

## COMMUNITY JOURNALISTS COVERING YOUR HOMETOWN

There are national media, such as the Toronto Star, the Globe and Mail or the CBC, that cover news across the country and around the world. But for news coverage about a specific town or even a neighbourhood, community media do the job best. One reason is that the journalists at community newspapers and news websites usually live in the community.

"They're writing about their friends and neighbours, their local elected officials. That's how they become aware of issues," said Joanne Burghardt. She is the director of content for Metroland, which owns 71 community newspapers across Ontario. Each of them publishes a newspaper every Thursday and each also publishes articles online.

The articles almost always have a local angle. For instance, if a national newspaper was covering the pandemic, they would likely write about how many people were sick in each province and how vaccines were rolling out across the country.

Community media would report on vaccine clinics right in the neighbourhood and how local people could sign up to get a vaccine. They would interview people in the area. They would find local heroes like frontline workers. And they would shine a light on the issues that were important to the people who live in the area.

"How is (the local government) spending your tax dollars? All of the decisions that affect your day-to-day life," says Burghardt.

"If you didn't have local journalists in your community, then who

would be covering (that) news? ... You would be left to social media," most of which is posted by people who aren't trained journalists, she said.

Community media cover local crime, local courts, school happenings, city council and development—things like roads and buildings that are being built in the community. And "anything that affects our readers getting around—transportation, road closures, highways, traffic accidents." These are subjects that for the most part, national media don't cover in-depth.

Jillian Follert is a journalist at Metroland's [durhamregion.com](http://durhamregion.com). She said community reporters spend a lot of time building relationships with people in the community, so when there is a news story to cover, they have solid sources they can rely on—people who trust them to cover their issues fairly.

"A big part of a community journalist's job is to develop strong relationships with their sources in the community," said Follert. "Talking to people frequently about things they're interested in as well. Having it not just be a one-sided relationship; you get a sense of what's going on. Going to

all the school board meetings regardless of whether there's anything juicy (to cover) or not."

That way, local journalists can uncover information that is important for people in the community to know about, but very difficult for big daily media to cover. It's how local journalists working for smaller media can make a big difference.



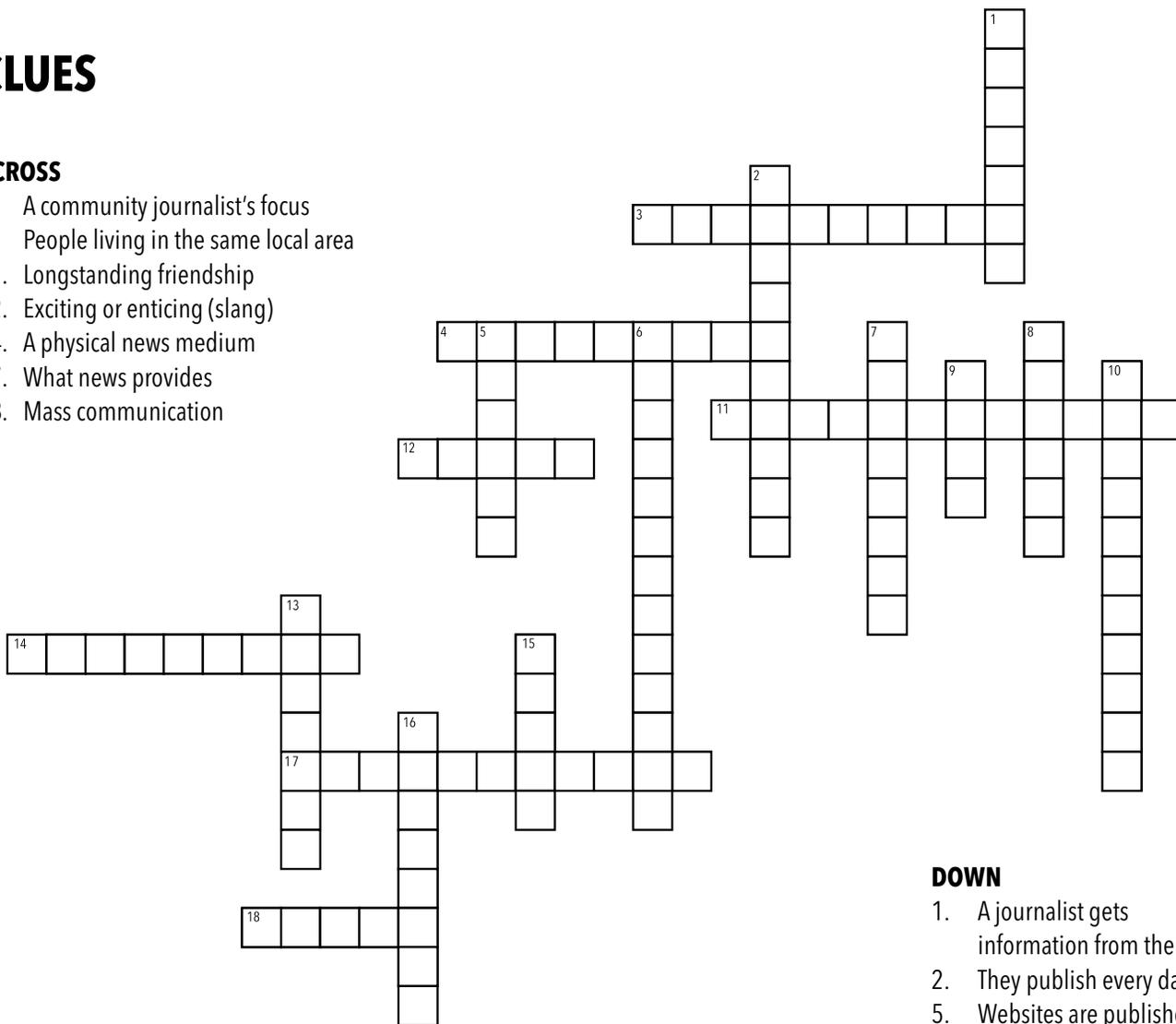
***Community journalists shed light on issues that are important to the people who live in the area.***

# COMMUNITY JOURNALISM CROSSWORD

## CLUES

### ACROSS

- 3. A community journalist's focus
- 4. People living in the same local area
- 11. Longstanding friendship
- 12. Exciting or enticing (slang)
- 14. A physical news medium
- 17. What news provides
- 18. Mass communication



### DOWN

- 1. A journalist gets information from them
- 2. They publish every day
- 5. Websites are published here
- 6. Where you live
- 7. Across the country
- 8. Problems or matters for discussion
- 9. Small city
- 10. Local government
- 13. An online news medium
- 15. In your area
- 16. Another term for news reporting

See answers at:  
[classroomconnection.ca/puzzle](http://classroomconnection.ca/puzzle)

