



Age Boom Academy

Combating Loneliness in Aging:
Toward a 21st Century Blueprint for Societal Connectedness

2021 Fellow Bios

With thanks to our funders:



Fellows



Tara Bahrampour writes about aging, generations, and demography for *The Washington Post*, where she has been a staff writer since 2004 and has covered aging since 2013.

Her areas of coverage include everything from the scientific (new developments in dementia treatment and the science of aging) to the sociological (trends in family caregiving, migration patterns of retirees, and how creativity changes as people age) to the personal (profiles of the oldest living West Point graduate, a 99-year-old first-time published poet, and an 80-year-old personal trainer with more stamina than people half his age).

In her reporting she has had the opportunity to be scientifically “aged,” with photos predicting how she will look decades into the future, and to put on special goggles, footwear, and headphones that simulated the physical limitations of living with cognitive decline.

During the pandemic year, she has focused on the challenges faced by older people who were the most susceptible to COVID-19, both in terms of contracting the virus and in terms of being cut off from the wider world by lockdowns. She wrote about grandparents caught between doing childcare and keeping themselves healthy; innovations to help people in retirement communities safely connect with family members and strangers; and the perspective age brings to surviving a plague.

Twitter: @TaraBahrampour



Edward C. Baig is a contributing writer for *AARP the Magazine*, covering technology and other topics. Ed was the long-time Personal Tech columnist and a reporter at *USA Today*, where he reviewed every important new consumer tech product to emerge during the past two decades, from the original iPhone to the Amazon Kindle. He has weighed in on emerging tech trends and industry news, in coverage areas that included the culture of tech, family tech, the impact of artificial intelligence on society, 5G, and privacy and security. Prior to joining *USA Today*, Ed was on the editorial staffs of *Business Week*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and *Fortune*. He authored *Macs For*

Dummies (Wiley) and *Palm Pre: The Missing Manual* (O'Reilly Media) and co-authored *iPhone For Dummies* (Wiley) and *iPad For Dummies* (Wiley). Most recently, Ed has been a Guest Industry Advisor at BJ Fogg's Stanford Behavior Design Lab.

Twitter: @edbaig

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Janeane Bernstein, EdD, is a writer, speaker, author, and radio host with University of California, Irvine's radio station, KUCI 88.9fm. She has a background in qualitative research, communications, and instructional design, and is passionate about mental health, self-care, and positive psychology. She earned a doctorate from Boston University in Curriculum and Teaching, with a focus on Educational Media and Technology, and studied at the S.I. Newhouse School of Communication and the School of Education at Syracuse University.

In 2019 her first book, *Get the Funk Out, %^&* Happens, What to Do Next!*, was published by Post Hill Press, distributed by Simon & Schuster, and narrated by Janeane for Audible.com. The book focuses on creating resilience and strength through life's curveballs and is relevant in our current pandemic. Currently, she speaks to students and adults about the power of resilience, self-care, the science of happiness, and the importance of prioritizing mental, physical, and emotional health.

In response to the millions of people out of work, she launched the online series, "Outside the Box," filled with expert advice on how to find work remotely and pivot to start a new venture. In 2021 she created a custom designed online mentoring series to help high school and college students find internships and employment opportunities during the pandemic.

Twitter: @momz_rock | Instagram: @janeanebernstein | janeanebernstein.com & otbseries.com



Mario Campa studied Economics and Political Science at ITAM (Mexico City). He graduated from Columbia University in 2015 with a master's degree in Public Administration.

He has experience in applied macroeconomic research, covering indicators during the last five years for a digital media outlet. He also writes a weekly column for a local newspaper and contributes a monthly article for *Este País* magazine.

Mario specializes in inequality and wellbeing, trying to reach wider audiences without losing rigor. He sees the Age Boom Academy as a unique opportunity to learn with leading researchers about societal cohesion and accessible reporting on the complex issue of loneliness in aging, strongly related in his country to poverty and income disparities.

He tweets constantly in Spanish and has over 28,000 followers. He currently lives in Hermosillo, Mexico.

Twitter: @mario_campa

Fellows



Melody Cao is a freelance journalist based in New York. She works with several organizations and media companies on their news websites, social media, video projects, and marketing campaigns. She started her reporting career at SinoVision, an American Chinese TV station for local news in New York City, as a daily news TV reporter in 2010. Later she focused more on producing feature stories and short documentaries.

