



Covering Suicide and Mental Health: A McCormick Specialized Reporting Institute

September 15-17, 2014

Twitter Hashtag: #suicidereporting

Partners:



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR
Suicide Prevention

Covering Suicide and Mental Health

September 15-17, 2014

SCHEDULE

MONDAY, September 15

2 p.m.

Open, welcome - **Kelly McBride and Dr. Doryn Chervin**

3-4 p.m.

The state of media coverage today - results of content analysis - **Kelly McBride**

4-4:15 p.m.

Break

4:15-5:30 p.m.

History, definitions, language and public opinions ~ **Melissa McCoy**

6-8 p.m.

Group dinner at Farmers Fishers Bakers Restaurant, 3000 K Street NW,
(202) 298-8783

TUESDAY, September 16

9-9:10 a.m.

Welcome - **Dr. Jerry Reed**

9:10-10:15 a.m.

Suicide: What we know - **Dr. Dan Reidenberg**

10:15-10:30 a.m.

Break

10:30 a.m.-Noon

Reporting tools - **Melissa McCoy**

Noon-1 p.m.

Lunch

1-2:30 p.m.

Special populations: Veterans, an untold story - **Dr. Robert Bossarte**

2:30-2:45 p.m.

Break

2:45-4:15 p.m.

The Critical Moment: What we learn from the crisis line

4:15-4:30 p.m.

-**Dr. Caitlin Thompson**

Break

4:30-6 p.m.

Beyond diagnosis: Working with veterans with mental illness - **David Wood**

6-8 p.m.

Group dinner at Tony & Joe's Seafood Place, 3000 K Street NW,
(202) 944-4545

WEDNESDAY, September 17

9:00-10:15 a.m.

Covering Government - **Melissa McCoy**

10:15-10:30 a.m.

Break

10:30 a.m.-Noon

Special populations: Teens, baby boomers, LGBT and the elderly - **Dr. Dan Reidenberg**

Noon-1 p.m.

Lunch/Work on your plan

1-2:30 p.m.

Going forward

2:30-3 p.m.

Evaluations and goodbye

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BIOGRAPHIES FOR FACULTY, STAFF AND SPECIAL CONTRIBUTORS

Maryland Arciaga serves as the meetings manager for the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center. She is responsible for ensuring high quality, efficient, and well-executed logistics in support of meetings and events. She manages venue procurement, travel arrangements, and payment reimbursements for all Action Alliance meetings. Arciaga has been planning meetings for corporations, associations and non-profit organizations for the last 15 years, serving on planning teams for notable events such as the 2008 Papal Visit, 2009 Presidential Inauguration, and AARP & Americans for Prosperity conferences.

Jack Benson is an expert in strategic, financial, and operational planning, with more than 20 years of professional services expertise in leading federal agencies and companies nationwide. As a strategist, he has advised clients on how to develop tactics and evaluation metrics and led integrated marketing and communication campaigns from concept through implementation. As a management consultant, he has counseled clients on growth strategy, sales and marketing, and operational issues. Benson is the manager and chief strategist for Reingold's development of a veterans' suicide prevention campaign to raise awareness of mental health services and resources for veterans in crisis. To help reach more than 23 million veterans and their families, the campaign is forging partnerships with federal and state mental health, housing, and employment agencies that serve potentially at-risk veterans, as well as primary and emergency healthcare providers, veterans support organizations, and community- and faith-based groups that have regular contact with veterans and may detect signs of crisis. The foundation of this effort is an integrated national outreach plan, crafted with a team of nationally recognized experts, which encompasses a messaging framework, campaign identity, audience targeting and characterization, and a strategically integrated mix of outreach approaches. Benson is also leading Reingold's work with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Make the Connection campaign. This award-winning campaign is focused on helping veterans overcome the stigma associated with mental health challenges through an innovative interactive website, compelling personal testimonials, and integrated national social media and paid media campaigns. Benson received a bachelor's degree from Colgate University and an MBA from the Darden Graduate School of Business at the University of Virginia, where he was a Shermert Scholar and recipient of the Genovese Fellowship.

