davies in Day 001: Voices of Recovery video profile.
(Image courtesy of Recover Alaska)

what responsible use of alcohol looks like." Elements of this approach include traditional media, such as *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner's* series *Paths to Recovery: Solving Alaska's Alcohol Problem*, and the *Anchorage Daily News Alcohol & Me* series, which integrates video. *Recover Alaska* also uses new media: *Day 001: Voices of Recovery* is an online video documentary series featuring the recovery stories of a diverse group of Alaskans. *Be [You]* is a teen-focused campaign that frames sobriety as the norm for healthy youth.

This collaborative and creative approach has attracted support from national funders, including Doris Duke, Hearst, Knight, Robert Wood Johnson, and Annie E. Casey foundations. It has also informed how Rasmuson Foundation integrates media into its other initiatives. "It's become an element of everything," says Kaplan.

1. Cook, Jeff. "Time is Now to Address Alcohol Impacts." *Rasmuson Foundation*. July 13, 2015. Accessed January 9, 2018. <https://www.rasmuson.org/news/initiative-news/time-is-now-to-address-alcohol-impacts>

LINKS:

Foundation website: rasmuson.org
Recover Alaska: rasmuson.org/initiatives/recover-alaska
Day 001: day001.org
Paths to Recovery: newsminer.com/news/akrecovery
Be [You]: beyoualaska.com

FOUNDATION TYPE:

family foundation

ASSETS:

\$664 million as of December 31, 2016

CONTACT:

Diane Kaplan, President and CEO
president@rasmuson.org



Bolstering the local news ecosystem as a critical underpinning for civic engagement

The Charles H. Revson Foundation was formed in 1975 from the estate of Charles Revson, founder of Revlon, Inc. Beyond a directive to innovate, the foundation was provided an otherwise open mandate and today focuses on education, biomedical research, Jewish life, and urban affairs.



Q&A session at the Center for Community & Ethnic Media, CUNY Graduate School of Journalism. (Photo by Aaron Montes/Voices of NY)

The foundation's support for New York City's news ecosystem grew within its urban affairs work, which invests in the city's vitality as a leading urban capital. Noting that local journalism is in what Julie Sandorf, Revson's president, calls "free fall," the foundation has increased its investments in organizations positioned to bolster critically important local reporting.

“Journalists are the best civic connectors,” says Sandorf. “It makes sense for a funder concerned with civic engagement and urban life to look at the strongest tool for civic engagement we can use, and that’s journalism.”

The foundation's news ecosystem grants are diverse. Revson has supported capacity-building to help New York City's 250-plus ethnic media outlets cover public affairs, granting funds toward these organizations' business development,

connections with each other, and collaborations with larger media outlets. Revson also funded the creation of the first local news desk at the nonprofit news organization ProPublica. In partnership with the New York Daily News, the ProPublica team won the 2017 Pulitzer Gold Medal.

Revson was an early funder of the expansion of the newsroom at WNYC (New York Public Radio). Sandorf cites progress at WNYC: in the eight years since the foundation's funding began, WNYC has increased the number of local reporters covering the city, raised more money for local news from foundations and members, and, Sanders believes, developed a more authoritative voice in civic affairs.

Revson's approaches and results are detailed in the foundation's 2017 President's Letter, which provides background for place-based foundations considering news funding approaches. Sandorf says, “Until eight to ten years ago, local journalism was a profitable industry with an array of revenue sources that subsidized an essential public service. The market has failed—most profoundly at the state and local level. For foundations and their grantees, the local news media serves as a broadcaster and amplifier of new ideas, policy solutions, and advocacy. Quality journalism remains among the most powerful tools for creating public policy impact, and our best insurance for holding individuals and institutions accountable.

“The evisceration of local public affairs journalism has a profound impact on achieving philanthropic impact,” Sandorf continues. “This makes for a compelling case for expanding philanthropic support.”