In 2013 her coverage on Hurricane Sandy won an Ippies Award for Best Video. Melody also worked with the 2016 National Health fellowship and produced a three-episode series on Chinese American autistic children. In 2017 she produced a seven-episode program on second-generation immigrant entrepreneurs and was nominated for a 2018 New York Emmy Award. Before she joined SinoVision, Melody worked at Shanghai Media Group in China as an international news editor.

She has a MA in International Relations and Communications from Boston University and a BA in Journalism from Fudan University in China.

[CenterforHealthJournalism/MelodyCao](https://www.centerforhealthjournalism.org/fellows/melodycao)

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Lois M. Collins is a long-time reporter and columnist for the *Deseret News*, writing on family issues, policy, and research including aging. She's won two Sigma Delta Chi feature-writing awards, among other national, regional, and local journalism honors. She graduated from the University of Utah with a degree in Communication. But she's most proud of stepping out of an airplane in mid-flight once for a story on skydiving, even though she was scared. (She highly recommends it.) Lois is married and has two now-grown daughters, too many dogs, a pair of cats, and a dwarf African frog. This is her second Age Boom Academy.

Twitter: @loisco



Paige Cornwell is a reporter for *The Seattle Times*, where she covers the impact of COVID-19 in the Seattle area. She was among the first local reporters to cover the coronavirus outbreak in the US, and covered COVID-19's spread inside Life Care Center of Kirkland, the site of the nation's first known outbreak. That work was recently selected as a finalist for the Scripps Howard Foundation's breaking news award, and a finalist for the Investigative Reporters and Editors' award for an investigation triggered by breaking news. She was a member of the *Seattle Times* team that won the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News for coverage of a deadly landslide in Oso,

WA. A Kansas City, KS, native, she is a graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and pursuing a Certificate in Gerontology from the University of Washington.

Twitter: @pgcornwell



Peter Cox covers aging for Minnesota Public Radio, where he's been a reporter since 2014. Reporting on aging, he's focused on issues around economics, institutions, culture, and mental health. Prior to MPR, he worked at small-town newspapers in Minnesota, daily newspapers in New York City and Atlanta, and in radio and newspapers in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Twitter: @peterncox

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Hannah Critchfield covers elderly and aging communities for the *Tampa Bay Times*. As a Corps member of Report for America, she previously reported on conditions inside prisons and jails during the pandemic for *North Carolina Health News*, where her investigation into North Carolina's underreporting of incarcerated people who died of COVID-19 eventually changed state prison policy.

Hannah has also worked for *Phoenix New Times* in Arizona, covering immigration and criminal justice in the Grand Canyon state. Her reporting has appeared in *The New York Times*, *VICE News*, *The Intercept*, and PBS. A graduate of the Columbia Journalism School, she focused on workplace abuse within undocumented communities and received the Melvin Mencher Reporting Award for Superior Reporting and the Fred M. Hechinger Award for Education Journalism for her investigation on the re-hiring of university faculty accused of sexual harassment in 2019.

She received her undergraduate degree from North Park University in Chicago, which first taught her how to keep an ear turned towards true stories of power and—more crucially—its impact on communities.

Twitter: @HannahCritch | hannah-critchfield.com



Cailin Crowe is an editor for the business journalism website Smart Cities Dive, where she reports on topics related to housing, libraries, climate, and social equity in cities. Cailin received her master's degree in Journalism from Northwestern University, with a specialization in Investigative Reporting and Social Justice. She has contributed investigative reporting, featured in NPR and *The Chicago Reporter*, which uncovered disproportionate discipline rates for women in prison.

Prior to working at Smart Cities Dive, she was an intern for *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and a fellow at *Washingtonian* magazine. Cailin received her bachelor's degree in Communication Studies from Saint Mary's College in South Bend, IN.

Twitter: @cailincrowe & @smartcitiesdive

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Diane Eastabrook is a veteran journalist with nearly four decades of experience, spanning general assignment news, business news, and aging services. Diane is currently a staff writer at McKnight's *Home Care Daily*, covering the home care, home health care, and hospital-at-home industries. Since joining McKnight's in March 2021, she has written about the potential impact of the American Jobs Plan on home-and-community-based services, the expansion of telemedicine, and the boom in in-home dialysis treatment.