Dr. Robert Bossarte joined the Post-Deployment Health Group as Director for the Epidemiology Program in February, 2014. Before coming to the Office of Public Health, Dr. Bossarte was Acting Associate Director and Chief for Epidemiology and Population Intervention Research for the VISN 2 Center of Excellence for Suicide Prevention. Prior to coming to VA, Dr. Bossarte completed his Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of Notre Dame and a post-doctoral fellowship in the Epidemic Intelligence Service. Dr. Bossarte has authored more than 80 peer reviewed manuscripts and received recognition for outstanding contributions to science and distinguished service.

Colleen Carr, MPH, is the manager of policy & stakeholder engagement for the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center. She conducts research and policy analysis to support the work of the Action Alliance. Previously, she was the suicide prevention specialist for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Suicide Prevention Program and the education coordinator for the Massachusetts/Rhode Island Regional Center for Poison Control and Prevention. Carr received her undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in public policy analysis and her master's degree from Boston University in public health.

Dr. Doryn Chervin, vice president and senior scientist in EDC's Health and Human Development Division, helping to lead business development initiatives to strengthen and expand EDC's health portfolio. She also serves as executive secretary of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, the public-private partnership advancing the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. Chervin's public health experience, which spans three decades, has focused on eliminating health disparities, addressing social determinants of health, and supporting adolescent and school health programs. From 1987 to 1996, Chervin worked on health promotion and education efforts at EDC. Following that, she was a vice president at ICF International (formerly Macro International), where she oversaw programs in public health research and evaluation practice. Recently, Chervin served as executive vice president for SciMetrika, LLC, primarily overseeing the Social and Behavioral Sciences Division. She has directed more than 180 state and national program evaluations, policy assessments and evaluations, training projects, and research studies, and has worked with a variety of federal and national organizations, state departments of health and education, community coalitions, and foundations. Chervin received a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Texas at Austin, a master's degree in education from the University of Houston, and a doctorate in public health from the University of Texas School of Public Health.

Andrew DeLong serves as the teaching & event services director at Poynter where he is responsible for the administrative and logistical support for internal and external seminars and special events. His passion for journalism first brought him to the Institute as a participant in the High School Journalism Program and then again as a member of the Poynter Fellowship for College Journalists. Prior to joining Poynter in 2012 as a program coordinator, DeLong worked for the Tampa Bay Times as both a writer and editorial assistant. He also freelanced for several local magazines and community publications. He is a native Floridian and enjoys volunteering in his community. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of South Florida where he majored in mass communications and minored in leadership studies.

Clayton Kratz provides administrative support for the Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center. He is responsible for the regular operations of both the Action Alliance and SPRC. He also ensures professional, efficient and high level coordination for all attendees, speakers and high level executive committee members during their meetings. His background is in public and global policy, having previously worked in grassroots campaigns, the US Chamber of Commerce, and the Office of Global Perspectives for the University of Central Florida. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Central Florida in history.

Kelly McBride is a writer, teacher and one of the country's leading voices when it comes to media ethics. She has been on the faculty of the Poynter Institute since 2002 and is now its Vice President of Academic Programs. The world's largest newsrooms, including the New York Times, The Washington Post, CNN, NPR and the BBC, frequently seek her advice for internal decisions and quote her expertise in their stories. Until recently, she ran the Ethics Department and the Reporting, Writing and Editing Department at Poynter. She is also the director of Poynter's Sense-Making Project, a Ford Foundation initiative examining the transformation of journalism from a profession for a few to a civic obligation of many, the values of the Fifth Estate and the effects of technology on democracy. McBride was the lead writer on ESPN's Poynter Review Project. She is the co-editor, along with Tom Rosenstiel, of a book: *The New Ethics of Journalism: Principles for the 21st Century*, which features essays by 14 thought leaders and practitioners, as well as a new code of ethics for journalists and people who care about journalism.

Melissa McCoy is former deputy managing editor of the Los Angeles Times and trains journalists in reporting on mental health issues. She is also a consultant for TEAM Up (Tools for Entertainment and Media), a non-profit focused on media and mental health issues.

