

Coachella Valley Journalism Foundation

September 2023

Welcome to our second monthly newsletter. This ongoing communication is designed to keep you informed about the important work that your donations to the Coachella Valley Journalism Foundation make possible.

This month we want to give you a complete rundown of the grants we have awarded to local news organizations since we were founded three years ago. As a reminder, CVJF provides support to local newsrooms in these distinct ways:

- **Staff positions:** The foundation raises funds to bolster staffing in local newsrooms. We identify gaps in local newsrooms — such as coverage of critical topics like education or the environment — and seek funding for reporters to enhance coverage.
- **Annual internships/fellowships:** Each year, the foundation invites local news organizations to apply for funds to hire interns or fellows for their newsrooms. Generally, these are current college students or recent graduates. This is an important investment in the future of the news industry. The call for applications occurs each spring.
- **One-time special grants:** Newsroom leaders across the Coachella Valley are encouraged to reach out to CVJF at cvjournalismfoundation@gmail.com at any time to request funds to help with reporting efforts that otherwise would not be possible without financial assistance. These small, one-time grants can fund travel, temporary staffing, freelance costs, data acquisition, polling, etc. These requests should focus on work that advances understanding of important local issues.

Here is a summary of the grants awarded by the Coachella Valley Journalism Foundation:

2021

Funding for The Desert Sun's Opinion Editor.



“When The Desert Sun was in danger of losing its opinion editor for good because of corporate cost-cutting, the community stepped in. Not long after that, I had the honor of being the first opinion editor supported — quite literally — by the public we serve. Donations to the Coachella Valley Journalism Foundation allowed me to be hired and paid my salary. I learned a lot about the valley in the year I spent in the role, though I only scratched the surface. My successor, Nicky Loomis, has done a fantastic

job keeping the opinion section thriving as a platform for diverse local opinions and a place for the editorial board to speak truth to power.... I'm glad the foundation and its donors have continued to support the opinion editor role."

Eric Hartley (Desert Sun Opinion and Engagement Editor, 2021-2022; currently Desert Sun News Editor)

2022

Continued funding for The Desert Sun's Opinion Editor.



"Having my role supported by CVJF means everything — not only would the editorial pages not exist if it weren't for CVJF — the civic dialogue in our valley would go unheard. The opinion pages are a gift. They enable civil, measured, well-thought-out debate, which is critical for communities to make progress, understand different perspectives and learn new things. At a time when local news voids are continuing to grow across the country at an alarming rate, CVJF is bucking the trend and helping local media organizations to provide readers with the news they need. The opinion pages serve as a mode of deepening understanding of the news by providing thoughtful context, varied perspectives on any particular issue and fact-checked arguments that promote critical thinking. I'm proud to work as the opinion editor to enable this dialogue to exist in the Coachella Valley."

Nicky Loomis (Desert Sun Opinion and Engagement Editor, 2022-present)

Funding for a journalism internship for Kevin Mann at the Coachella Valley Independent.



Kevin Mann is a former bankruptcy paralegal who's made a career U-turn into filmmaking and journalism. He has also written for the College of the Desert's Chaparral student newspaper and The Desert Sun. His screenplay, "Appetite," was runner-up at the Southern California Screenplay Festival in 2022. During his internship with the Coachella Valley Independent, he focused on entertainment reporting.

Funding for a journalism internship for Kevin Caparoso at The Desert Sun.



Kevin Caparoso is a 2022 graduate of California State University, Long Beach. After climbing the ranks of his student paper in Long Beach, Kevin was eager to take the next step toward starting a career in journalism. During his time with The Desert Sun, Kevin wrote about everything from a "Project Runway" winner helming an arts school to a family-run aerial yoga business. He was responsible for creating the paper's weekly 10 things to do in the Coachella Valley event roundup and several holiday event guides.

He also had the opportunity to spend a weekend reviewing sets and writing features at the Coachella music festival in Indio.