Twitter: @EastabrookDiane



Kate Ferguson is editor-in-chief of *Real Health* magazine. As an executive editor at Smart + Strong, she is also a senior editor at *Cancer Health* magazine and a contributing writer at *POZ* magazine, two of the company's brands. Along with her editorial skills, Kate possesses a deep passion for health, fitness, and wellness, which she previously explored for the African-American market as the editor-in-chief of *Today's Black Woman* and the managing editor of *Black Men*.

Previously, Kate was the editor-in-chief of two teen entertainment magazines: *Word Up!* and *Rap Masters*. She also served as editor-in-chief for *Black Teen* and

Female Bodybuilding and was the entertainment news editor and on-camera talent for "The Video Zone," a local music program on cable television.

A graduate of Hunter College in New York City, with a BA in Mass Communications, Kate received her MA in Broadcast Journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia and an MA in Health and Science Journalism from the Columbia Journalism School. She lives in Hackensack, NJ.

Twitter: @kfergusonn

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Bruce Frankel is vice-president of Redstring, a community-building technology and business, where he is a community architect and chief content officer. He is also president of the Life Planning Network, a national nonprofit association educating and supporting professionals shaping the culture of aging and helping people navigate the second half of life. He is the author of the prize-winning *What Should I Do with the Rest of My Life? True Stories of Finding Success, Passion, and New Meaning in the Second Half of Life*.

Bruce is a passionate age advocate who focuses on helping communities align content and tactics with a community mindset to accelerate organizational potential, sustainability, and achievement of meaningful goals. Though their approaches differ, many of the communities in the Redstring Network share the purpose of empowering and supporting older adults, and increasing healthspan and opportunities for lifelong learning, work, purposeful experience, and elder rights.

He is a featured speaker at positive aging conferences, an editor of *Live Smart After 50! The Experts' Guide to Life Planning for Uncertain Times*, and the editor of *LPN-Q*, the quarterly of the Life Planning Network. He is a former writer and editor at *People* magazine and New York-based national reporter for *USA Today*, where he covered organized crime, terrorism, politics, and major trials. He is also a co-author of *World War II: History's Greatest Conflict*. He is a US Liaison/Advisor of the Pass It On Network and an accredited member of the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing and serves on the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee for Stonewall CDC, a grassroots LGBTQ group in New York. Bruce has an MFA in Poetry from Sarah Lawrence College and a BA in Government from Franklin & Marshall College. He lives in Sharon, MA.

Twitter: @thebrucefrankel



Anita Fritz is the senior reporter at *The Greenfield Recorder* in Greenfield, MA, where she has covered numerous issues and the county's 26 cities and towns over her 20-year career there. She worked at the *Eagle-Tribune* in North Andover, MA, for a short time before deciding to return to *The Recorder* to do the community journalism she loves. She has reported on eldercare issues, health, science, agriculture, COVID-19, racial justice issues, and much more in a rural community where she grew up and lives and where she feels she can have the most impact. An award-winning journalist, she turned mostly to eldercare issues after the

pandemic hit the county she covers.

Twitter: @AnitaAlice01301

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Julie Halpert is an award-winning freelance journalist with more than three decades of experience writing regularly for many of the nation's most widely respected publications, including *The New York Times*, CNBC, *Business Insider*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *AARP The Magazine*. She tackles numerous topics in her pieces, ranging from the future of self-driving cars to the causes and consequences of mental health issues, personal finance, caregiving, and the challenges of parenting young adults. She has focused extensively on issues of aging, writing about the many ways that boomers are redefining retirement and reinventing themselves during this period of life.

For the past few years, she has written the “Second Acts” stories in *The Wall Street Journal* about those who have switched to new types of careers and passions late in life. She has also explored the impact of COVID-19 on loneliness among older Americans. She is the co-author of *Making Up With Mom*, which focuses on generational differences between women and their mothers and how to resolve them. She also co-teaches an environmental and public health journalism class at the University of Michigan.

Twitter: @julhalps

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Ariel Hart is a reporter on health care issues at *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. She currently focuses on the COVID-19 pandemic, the state and national pandemic response, and their impact on the people of Georgia. Her stories from the first signs of the pandemic in Georgia have spotlighted the allocation of resources, the plight of health care workers, racial disparities, the spread of misinformation, and the emergence of new outbreaks after Georgia lifted restrictions. She feels her most resonant pieces from the pandemic were simply the words of other people: “as-told-to” interviews with doctors at the beginning of the pandemic who told her about their personal experiences inside hospitals.