LINKS:

Foundation website: revsonfoundation.org
Urban Affairs program: revsonfoundation.org/programs/urban-affairs
2017 President's Letter: revsonfoundation.org/about/letter-from-the-president
Center for Community and Ethnic Media: ccem.journalism.cuny.edu
New York Public Radio: wnyc.org

FOUNDATION TYPE:

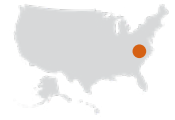
private, independent foundation

ASSETS:

\$176 million as of December 31, 2017

CONTACT:

Julie Sandorf, President
jsandorf@revsonfoundation.org



Grant applicants bring community news and information gaps to a foundation's attention

The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, established in 1936 to honor the deceased youngest son of R.J. Reynolds, supports organizations across North Carolina. In 2016 the foundation launched a statewide learning tour that has resulted in further planning and an emerging direction that is guiding the redesign of its grantmaking strategies.

Z. Smith Reynolds's media funding grew out of its relationships with grantees and the communities it serves. Joy Vermillion Heinsohn, assistant director, explains that as newsrooms around the country cut beats and some local papers closed entirely, the foundation's board became "concerned about the ability of North Carolinians to know what's really going on in their communities." Concurrently, the foundation's constituents began submitting grant applications to fill gaps in news coverage. Although they represented a new need, these requests fit within the foundation's existing strengthening democracy program, aligned with the foundation's view of democracy as dependent on access to reliable information. Z. Smith Reynolds's media funding therefore came about not as a foundation-driven strategy but rather as a response to an increase in requests for journalism and media funding that prompted internal reflection about the meaning of this increase, and whether the foundation should or could be responsive.

One example of the resulting media funding is support for *Carolina Public Press* (CPP), a nonprofit online news source that has also taken a responsive approach toward its constituents. *The News Exchange* tour visited the 18 western counties CPP serves to hear directly from readers about gaps in news coverage, and to explore the future of high quality news in the region.

While noting that responsiveness to applicants is key, Vermillion Heinsohn identified a significant differentiation point among grant requests:



Forum on domestic violence, women's health, and rural hospitals organized by Carolina Public Press. (Photo by Colby Rabon)

“Funders get a few different kinds of media requests—place-based journalistic endeavors and others that are for communications projects with a point of view.”

She stresses the importance of distinguishing between the two and notes that funders are confronted by a challenging question: “What does nonprofit, place-based, often online, news media need to look like in this era of media transition?” Vermillion Heinsohn underscores the need to recognize and support work “rooted in journalistic ethics.” As foundations and nonprofits new to journalism enter and establish themselves as participants within the field, a fundamental understanding of journalistic ethics and best practices is a necessary point of orientation within this evolving terrain.

LINKS:
Foundation website: zsr.org
Emerging Direction: all-for-nc.zsr.org
Carolina Public Press: carolinapublicpress.org

FOUNDATION TYPE:
family foundation
ASSETS:
\$421 million as of December 31, 2016

CONTACT:
Joy Vermillion Heinsohn,
Assistant Director
joyv@zsr.org

Committed to multi-faceted uses of media that enrich the public sphere

Wyncote Foundation was formed in 2009 with funds from the Otto and Phoebe Haas Charitable Trusts at the direction of John C. Haas. Wyncote is led by his four sons who together pursue shared and singular grantmaking interests. David Haas, vice chair, leads Wyncote's public media and journalism grantmaking. While focusing in part on the Philadelphia region and the state of Pennsylvania, Wyncote actively participates in field development in the broader public media sector.

In its local and regional grantmaking, Wyncote takes an ecosystem approach, combining a strong commitment to accountability journalism with support for a range of community information needs and resources, creative storytelling, and independent media. Alongside anchor institutions such as libraries, parks, colleges and universities, cultural organizations, and the local press, Wyncote sees media as a crucial component of the public sphere.

Haas comes to Wyncote's philanthropic work from his background as a photographer, media maker, and arts administrator. Bringing an understanding of media production and how organizational cultures function in a network, he is an advocate for the kinds of support needed to help creative, mission-driven media flourish.



WHYY ZIP Photo Essay: Life Around The Liberty Bell in Old City, 19106.
(Photo by Jessica Kourkounis)

Wyncote's media grantmaking that is specifically place-based is focused on Greater Philadelphia and Pennsylvania; many national initiatives it supports have a strong place-based orientation or component. Six recent grants highlight the range of place-based initiatives that Wyncote supports.