Liliya Melnyk is the communications coordinator for the Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center. She is responsible for the maintenance of the Action Alliance's internal and external communication venues, including newsletters, the Action Alliance website, and social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogger, and YouTube. Before joining the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, Melnyk provided promotional and social media services for the Sixth World Conference on the Promotion of Mental Health and Prevention of Mental and Behavioral Disorders.

Mark J. Miller has worked with the Poynter Institute's NewsU since 2005 and has also written for such publications as National Geographic, The Washington Post, Men's Journal, Glamour, and Boys' Life, among many others. He writes daily for Brandchannel.com.

Elizabeth Neely specializes in strategic planning and execution of multiplatform communications campaigns, with a special focus on mental health and suicide prevention communications and outreach. As a director at Reingold, she oversees the development and execution of video, website, social media, graphic design, and content deliverables and coordinated outreach efforts for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Crisis Line and the National Football League (NFL) Life Line campaigns, and supports the Changing the Conversation Task Force of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention. Elizabeth received a BS in Communications and Public Health from The George Washington University.

Vidisha Priyanka is currently working with Poynter NewsU as an interactive learning producer. Vidisha worked as planning editor for digital video at TBO.com, media partner of The Tampa Tribune and WFLA-TV, News Channel 8. She also worked as an audience editor and news and special projects producer for almost 10 years and helped focus resources on serving news audiences. She has a master's degree in Journalism from the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg. She is a native of India and used to work as a content writer for the web edition of India Today, the largest selling political magazine in India and as a reporter and content producer for The Times of India, New Delhi.

Dr. Jerry Reed began serving as the Director of the Suicide Prevention Resource Center in July 2008. Additionally, Dr. Reed serves as the Director of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Injury, Violence and Suicide overseeing a staff of 45 and directs the work on multiple projects and serves as Co-Director of the Injury Control Research Center for Suicide Prevention with partners at the University of Rochester Medical Center. His interests include geriatrics, mental health, suicide prevention, global violence prevention and public policy. He served on the Board of the International Association for Suicide Prevention as Chair of the Council of Organizational Representatives. Dr. Reed recently co-led the committee that updated the U.S. National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. Dr. Reed received a Ph.D. in Health Related Sciences with an emphasis in Gerontology from the Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond in 2007 and his MSW degree from University of Maryland at Baltimore in 1982 with an emphasis in Aging Administration.

Dr. Dan Reidenberg is the executive director of SAVE, the managing director of the National Council for Suicide Prevention and the US representative to the International Association of Suicide Prevention. He serves on the steering committees for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, as chair of the American Psychotherapy Association, chair of the Certified Relationship Specialists Board and is on the APA Editorial Board, the Editorial Board of Esperanza magazine and Advisory Board to Reachout.com and Your Life Counts Clinical Advisory Board in Canada. Dr. Reidenberg has done extensive work on several inpatient psychiatry units and in private practice with adolescents and adults who have serious and persistent mental illnesses, are chemically dependent, and/or have diverse personality disorders. He has received numerous awards including being named one of the Ten Outstanding Young Minnesotans, the B. Warren Hart Award for service to humanity, Nonprofit Professional of the Year and recently was recognized at The White House as a "Champion of Change" by the Obama Administration. Dr. Reidenberg speaks all over the

United States and the world on suicide and suicide prevention. His presentations and appearances can be catered to any audience of students, parents or professionals and can incorporate multi-media components and/or interactive activities as appropriate. His presentations are both science-based and humanistic, and his stories empower audience members to know that everyone can SAVE someone's life.

Eileen Sexton is the director of communications for the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center. She oversees the Action Alliance's media relations, branding, website, newsletters, social media, and other communications efforts. She has an extensive background in public relations, health communications, and marketing. Sexton previously served as vice president of communications for both Mental Health America and Special Olympics, Inc. Early in her career, she spent a decade working in the Olympic Movement for the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games and the U.S. Water Polo Team. She is a graduate of Ball State University with a double major in journalism and community health.

Dr. Caitlin Thompson is the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' deputy director for suicide prevention. A licensed clinical psychologist, she is assistant professor at the University of Rochester Department of Psychiatry.