Ariel has covered several subjects at *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, including transportation and voting rights. She and her teammates’ reporting on the disciplinary oversight of doctors placed as a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in National Reporting. Prior to her current job, Ariel was a full-time freelancer covering the South for *The New York Times*, where her work following the 9/11 attacks contributed to the staff’s Pulitzer Prize for Public Service.

Ariel is a graduate of the Columbia Journalism School and Bryn Mawr College. She is at heart a native Arizonan and the great-great granddaughter of a Tombstone gunsmith.

Twitter: @arielwriter



Erica Hensley is an independent health and data journalist based in Jackson, MS, where she covers Deep South reproductive and aging health through a social determinants of health lens. Previously she worked as an investigative reporter focusing on public health for the non-profit digital outlet *Mississippi Today*, where she led the newsroom’s COVID-19 coverage, launched a statewide newsletter focusing on race and gender health disparities, and was a Knight Foundation fellow for a collaboration with local TV station WLBT. She is the 2019 recipient of the Doris O’Donnell Innovations in Investigative Journalism Fellowship, in which she produced a series on lead exposure across Mississippi—

following up on similar work in Georgia that earned her an Atlanta Press Club award for investigative reporting. Erica received a bachelor’s in Print Journalism and Political Science from the University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism and a master’s in Health and Medical Journalism from the University of Georgia Grady College for Journalism and Mass Communication.

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Sharon Jayson is an Austin-based journalist, content creation specialist, and professional communications consultant who can tell stories across platforms, with experience online, in print, and in broadcast media.

She writes for news websites and publications, including *The Washington Post*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Kaiser Health News*, *NBC News*, *AARP The Magazine*, and the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative section of *Texas Co-op Power* magazine, among others.

For a decade at *USA Today*, Sharon was responsible for coverage of behavior and relationships, a beat that included psychology, human emotions, mental health, sexual behavior, dating, marriage, and divorce. Parenting and the generations (Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers in particular), as well as aging, caregiving, and retirement were all part of her beat. Sharon spent four years at *USA Today* headquarters in McLean, VA, and the next six years based in Austin. As a representative of *USA Today*, Sharon appeared on NBC's *Today Show*, CNN, and MSNBC discussing her reporting.

Sharon is a former president of the Austin Professional Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. She served as a volunteer state chairperson of an open government advocacy organization for which she received a national SPJ award for contributions to open government. Sharon was recognized by the nonprofit Generations United for her generational reporting, and she earned a "Best of *USA Today*" award for National Trends Reporting on Millennials.

Prior experience includes the *Austin American-Statesman*, where she covered K-12 education and later the University of Texas and Texas A&M university systems and campuses. Sharon served as capitol bureau chief for the Texas State Network, a radio network covering government and politics, including legislative sessions, as well as reporting on-site at national political conventions and meetings of the National Governors Association. She also worked in Austin as a television news anchor, producer, and reporter.

Twitter: @SharonJayson

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Kasley Killam specializes in social health: the dimension of well-being that comes from connection and community. As the founder of Social Health Labs, she partners with organizations at local, state, and national levels on initiatives that aim to address widespread isolation and loneliness. Having studied this topic at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, Kasley writes the Social Health blog for *Psychology Today* and regularly contributes articles to *Scientific American* and other outlets.

She is a frequent speaker, giving keynotes and leading panel discussions for corporate audiences and conferences, and has been interviewed on TV, radio, and numerous podcasts. Kasley currently serves on the board of directors for two nonprofits, is an Encore Public Voices Fellow, and is a World Economic Forum Global Shaper. Previously, she led a national community engagement strategy and partnerships for Verily Life Sciences, conducted research on mental health and positive psychology, and developed an award-winning campaign to promote empathy and kindness.

Twitter: @KasleyKillam | kasleykillam.com



Rachel Layne is a freelance reporter, editor, writer, and occasional ghostwriter. Her work appears in *The Boston Globe*, CBS News, *CQ Researcher*, *HBS Working Knowledge*, *Karma Impact*, *MIT Technology Review*, and *USA Today*, among other publications. Most recent stories include topics from economic justice and consumer finance issues to trade, climate change, energy, water, management, and small business. Previously, Rachel was the multinational conglomerates reporter for Bloomberg News for nearly two decades. Rachel is also an affiliate professor at the Department of Journalism at Emerson College.

Twitter: @Layniac | authory.com/RachelLayne

Fellows



Nora Macaluso, who was born and raised in Philadelphia, witnessed the ups and downs that come with aging when she returned to her hometown in 2019 to be close to her parents.

