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By:

Alice Dreger, Publisher



Thanks to the ever-energetic Jodi Spicer joining the ELi team to help with office work, I have time to report that the ever-energetic Jodi Spicer has joined the ELi team to help with office work!

Seriously, this marks an important moment for ELi. We are now big enough ? with enough employees and donors ? that we needed to hire on a true all-purpose ?office? worker.

Like most folks who are employed by ELi, Jodi is working for us part-time, earning extra pay for her family. In her case, that includes two children she's raised in East Lansing and ELPS, one now in college. She also works as a public health consultant for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Like many ELi employees, Jodi is way overqualified in some areas ? in her case, communications and organizational management ? and we *love* it! The people who work for ELi are mission-bound, firm believers in the value of a free local press. They do it because they believe in taking their substantial talents and putting it to the public good.

It is a bit funny to say Jodi is doing ?office work,? when in fact ELi has no office. To save overhead costs, we all work from home ? or in coffee shops, libraries, and the like. The ELi team uses a bunch of free online communication systems, plus the good ol' telephone, to collaborate. Jodi has hopped right in to that mode, and we now think of her as ?part of the office.?

Jodi has been helping with so much ? producing the weekly mailer [2], designing and ordering new envelopes for ELi (she found these are cheaper for us than buying envelopes and putting return-address labels on them), putting together materials for our supporters and mailing them out, getting t-shirts out to people who send in corrections (we love rewarding people who help us meet our mission of factual news!), and getting the new East Lansing tax forms out to our employees.

That's just some of what she's taken off my desk. Phew. Ordinarily, when we hit the big end-of-year fundraising period, I pretty much have to stop being a reporter for ELi, including backing off on being a supporter to our other local government reporters.

That creates a chicken-and-egg problem. Our government reporting goes down while we're asking people to support us doing government reporting.

This year, for the first time, I'm able to keep doing pretty regular work on ELi's ?Gov Gang? [3] while also working every day with the fundraising team. Moreover, the work Jodi is doing is upping our game in terms of donor relations, which in turn is helping with fundraising.

Your support of ELi makes it possible for us to find people like Jodi and talk them into taking a job that will pay enough to help them a little while they help us a lot to bring you the news of East Lansing. It's a beautiful system [4], one in which about 85% of donated funds go straight to paying local people to provide news as a public service.

Join me and hundreds of our neighbors [5] today in donating to ELi [6] to keep this work going in 2019. Right now, we can double your donation through NewsMatch [7], and you get a tax deduction! (If you sign up for just \$5/month, we get a \$60 match! Act now! [8])

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