David Wood is the senior military correspondent for The Huffington Post. His series on severely wounded veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for national reporting. He has been a journalist since 1970, a staff correspondent successively for *Time Magazine*, the *Los Angeles Times*, Newhouse News Service, *The Baltimore Sun* and AOL's Politics Daily. A birthright Quaker and former conscientious objector, he covered guerrilla wars in Africa as *Time Magazine's* Nairobi bureau chief (1977-1980). As a Washington-based correspondent since 1980, Wood has reported on national security issues at the White House, Pentagon and State Department, and has covered conflicts in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Central America. In five trips to Afghanistan, he has lived and worked with the 10th Mountain and 101st Airborne Divisions, the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, the 82nd Airborne Division's special troops battalion, the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry, in RC-East and, most recently, with the 10th Mountain Division's 1st Brigade in Kunduz, Faryab, Kabul and Kandahar provinces. Wood has written widely across the span of national security issues, from nuclear deterrence theory to combat stress, domestic terrorism, military technology and doctrine, and scarce resources and demographic shifts as causes of instability. A Pulitzer Prize finalist in 1998, he has won the Gerald R. Ford Prize for Distinguished Defense Reporting and other national awards. He has appeared on CNN, CSPAN, the PBS News Hour, MSNBC and the BBC, and on National Public Radio's Diane Rehm Show. He has lectured at the U.S. Army Eisenhower Fellows Conference, the Marine Staff College, the Joint Forces Staff College and Temple University. Wood was raised as a pacifist and in 1968 completed two years of civilian service in lieu of military duty. He has three grown children and two stepchildren and lives outside Washington DC. He bicycles for sport and goes to climb high mountains whenever possible.

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PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

Erin Beck is a reporter at The Charleston Gazette, a newspaper covering the state of West Virginia. She has been interested in mental health issues since she was a child, when her mother, a psychologist, taught her to recognize mental illness as a legitimate health issue. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, West Virginia has the most cases of serious mental illness among adults, with a rate of 5.5 percent. Beck wants to use her position at The Charleston Gazette to educate the population on this issue and raise awareness, hopefully spurring positive change.

Erin Ehsani is an Alabama native living in Brooklyn and writing about Alabama, among other things. Research and writing interests include familial myth, intersection of social justice and art, narratives of trauma and mental illness, and inequality and poverty in the United States. You can find her tweeting about such things @erinehsani. Ehsani is presently revising a book about suicide and mental health in the South. Her day gig is running operations and marketing for a tech start-up and ongoing freelance work including content strategy, having worked with start-ups, nonprofits, corporations, and entrepreneurs to define their core story and create meaningful content across platforms.

Megan Finnerty is the Page One reporter at the Arizona Republic, focusing on breaking and longform stories about the emotional and financial motives behind the news. She's the founder and host of monthly nights of live storytelling called the Arizona Storytellers Project. And she appears regularly as a correspondent on Phoenix's NBC affiliate's afternoon show, EVB Live, doing live shots, packages, in-studio interviews and expert commentary. The Arizona Storytellers Project, which won a Rocky Mountain Emmy Award, was recognized for how it involves its audience, from telling their stories in print to videotaping them for online to inviting them on stage to speak at live events. The project also won a National Headliner Award for first place in Journalistic Innovation. She is obsessed with the idea that oral storytelling and journalism are dedicated to the same goals: creating and deepening understanding among community members, as well as reflecting and serving the communities they're a part of. Finnerty was named a finalist for the John S. Knight Journalism Fellowship at Stanford University. After going to her first concert at age 15 at the Riviera Theatre in Chicago, she became a journalist to have an excuse to talk to guys in bands. Since then, she's developed more compelling reasons to stay a journalist, having realized that guys in bands are better at music than talking. She feels strongly about NPR, feminism, most everything Dave Eggers does and her hair. She prefers a bold lip to a smoky eye.