She saw firsthand the physical difficulties of walking uneven sidewalks and opening once-easy product packaging, and the blows to the psyche from dismissive doctors and fellow citizens. Though she'd read about these things—and even written about them—living the reality with her parents brought her a new level of understanding.

Nora spent much of her writing and editing career at various divisions of Bloomberg in New York; Washington, DC; and Detroit. She wrote and edited articles on topics ranging from health and the environment to economic policy and tax law. As a freelance writer and editor, she's stayed in the health niche, writing and editing articles on medicine and marijuana policy, as well as corporate finance and technology.

Nora is trying to maintain an active lifestyle and delay some of the adversities that come with aging. After raising two children, she and her husband recently bought a beach house at the Jersey Shore, and they're looking forward to spending the summer recreating and relaxing with their cat, rabbit, and a soon-to-own dog.

Twitter: @noramacaluso



Alessandra Malito is the retirement reporter at *MarketWatch*, where she covers Social Security and Medicare; saving and investing strategies for people of all ages; 401(k) plans and individual retirement accounts; older Americans' lifestyles; and emerging trends in retirement and aging. Alessandra has a bachelor's degree in Journalism from Stony Brook University and a master's degree in Journalism from CUNY Graduate School of Journalism. She has attended the Age Boom Academy, numerous fellowships at the National Press Foundation, and the SABEW government data fellowship.

Twitter: @malito_ali

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Lauren J. Mapp is a reporter at *The San Diego Union-Tribune* covering family caregiving, eldercare, and Indigenous communities. She was the 2019 Outstanding Graduate in Journalism at San Diego State University, where she earned her bachelor's degree in Journalism with a minor in American Indian Studies. She also holds associate degrees in Journalism, Culinary Arts, and Political Science from San Diego Mesa College.

Lauren previously worked as a freelance writer for *North Coast Current* and *Times of San Diego*, an investigative reporting intern at *inewssource*, a senior staff writer at *The Daily Aztec*, editor-in-chief at *The Mesa Press*, and the arts editor at *The City Times*.

Twitter: @laurenjmapp



JoAnn Mar is a veteran public radio producer. Her documentaries and features have aired on NPR, the BBC, Voice of America, The Charles Osgood File, and Pacifica Radio. Topics covered include end-of-life, criminal justice, women's issues, the plight of immigrants, and public education.

JoAnn has won many journalism awards over the last three decades, including the prestigious George Polk award in 2006 for investigative reporting on prison privatization. She was the recipient of a 2007 media fellowship from the Open Society Institute and produced an award-winning documentary on California's prison crisis. Most recently, JoAnn received fellowship grants from the Association of Health Care Journalists and the New America Media/Gerontological Society of America, and USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism for reporting on care at the end of life. Her most recent documentary, *Palliative Care: The Search for Comfort and Healing in the Face of Death* won a silver medal from The New York Radio Festivals in the science/health category.

Twitter: @kalwfolk

Fellows



Anne Marshall-Chalmers started her journalism career in local television news but is now focused on narrative writing, investigative reporting, and audio storytelling. As a research assistant at the Berkeley Investigative Reporting Program, her work focuses on aging in America.

Anne has written about the toll of caregiving during a pandemic and the slow pace of vaccine distribution at small long-term care facilities. Her work has appeared in the *LA Times*, *CalMatters*, NPR, *Atlas Obscura*, and regional publications throughout Kentucky and Tennessee, where she lived before moving back to her home state of California. She has earned several regional Emmy awards as well as awards from the Society of Professional Journalists and The Associated Press. In 2012 she won a national Alt Weekly award for her reporting on economic inequality in Louisville, KY. In 2019 she was nominated for a national City and Regional Magazine Association (CRMA) award in the category of civic journalism for a piece exploring eviction in Louisville.

Anne is expected to graduate from the University of California, Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism in 2022.

Twitter: @marshall_anne



Gregg W. Morris is an African American freelance writer, editor, and photojournalist who is also a tenured assistant journalism professor at Hunter College. Most of his freelance work and projects are for the San Francisco-based Ethnic Media Services and the Center for Cooperative Media at Montclair State University (MSU), Montclair, NJ. Most recently he has written "Spotting and Preventing Pandemic-Related Scams and Other Fraud" for Ethnic Media Services and "Racial Disparities in Vaccine Distribution" for the Center for Cooperative Media, MSU. He is working on ethnographic memoirs about teaching at Hunter College and being a Cornell

University assistant basketball coach when the Black ball players walked off the field.

