

HCCC 2020 Summer Fellowship Report

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This summer, thanks to the Harvard Club of Cape Cod and the Center for Public Interest Careers, I had the opportunity to work as a Summer Reporting Fellow for the *Provincetown Independent*, a locally-funded weekly newspaper and nonprofit based in Provincetown, MA. The mission of the *Independent* is to “defend journalism at the grassroots” and create a robust platform for civic and community engagement among the sparsely populated outer four towns on the Cape. Throughout my time at the paper, I was able to serve this mission through thoughtful reporting, youth mentorship, and research around the sustainability of alternative funding models for small newspapers.

In the beginning of the summer I was focused on substance abuse issues on Cape Cod—I produced an article about telehealth medication-assisted substance use disorder treatment and another piece about increasing trends in regional meth use. By the end of the Fellowship, my topics of study ranged from rural broadband to county government to the drive-in circus. Each of these stories, large and small, instilled in me the importance of an outlet for homegrown storytelling. See <https://www.provincetownindependent.org/author/o-weeks> for all my stories.

Aside from the actual writing, I spent much of my summer mentoring local middle and high school age aspiring journalists. One of the best institutional qualities of the *Independent* is its constant emphasis on the wellbeing of future generations, from its willingness to experiment with untested business models to its focus on creating lasting opportunity on the Outer Cape. It was deeply moving to spend so much of the summer surrounded by people committed to creating lasting change and devoted to their locale.

I am so thankful for everyone at the *Independent* and the HCCC for this amazing summer. Its lessons will long stick with me.