As a crime reporter in Jacksonville, **Derek Gilliam** runs from crime scene to crime scene while balancing longer-term projects. He lives by the motto "Never trust a reporter whose shoes aren't scuffed." He hit the ground running in Jacksonville recognizing that July 2013 produced 15 homicides -- the most in about four years in the city. This past April, one of his stories and the graphics that accompanied that story detailing 32 shooting victims in 30 days prompted the sheriff's office to launch a police operation code-named Ceasefire that targeted crime-ridden neighborhoods. He enjoys telling narrative stories, but knows sometimes fact-filled articles that include (gasp) numbers can have a similar impact. Sometimes those types of

stories have more impact, depending on the statistics. However, he feels the best stories will combine a strong, narrative structure with detailed, relevant information.

Kari Lydersen writes, “I’m a reporter, author and journalism instructor in Chicago. I’m currently one of the co-directors of the Social Justice News Nexus, a program at the Medill School of Journalism launched in 2014. It brings together Medill graduate students and SJNN Fellows (local reporters and community journalists) to collaborate on social justice stories on a given theme. Our first cycle of the project delved into the drug war and impacts of drugs. In September we are launching a focus on mental health. The other directors and I will work with students and reporters from a range of media outlets to investigate and tell the stories behind mental health issues in Chicago, most notably the impacts of violence and the city’s restructuring of its public mental health care system. Personally, I have been a reporter in Chicago for 17 years since graduating from Medill. I worked as a staff writer at The Washington Post Midwest bureau until it closed in 2009, then for the Chicago News Cooperative doing stories for the Chicago edition of the New York Times. In 2011-2012, I was at the University of Colorado studying environmental and mining law and science through the Ted Scripps fellowship. I also currently freelance for outlets including Midwest Energy News, Crain’s Chicago Business and the Better Government Association. I’m the author of five books, most recently one about the closing of Chicago’s coal-fired power plants and one about Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, featuring a grassroots movement which has opposed Emanuel’s closure of mental health clinics.”

Candice Madsen is a senior producer of special projects for KSL Television in Salt Lake City, Utah. Her areas of focus include politics, community affairs and mental health issues. She produced a half hour commercial-free special that aired on April 25, 2013 in KSL's 10 p.m. newscast that focused on youth suicides. Mental health agencies in and outside of Utah are now using the show in training. She also produces the weekly television program Deseret News National Edition. Madsen grew up in Arizona, loves Utah's mountains and is an avid hiker.

Rhonda McBride serves as rural affairs editor and special projects manager at KTVA-Channel 11, Denali Media, in Anchorage, Alaska. She writes, “I’ve spent a lot of time doing in-depth reporting on suicide, which is epidemic in some Alaska Native communities – where indigenous peoples also face some of the highest rates of rape, child sexual abuse, domestic violence and alcoholism in the nation. I’ve been following the tragedy of suicide since 1988, when I first arrived in Bethel. At first, the coverage was limited to news stories about the occurrence of a suicide – then expanded to in-depth series on the subject. Recently, I did a series about suicide in Alakanak (uh-luck-uh-nuck) a village on the mouth of the Yukon River, in which almost everyone in the community has several friends or relatives who have taken their own lives. One of the most fascinating things is that Alakanak recently went for almost five years without a suicide, after decades of sometimes having as many as six or eight in one year. The focus of the series was how Alakanak has turned around this problem –through embracing traditional Yup’ik culture. It was a difficult story to tell. Many elders feared our coverage would jinx their success. Shortly after our series aired, there was a suicide in the village -- though elders assured us it was not connected to our series. Of course you never know.”

Rhonda J. Miller serves as a writer & producer for Writing Into Sound in Providence, Rhode Island. She became entranced by the magic of sound in a small studio in Delray Beach, Florida when she first heard voices, the sounds of the scene and music mixed to create powerful, true tales. Her public radio stories of walks in Mississippi marshes to find dead sea turtles, homeless veterans living in the woods, lingering illness since the BP oil spill and the

joyous adventures of a man who created Cajun music festivals on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts to encourage thousands of people to dance have kept her on the adventure from one radio story to the next. She's been writing news since high school. Writing for print and web are a part of her journalistic repertoire and she's recently covered banking, including quarterly earnings reports. She's created three of her own websites, two thanks to WordPress, and recently started writing a blog for a psychotherapy group in Boston. To relax from all those deadlines, Miller plays some Broadway tunes on a beat-up 1952 Wurlitzer piano she bought from a woman in rural Mississippi, goes quiet water kayaking, contra dancing, volunteers at folk music concerts and when the veggies are in season, rides her bike to the farmers market on Saturday mornings. A true believer in the critical need for quality journalism for a healthy democracy, Miller is dedicated to writing, recording and producing stories with truth and vitality that offer sparks of light and insight in our complex world.

