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By:

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Above: Dan Totzkay reporting for ELi in 2018.

We have a fantastic reporting team, but we need to bring on some new members, especially for local government reporting! ELi recently lost one great government reporter because she decided to open a shop and also run for City Council (that's Jessie Gregg), and lost another because he graduated and got a job in his field several states away (that's Dan Totzkay).

Why should *you* consider becoming a paid or volunteer reporter for ELi, bringing nonpartisan news of our community to our people?

I asked that question of Dan Totzkay ^[2], who was a government reporter for us before he finished

his Ph.D. in Communication at MSU and got a tenure-track job at West Virginia University. Here's what Dan said:

Reporting on the mechanisms in place in East Lansing made me feel more connected to the community than I ever had before. I lived in East Lansing for about nine years, across degrees, and never felt nearly at home and welcomed than I did when I was working with ELi.

I suddenly understood why some buildings were empty and others weren't, started to recognize people on the street more often, and felt like I was contributing to the community in a way I hadn't before," Dan explained.

The money also helped: Working with ELi gave me a supplemental income that was invaluable, paying what equaled to around a \$22/hour pay with my writing and research pace. This frequently paid my rent or, during months I could not report as much, gave me a little extra money to offset my coffee habit or buy some extra groceries I didn't need.

Not everyone is as fast and skilled a researcher or writer as Dan, and we pay by the article, so you might earn less per hour as you work up your skills. But many of our reporters find that the extra income or the extra volunteer service helps improve their lives.

Dan found that the work at ELi also benefitted him in other arenas: Reporting with ELi let me hone my writing and researching skills outside of my graduate research in a way that not only afforded a much-needed break from graduate school, but also refined how I write for public audiences. I frequently attended City meetings that required close listening and quick note-taking, followed up by independent research to fill in the blanks.

For Dan, The break from simply reading academic journals and textbooks and instead digging into local politics and goings-on let me put those skills from my graduate training to the test that helped me become a better writer and reader.

Dan concludes, I cannot recommend reporting for ELi enough and I guarantee that you will love doing it and build a truly supportive and fun network in the process.

Interested in becoming a reporter with ELi? We are especially interested in bringing on people with professional or graduate-level writing experience, but that is not a prerequisite for joining our reporting team.

As we head into our annual year-end fundraising period, with NewsMatch doubling your financial contributions right now [3], it will be difficult for me to run ELi, fundraise, and report, all at the same time. So, for the next few weeks, you'll see less reporting from me.

But besides helping out by making a contribution that will be doubled right now [3], now you know that you can help us with our reporting needs, too!

Check out this page to learn more [4] about reporting with us, and contact us [5]!

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