Twitter: @GreggWMorris | ethnicmediaservices.org

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Sophie Okolo is a writer, scientist, and longevity advocate on a mission to reframe the conversation around longevity and healthy aging. Her writing has appeared in *Salon*, *PBS Next Avenue*, and *IEEE Potentials*, among others. Sophie is the founder of Global Health Aging, a creative consultancy and award-nominated website featuring a broad range of news stories, diverse opinions, and research regarding living and aging well in a changing world. She has published articles ranging from breaking the stigma of loneliness in Denmark to integrating mental health services into primary healthcare in Australia. She also has an ongoing

interview series featuring personal conversations with international visionaries in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math).

As a *Forbes* contributor, Sophie focuses on the intersection of technology and healthcare. A recent story explored the implications of COVID-19 on the mental and emotional health of nursing home residents. She is currently writing an article about how loneliness and resilience affect our quality of life, focusing on privilege and its contribution to inequalities in health. Sophie is a TEDMED 2020 Research Scholar and one of seven featured female science communicators in the current issue of *Diversity in Action* magazine. During National Minority Health Month 2021, she spoke about uncovering loneliness inequities among older adults at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center.

Previously, she researched advance directives and end-of-life Medicare spending and the role patient navigators play in eliminating health challenges. She has been elected to the New York Academy of Medicine and Sigma Xi Scientific Research Society. Early in her career, Sophie performed biomedical research in academia and healthcare. She has an MPH in Gerontology and Healthcare Research and a BS in Bioinformatics with Research Honors. She enjoys comedy, baking, reading biographies, tennis, and concerts.

Twitter: @sophieokolo

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Amy H. Peterson is a journalist from rural Iowa. An award-winning staff writer for the *Estherville News*, she is founder and creator of Fierce Good Causes, a hybrid of journalism, essays, drama, and video/film centering on the stories of women facing the challenges of today, and collaborating with developers to create social justice apps. She worked with the Emmy and Peabody award-winning journalist and filmmaker Bill Lichtenstein on a journalism and advocacy project, #KeepStudentsSafe, and is currently collaborating on a project on LGBTQ civil rights with the attorney Herman Duarte. She is developing articles on the work and purpose of

Generation X in rural America for *PBS Next Avenue*. She's a member of the Dramatists Guild and Hive Global Leaders and earned her MA in Journalism from Full Sail University. She lives in Estherville, IA, with her family and pets.

Twitter: @amyhpeterson



Angelica Recierdo is a healthcare writer, editor, content strategist, and poet. She earned her BS in Nursing from Northeastern University and her MS in Narrative Medicine from Columbia University. Angelica served as a Global Health Corps Fellow and AmeriCorps VISTA Member in 2016-17. Her work has spanned the healthcare industry, from government and pharmaceutical consulting to academia and health tech. Angelica is passionate about using her skills in writing, synthesis, and narrative humility to lift up people at the margins through a health equity and racial justice lens. She is currently working to build the “newsfeed of medicine” on

the editorial team at Doximity, the largest online medical professional network for US clinicians.

Fellows



Kathy Ritchie has nearly 20 years of experience reporting and writing stories for national and local media outlets. Kathy joined KJZZ in Phoenix, AZ, in 2014 as a general assignment reporter, covering breaking and spot news. She began focusing on aging issues in 2017 when she produced a two-part series about aging and intimacy. She was later asked to oversee a 10-part series entitled, “The State of Aging in the Valley.” At the time, it was one of the largest newsroom collaborations and culminated in a sit-down interview with Dr. Pauline Boss, author of *Loving Someone Who Has Dementia*.

Since then, she has reported on the challenges facing LGBT elders; oral healthcare in long-term-care facilities; senior homelessness; women in poverty; ambiguous loss and grief; grandfamilies (grandparents raising grandchildren), and what it means to age in our society. In 2019 Kathy produced a four-part podcast called, *The Recovering Caregiver*, which explored life after dementia. The final episode was nominated for an Edward R. Murrow Award.

More recently, her work has focused on the devastating impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on older adults and people with disabilities. She has reported on the struggle to get adequate testing inside long-term-care facilities, PPE shortages, the consequences of isolation on residents and rural seniors, caregiver burnout, and the complicated grief affecting some family members who lost loved ones in nursing homes, as well as the hurdles facing older adults during the vaccine rollout.