Patti Mullins is a senior reporter at The Frederick News-Post in Frederick, Maryland. She has strived throughout her career to combine work with community service, using her skills if possible to better a community, lift up people and spotlight injustice. Starting with small town news of a failing water supply and zoning dilemmas, she aimed to write clear prose that neither oversimplified and insulted the average readers, nor excluded them with technical details. Her goal is not to elicit a particular response, but to inform her readers of circumstances so they may decide whether it is time to take any action. That action may be to support a particular cause or candidate, get involved in a project, celebrate a person's achievement, reject the status quo, express gratitude for abundance, take heart or derive strength.

Originally from DeKalb, Illinois, **Janai Norman** headed to the Show-Me-State to pursue a career in broadcast journalism at the University of Missouri. Taking the road less traveled, she did not graduate from the esteemed Reynolds School of Journalism. Instead, she double-majored in Mass Communication and Psychology, looking to understand people and how they communicate from a unique perspective. While in school, Norman began working as a morning production assistant at the ABC-affiliate in Columbia. That job became a launching pad, helping her land an internship at ABC17 that ended with her first on-air work, before flying to NYC to intern with ABC News. After interning with the network, she returned to Columbia to finish her studies and worked as a reporter/fill-in anchor until landing a job with FOX23 News. For the last 18 months, Norman has worked as a morning reporter/fill-in anchor in Tulsa, Oklahoma where she covered the deadly tornado that swept through Moore in May of 2013 and the botched execution of inmate Clayton Lockett.

Corinne Reilly joined The Virginian-Pilot in 2009 as a military reporter after four years at the Merced (California) Sun-Star, her first newspaper. She took a job at The Washington Post in 2012 but returned to The Pilot in 2013. She has reported from Iraq, Afghanistan and Haiti, and was named a finalist for the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in feature writing. A native of San Jose, California, she is a graduate of the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Nok-Noi Ricker is the go-to reporter when it comes to breaking news for the Bangor Daily News. She also makes time to cover the military and projects that people are talking about at the water cooler, including drug addiction, crime, mental health issues and suicide. She is currently working on a project dealing with military deaths by suicide in Maine and what has been done to prevent them since a surge of 349 deaths in 2012, one a 23-year veteran from Maine who was on her sixth deployment. After Ricker is finished with her military project, her plan is to turn her attention to the number of "suicide by cop" cases in Maine. She is not afraid to draw out emotion, sometimes making people cry, by asking the hard questions, and has been seen crying at her desk as she writes stories about the tragedies of life.

Johanes Roselló is an assignment reporter for Mundo Hispánico Newspaper in Georgia. She covers various topics related to the Hispanic community in Georgia and has covered an extensive array of themes such as: immigration, human trafficking and domestic violence, among others. Her work has been recognized with three José Martí Awards from the National Association of Hispanic Publications. Her objective is to be a "voice for the voiceless" in the growing Latino community. Combining her passion for social justice with her ability to write, Roselló is a resourceful tool for community journalism. Before joining Mundo Hispánico, Roselló was a frequent collaborator with CNN en Español Radio.

Evamarie Socha is a beat reporter covering Union County, Pennsylvania, including courts and the law, education, some natural gas industry and municipal government. Socha spent most of her career in Washington, where she worked for CGI Federal, Hanley Wood, Post-Newsweek Tech Media and Army Times Publishing Co. She has done every job from editorial assistant to managing editor. Socha has a bachelor's in journalism from the University of Pittsburg at Johnstown, and a master of arts in journalism and public affairs from American University, Washington. The main story on her beat these days is the case of four young men charged with throwing a rock off an interstate overpass; the rock crashed through a windshield, nearly killing a woman and changing her and her family's lives forever. It has divided the small rural community where the boys live and brought a national spotlight to a typically quiet part of Pennsylvania.