Reporting grant to underwrite KESQ's travel to Washington, D.C., to report on legislation sponsored by U.S. Rep. Raul Ruiz.

"I wanted to reach out again and give you my appreciation for the assistance you have given our news operation. With the grant money that the foundation so graciously gave to us we were able to provide an exclusive look into the signing and ceremony of the PACT Act, a bill that greatly benefitted veterans (specifically one family that lived here in the Coachella Valley) that were affected by burn pits in the Middle East. This was not a budgeted trip for us but, because of the money received, we were able to cover it on location the day it happened and get exclusive real-time interviews with the family, our congressman (Dr. Ruiz, who sponsored the bill) and other people involved. This type of coverage is important to our viewers and gives us a presence when important issues like this are decided. In this day and age of multiple media options and the stagnant growth of traditional media, The Coachella Valley Journalism Foundation plays an important role in assisting media in continuing to provide the level of reporting that viewers, listeners and readers demand."

Jerry Upham, (KESQ General Manager)

2023

Continued funding for The Desert Sun's Opinion Editor.

Funding for a journalism internship for Holly Hinman at KESQ.



Holly Hinman is an incoming junior at Loyola Marymount University, currently studying journalism after receiving her associate's degree at College of the Desert in Film, Television, and Media in 2022. Holly was editor-in-chief of The Chaparral student newspaper at COD and was the student speaker representing her class during College of the Desert's 2023 commencement ceremony. Holly interned as a digital news producer for KESQ News Channel 3, where she wrote and published articles, was actively involved in newscast production and helped with on-scene reporting.

Funding for a journalism internship for Dean Trombino at The Desert Sun.



Dean Trombino is a recent College of the Desert graduate. Born in Palm Springs, the 2021 Palm Desert High School graduate has lived in the Coachella Valley his entire life and was seeking an opportunity to combine his passion for sports with his passion for writing. During his internship, he excelled as a prep sports reporter for The Desert Sun, covering everything from Friday night football games (a sport he played locally growing up) to the occasional Coachella Valley Firebirds game. Dean proved himself to be a huge asset both as a reporter and social media producer.

Funding for a journalism fellowship for Haleemon “Halee” Anderson at the Coachella Valley Independent.



The CVJF is helping the Coachella Valley Independent pay its share to host a California Local News Fellowship journalist for two years. Haleemon “Halee” Anderson comes to the Coachella Valley from Los Angeles, and is originally from New Orleans, by way of the Bay Area. She is a master’s candidate in Specialized Journalism at the USC Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism. After teaching high school English and journalism, she decided to make the leap into journalism full-time. She’s written for various Los Angeles-based publications including the Los Angeles Times, NBC Los Angeles, the L.A. Watts Times, Black Radio Exclusive and the Inglewood News, covering arts, entertainment, sports, politics, and community news. Her primary beat at the CV Independent will be covering local government and institutions, with a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion. To learn more about the California Local News Fellowship program and to support the Coachella Valley Independent’s efforts, read this column from editor Jimmy Boegle: <https://cvindependent.com/2023/08/a-note-from-the-editor-were-getting-a-new-reporter-via-the-california-local-news-fellowship/>

Grant to underwrite KESQ reporter’s travel to Pennsylvania to cover the Firebirds’ championship series.

Grant to underwrite KMIR reporter’s travel to Pennsylvania to cover the Firebirds’ championship series.

“Thank you so much first and foremost. This is very much appreciated and will help a lot to support our Firebirds on the road.”

Tali Letoi, (KMIR Sports Director and Reporter

How to help

Donate today!

All contributions are tax-deductible. CVJF is a 501(c)3 organization!

Make your check payable to the Coachella Valley Journalism Foundation and send it to
CVJF, P.O. Box 207, Palm Springs, CA 92263.

Or click the “Donate” button on this page to contribute using a credit or debit card.

A receipt will be provided.

To volunteer your expertise on our board or on a committee, and for more information,
send an email to cvjournalismfoundation@gmail.com.

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