Over the years, Kathy’s work has also aired on NPR’s *Here & Now*. Kathy got her start in television at ABC News and later at FOX News in New York City. She earned her master’s degree from New York University in 2001 and her undergraduate degree from Arizona State University in 1999.

Twitter: @kathymritchie

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Maria Sestito covers senior issues for *The Desert Sun* as a Corps member of Report for America. She is also a Journalist in Aging fellow through the Gerontological Society of America and the Journalists Network on Generations. Maria earned her master's degree from the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism in May 2020. While there, Maria studied Arabic as a Foreign Language and Area Studies fellow and participated in the Bloomberg-UNC-Berkeley Business Journalism Diversity Program. She deepened her understanding of aging while working on a project with the Investigative Reporting Program, but first became interested in the area while covering crime and courts in Napa Valley prior to returning to school.

At the *Napa Valley Register*, Maria wrote about violations in nursing homes and elder abuse in addition to covering wildfires, murder trials, and mental health. She also wrote an award-winning lifestyle column called "Jersey Girl." Previously, Maria worked as a photographer and reporter at *The Daily News* in Jacksonville, NC. Originally from New Jersey, Maria earned her undergraduate degree in Middle Eastern Studies and Women and Gender Studies from Rutgers University. She now lives with her cat, Cosmo, in the Palm Springs area.

Twitter: @RiaSestito

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Rochelle Sharpe is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist with more than 30 years of experience. Now a freelance writer in Brookline, MA, Rochelle focuses on public health and education issues. Her freelance work has appeared in such publications as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Politico*, and *Prevention*. Earlier in her career, she worked as a staff writer for *The Wall Street Journal*, *Business Week*, and *USA Today*.

A reporter in Washington, DC, for 13 years, she covered the Food and Drug Administration, the Equal Opportunity Commission, and the US Department of Education. She also was a pioneer in computer-assisted reporting, analyzing government databases to delve into such topics as child abuse, police brutality, and unnecessary medical testing. Her investigative articles have been discussed at Congressional hearings as well as on *Oprah* and *The David Letterman Show*.

Rochelle also has worked as a journalism professor, editor, and writing coach, and helped create an investigative reporting workshop for high school students at Boston University.

Born and raised in Gary, IN, Rochelle graduated with honors from Yale University. She has received numerous accolades throughout her career, including a National Headliner award, a White House Correspondents journalism prize, and the Best of Gannett. In 2012-2013, she was a Knight Science Journalism fellow at MIT, where she studied the intersection of health and technology. She lives in Brookline with her husband and two daughters.

Twitter: @rochellewriter

Fellows



Misty Williams is a state news editor for *The AARP Bulletin*. Her coverage includes efforts to curb rising prescription drug costs, fight age discrimination in the workplace, widen access to retirement savings for workers, combat social isolation, and more.

Before joining AARP, she covered health care policy for *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and *Congressional Quarterly* in Washington DC for more than eight years. Her coverage has included in-depth pieces on the Affordable Care Act and attempts to repeal it, the Medicaid expansion debate, the nation's crumbling rural health care system, and the lack of mental health services for poor Americans. Also at *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, she helped coordinate breaking news and in-depth coverage of criminal justice and other key issues. Previously, she worked as an editor at the *Atlanta Business Chronicle* and as a real estate reporter at daily newspapers in Phoenix and California.

Misty was a 2014-2015 recipient of the Rosalynn Carter Fellowships for Mental Health Journalism. She is from California's Central Valley and is a graduate of California State University, Fresno.

Twitter handle: @Misty_Rae



Taylor Wizner is a Michigan-based public radio journalist who enjoys bringing the area's northern region news and perspectives to life through sound. Having reported on Michigan issues for more than five years, she is currently a reporter for Interlochen Public Radio, the NPR affiliate for northern lower Michigan, where she primarily covers healthcare issues and has spent the last year focused on the COVID-19 pandemic's impact. Her work has been featured on NPR and on public radio stations across Michigan. She has an MS from the Columbia Journalism School and a BA from the University of Michigan, where she got her start in journalism at the

student newspaper, *The Michigan Daily*. Taylor lives in Traverse City and enjoys hiking the northern hardwood forests and Lake Michigan sand dunes with her dog Willy.

Twitter: @twizner
