

# Journalism/Technology Innovators

Super User 26 January 2017



**Presented by: David DiStefano, Exude**

**1st Place: Larry Platt and Ajay Raju, The Philadelphia Citizen.** The Philadelphia Citizen is a nonprofit, non-partisan media organization that has a dual mission: to provide deeply reported journalism that emphasizes solutions that can move our region forward, and to actively reignite citizenship in and around Philadelphia. We seek to identify our innovators, call out those who stand in the way of progress and shine a light on the next generation of Philly leadership—all while giving Philadelphians the interactive tools they need to become more involved, engaged citizens. Philadelphia doesn't just need another news organization. It needs journalism that focuses on solutions that, together, we can help bring to

fruition. It needs a movement of citizens who refuse to outsource leadership to a political class long characterized by an insidious transactional culture. Larry and Ajay saw innovation between journalism and citizen engagement and are defining journalism for the future, commenting, "Receiving a Social Innovations Award validates The Citizen's theory of change: That Philadelphia needs a new narrative informed by solutions-based reporting and calls for constructive civic action. Because citizenship is not a spectator sport."

Partners Mr. Platt and Mr. Raju state: "Receiving a Social Innovation Award validates The Citizen's theory of change: That Philadelphia needs a new narrative informed by solutions-based reporting and calls for constructive civic action. Because citizenship is not a spectator sport".

**2nd Place: Marian Uhlman**, Executive Director, Healthy NewsWorks. Marian, a former public health journalist, is transforming the health of the greater Philadelphia through a dynamic student journalism program. Over 400 elementary and middle school students research, write and produce school newspapers, including feature articles on health, nutrition, fitness, and safety issues that affect schools and local communities. Since 2003, Marian has been empowering student journalists to promote health and literacy in their school communities, reinforcing Pennsylvania literacy standards, and developing the writing, reading, research and critical thinking skills of the student journalists.

Marian underscores her appreciation for this recognition, saying, "Healthy NewsWorks thanks Social Innovations Awards voters for recognizing our hard-working elementary and middle school journalists who are teaching their peers and communities how to lead healthier lives."

**3rd Place: Lawrence Souder**, Drexel University and Drexel Edits. Lawrence Souder founded and currently leads Drexel Edits, which aims to foster and support civil discourse and helps neighborhood nonprofit organizations to advance their missions through more effective communications while harnessing, in a systematic fashion, the academic community's and communications professionals' talents, resources, and passion for social justice. Services started with pro bono editing services and, in the three years since its founding, have expanded to include conventional face-to-face workshops (online webinars and a nonprofit communications degree minor are being developed) and technical assistance in communications for nonprofit staff; a certificate program in editing for volunteer editors; and a radio program with nonprofit communications staff as guests. Lawrence Souder identified lower-resourced neighborhood nonprofits' need for improving their communications pieces and has come up with and rallied resources for an innovative and efficient solution that benefits the nonprofits and their constituencies, helps the university to be more responsive to a community need,

and also enhances the professional skills of its volunteer editors.

Mr. Souder notes, "It's very gratifying to accept the 2017 Social Innovations Award because it acknowledges the work and commitment of many folks including: my volunteer editors at Drexel Edits, my colleagues at Drexel's Lindy Center for Civic Engagement, and our many nonprofit clients in the neighborhoods of Philadelphia."