



While national headlines thunder and press freedoms face growing pressure, it's local news that still shows up. Covering school board votes, spotlighting nonprofits, explaining zoning decisions, and holding the mic for everyday voices.

Local news keeps us informed and engaged in the places we live. And in a time of rising censorship, corporate consolidation, and misinformation, that work has never been more vital... or more at risk.

In this issue of Inklings, we're lifting up the people and projects keeping Virginia informed. Plus, we're sharing practical tools for nonprofits to build relationships with local reporters.

Strengthening democracy starts close to home.



strengthening local news across Virginia

[Virginia Local News Project](#) works across the Commonwealth to equip local outlets with the tools, training, and support they need to grow and adapt in today's information landscape.

That means defending press freedom and helping hometown publications meet the demands of a digital-first world.

A perfect example? The Alexandria Times.

[As Alexandria's only locally owned newspaper](#), the Times is deeply rooted in its community, but it's not standing still. The Times delivers award-winning journalism, with staff earning 12 Virginia Press Association awards in 2024, including four first-place honors. They cover city council meetings, local businesses, events, and human-interest stories, providing essential reporting that keeps communities connected.

That community connection requires meeting readers where they are: online, mobile, and expecting real-time access to meaningful information. With support from VLNP, the Times recently completed a digital audit, evaluating how their website could better serve readers and advertisers. A partnership that highlights how strategic support can strengthen local news.

Meanwhile, in Richmond...

The Richmonder proves nonprofit storytelling has power.

The Richmonder has recently tracked the ripple effects of federal funding cuts on [local nonprofits](#) and spotlighted powerful nonprofit leaders like [Jacob's Chance founder Kate Mardigian](#).

This is what it looks like when local news invests in community storytelling and why it deserves our investment in return.

tool of the month

Your nonprofit has stories worth telling. Here's how to connect with the journalists who can help share them.

Find Your Reporters

Start with the [Virginia Press Association's member directory](#), browse community reporters on local TV station sites, and look for journalists who cover nonprofits or community issues. Following them on social media is also a great way to see what they're tracking.

Make the Connection

Send a brief intro email with your mission and recent wins. Offer yourself as a source, share story ideas (not just press releases), and be available for quick quotes when news breaks. Even if a reporter can't attend your event, inviting them keeps your organization on their radar.

Pitch with Purpose

Reporters look for local impact, human stories behind the numbers, solutions to community problems, and timely ties to current events.

Remember: journalists need sources, and you need coverage. Think of it as a partnership, not a transaction.

support local news: here's how

- Subscribe to your local paper (print or digital)
- Share local stories on your socials
- Pitch good news: nonprofit wins, community voices, etc.
- Attend events hosted by news outlets
- Follow local journalists and publications
- Talk to your networks about why local coverage matters
- Teach kids and teens how to spot trustworthy sources

And while you're at it... make sure information is accessible to everyone. Blue Octopus recently pledged to be an [Information Access Champion](#), committing to share information in ways that include and reflect the disability community.

what's in the net?

Probably not front-page news, but here's what the Blue Octopus crew is consuming this month:

Carter is designing Taskmaster-style challenges for the office. We're concerned.

Shelley is deep in back-to-school prep: pencils, haircuts, strategic snack negotiations.

Laura is binge-watching A.P. Bio and admiring Jack Griffin's dedication to revenge plotting.

Quillin is officially a NASCAR fan now, which surprised her almost as much as us.

Ink spilled, stories shared, mission accomplished. Until next time.