Christine Stapleton, a reporter at The Palm Beach Post in Florida, has covered the biggest stories of our generation and written extensively about her alcoholism and bipolar II disorder. She received two writing awards from Mental Health America and is author of Depression on My Mind: A journalist's story of depression, bipolar and alcoholism.

Ashley Thompson joined Alabama News Network in October 2012 as a general assignment reporter in the Montgomery newsroom. She is so excited to be doing what she loves and surrounded by such an inspiring news team. She has lived in Michigan, Georgia and Alabama and considers all three to be home. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham with a major in mass communications and a minor in communication management. While at UAB, she was very involved. She was a member of the competitive Golden Girls dance team which performed at all football and basketball home games. She also worked with the athletic department where she was involved in pre- and post-game operations for a number of sports. Thompson interned with ABC 33/40 in Birmingham and Turner Broadcasting System in Atlanta. It was at these two internships that she really began to develop the skills needed to become a good journalist. She is a big football fan and an even bigger New Orleans Saints fan. She was a Saints cheerleader for the 2011 season when the team went undefeated at home games. She was on the sidelines when quarterback Drew Brees broke Dan Marino's single season passing record and says it was one of the best nights of her life. Before CBS 8 News, Thompson worked at ESPN in Bristol, Connecticut, where she was a production assistant. She says of all the athletes she's come in contact with, Jerry Rice is by far her favorite. In her free time, she loves working out, reading and shopping. She also enjoys spending time with friends, attending church service and traveling.

Anna Grace Usery is a senior communications student studying multimedia journalism at the University of North Alabama. She is the editor-in-chief for her school's newspaper, The Flor-Ala. She aspires to be a lawyer for the Alabama Press Association and encourage students to pursue an education in communication. She is a 21-year-old who loves to cook, attend poetry readings, and take care of her cat, Smudge.

Adam Wagner is a public safety reporter for the StarNews in Wilmington, North Carolina. Among his more noteworthy stories are coverage of a police officer killing an 18-year-old mentally ill teenager, an ex-sheriff dying while in federal custody in a neighboring county's jail, an outburst of gang activity and a heroin boom in Southeastern North Carolina. When he moved to Wilmington in 2012, it was as a transportation reporter, but he leapt at the opportunity of the public safety job as soon as it came open in July 2013. Wagner has also worked at The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review and Newsday. He is a 2012 graduate of Ohio University, where he worked as managing editor of the student newspaper while sleeping way less than he does now. He is a Pittsburgh native, so yeah, he's a Steelers fan.

Cheryl Platzman Weinstock has been a freelance health/science writer for 30 years and specializes in covering women's health issues. She was among the first writers to report about the rise of AIDS among middle class women in The New York Times and among the first to report about the unique symptoms of heart disease in women in Woman's Day. One of her recent articles for "O", The Oprah Magazine, examined the validity of genetic testing and earned her The American Society of Journalists and Authors Arlene Eisenberg Award For Writing That Makes A Difference and the New England Chapter of the American Medical Writer's Association Will Solimene Award for Excellence. She is the winner of numerous other awards and fellowships, including several Knight Fellowships, and is a member and past board member of the National Association of Science Writers and the American Society of Journalists and Authors. She is also a member of the freelance committee of The American Society of Health Care Journalists. Besides covering health and science, she frequently contributes to the Metropolitan Section of The New York Times where she last wrote about the after effects of the Sandy Hook massacre. She contributed to the newspaper's Pulitzer Prize-winning coverage of 9/11. Platzman Weinstock graduated from Brooklyn College in 1979 with a major in biology and also has a master's degree in journalism from New York University.

Bethany Ziegler is the community news editor for The Star Democrat, based in Easton, Maryland. Prior to that she served as a reporter for The Advocate of Hampstead & Manchester, a weekly paper based in Westminster, Maryland. She also wrote briefly for Patch.com sites in Westminster and Georgetown in Washington, D.C. She graduated summa cum laude from Lynchburg College in Virginia.