- *PlanPhilly*, based at WHYY, the Philadelphia region's NPR-affiliated news and information station, is helping to engage and educate citizens on the value of a well-designed city, and encourages active involvement in shaping the city through news coverage and content sharing. The project covers design, planning, sustainability, transportation, and development in Philadelphia. With a large advisory board and a staff of five, *PlanPhilly* has published more than 11,000 articles since inception.
- *The Next Mayor 2015* was a cross-city media collaboration led by the for-profit news site *Philly.com*. It aggregated stories of interest, explained differing policy platforms, provided voter resources, and offered opportunities for citizens to inform public debate through online conversations and polling.
- *Localore: Finding America* is a continuing project of Association of Independents in Radio (AIR), a long-standing Wyncote grantee. *Localore* matches independent producers with local public radio and television



stations to create rich, diverse stories using new approaches to storymaking that have demonstrably drawn younger, more diverse people and communities to engage with public media. *Every ZIP Philadelphia* is one such project, bringing stories from all of the city's ZIP codes to WHYY.

- *Family Pictures USA* is a national television and transmedia project in development that explores neighborhoods and cities through the lens of the family photo album. *Family Pictures* creates events to which people bring family photos and share stories about them. Programs are then created by weaving these stories together with themes from those communities. Wyncote support was central to the project's planning process and launch.
- *QUEST* is a feature-length documentary ten years in the making that follows the story of a North Philadelphia family whose home music studio nurtures a community of hip-hop artists. Wyncote provided support for civic engagement around ideas and concerns illuminated by the film, in Philadelphia and

other cities with similar challenges. The film will be aired nationally on PBS, but as with many such documentaries Wyncote supports, local engagement efforts typically begin before, and extend well beyond, the point of broadcast.

- Opera Philadelphia's *Media Lab Initiative* was designed to integrate digital media into a classical music setting as a means to deepen community relationships. Programs included Hip H'opera, libretto and music development with four area schools resulting in a media production; *Opera on the Mall*, a free outdoor broadcast of the season's opening show; and a convening of classical performing arts leaders to explore partnerships for joint media projects.



*Opera on the Mall, a program of Opera Philadelphia.
(Photo by M. Fischetti/VISIT PHILADELPHIA®)*

“Stories that are told and heard shape how we see our community, our role in it, and our sense of commitment to sustaining it,” Haas says. “They shape the stories we tell ourselves.”

Haas thinks that local and regional news, cultural expression, and other mission-driven media are essential elements of any given region's overall media ecosystem. “Public interest journalism, civic information, and creative expression from diverse viewpoints and by citizens of a place can help grow the capabilities of a community to engage more honestly and constructively with itself and others around core civic needs and aspirations.”

LINKS:

Localore: Finding America: airmedia.org/localore

Family Pictures USA: familypicturesusa.com

QUEST: quest-documentary.com

Opera Philadelphia: operaphila.org

FOUNDATION TYPE:

family foundation

ASSETS:

\$453 million as of December 31, 2015

CONTACT:

David Haas, Vice Chair

dhaas@wyncotefoundation.org

RESOURCES FOR PLACE-BASED FOUNDATIONS INTERESTED IN FUNDING MEDIA

TOOLS AND GUIDES:

- *Foundation Maps for Media Funding*: a data visualization tool created by the Foundation Center in partnership with Media Impact Funders enables users to scan the global funding landscape, analyze funder and nonprofit networks, and increase knowledge of media funding.
<http://maps.foundationcenter.org/?acct=media>
- *Journalism and Media Grant Making: Five Things You Need To Know, Five Ways To Get Started*: a booklet first published in 2011 and recently revised and updated.
Link forthcoming at www.mediaimpactfunders.org

REPORTS:

- *Informing Communities: Sustaining Democracy in the Digital Age*: a seminal report of the Knight Commission identifying the types of information communities need in order to function and thrive. The report's most urgent finding is that a "broadband gap," a "literacy gap," and a "participation gap" threaten to hold those U.S. residents who are young, poor, and live in rural areas in a second-class status as citizens.
https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/files/content/docs/pubs/Informing_Communities_Sustaining_Democracy_in_the_Digital_Age.pdf
- A new Knight Commission on Trust, Media and Democracy was formed in 2017; updates are being posted continuously.
<https://medium.com/trust-media-and-democracy>
- American Press Institute (API) report on *Charting New Ground: The Ethical Terrain of Nonprofit Journalism* and a companion piece providing *Guidance on the Philanthropic Funding of Media and News*. API's reports also detail the growth in philanthropic funding of news and media: 43 percent of respondents said their funding of media and news had increased over the past five years.
<https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/reports/nonprofit-news>
<https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/nonprofit-funding-guidance>
- *Break Form: Making Stories With and For the People* presents findings from an extensive study drawn from the *Localore: Finding America* project from AIR (Association of Independents in Radio), with information about the project's independent producers, station partners, and far-reaching network of community collaborators.
<https://airmedia.org/break-form-distilled>
<https://findingamerica.airmedia.org/15-communities>
- *Lessons from the Local News Lab: Building a Connected and More Collaborative Local News Ecosystem*: a report from the Dodge Foundation documenting key takeaways, replicable lessons, and fresh ideas for journalists, communities, and foundations that care about the future of people's access to local news and information. See also the content-rich Local News Lab website. The Lab provides a testing ground for local journalism projects that support experimentation with new ways of reporting, engaging communities, and sustaining news organizations of all sizes.
<http://localnewslab.org/2016/02/19/new-report-lessons-learned-from-the-local-news-lab>

INITIATIVES TO LEARN MORE ABOUT:

- The Democracy Fund and Knight Foundation's partnership with place-based and community foundations on *News Match 2017*, a matching-gifts fund to support nonprofit news organizations delivering local, beat, and investigative reporting. The fund is hosted and administered by the Miami Foundation, and facilitates local

fundings' and individuals' matching donations to newsrooms within their geographic areas.

<http://www.democracyfund.org/blog/entry/announcing-news-match-2017-2-million-fund-will-match-donations-to-nonprofit>

- The *News Integrity Initiative* at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, formed in April 2017 by a global consortium of tech companies, private philanthropy, and nonprofits aims to focus on helping people make informed decisions about the news they read, view, and share online.
<https://www.journalism.cuny.edu/centers/news-integrity-initiative>
- *Gather* is a password-protected hub for conversations and resources related to engaged journalism.
<https://medium.com/lets-gather>
- The Center for Cooperative Media documents strategies for collaboration in journalism and recently launched a database of collaborative journalism projects from around the world and offers a useful inventory of projects to study and learn from.
<https://collaborativejournalism.org/database-search-sort-learn-collaborative-projects-around-world>

STAYING IN TOUCH WITH TRENDS:

- Useful sites for tracking trends and ideas in journalism and media:
 - Current: News for people in public media
<https://current.org>
 - MediaShift: Insight and analysis at the intersection of news and technology
<http://mediashift.org>
 - Nieman Journalism Lab: Helping journalism figure out its future in an Internet age
<http://www.niemanlab.org>
 - Poynter: The world's leading instructor, innovator, convener, and resource for anyone who aspires to engage and inform citizens in 21st century democracies
<https://www.poynter.org>
- The Lenfest Institute for Journalism and the Solutions Journalism Network created Solution Set, a weekly report detailing a notable innovation in news.
<https://www.lenfestinstitute.org/solutionset>
- The Benton Foundation offers a daily newsletter tracking policy developments in the communications sector.
<https://www.benton.org/headlines>

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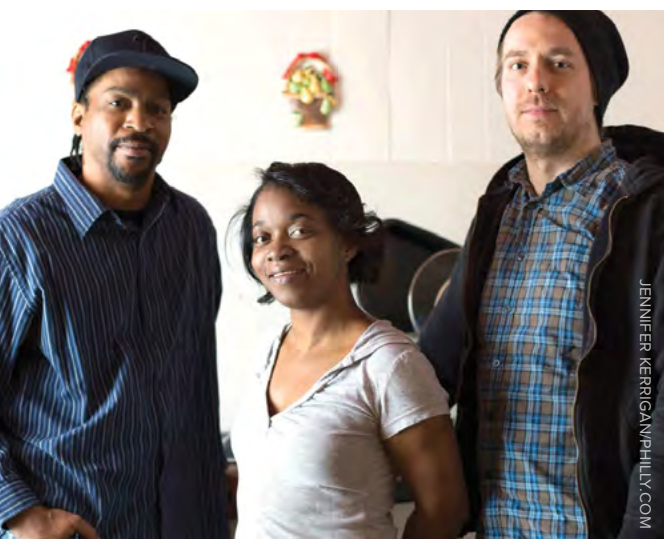
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