

Media groups join forces to promote professional journalism with JournalismIS campaign

By Grace Peacock
Special to The IFP

A coalition of media outlets, associations, unions and journalism schools are banding together in a marketing campaign to spread the message that professional journalism just can't be beat.

Pegged 'JournalismIS', the campaign is backed by Metroland Media Group (The IFP is a Metroland newspaper) and will feature newspaper, television and online advocacy ads touting the value of professional journalism.

"Our starting point for this, was a general worry that journalists weren't doing enough to tell their own stories," said campaign spokesperson Mary Agnes Welch at the launch Friday, June 12 at the Ryerson School of Journalism in Toronto.

The former president of the Canadian Association of Journalists and reporter for the *Winnipeg Free Press* said: "We're not talking enough about the contribution we make nationally, but also on the



Ian Oliver, President of Metroland Media Group, (left), John Cruickshank, Publisher of the Toronto Star and President of Star Media Group, (centre) and Phillip Crawley, Globe and Mail Publisher and CEO., (right), listen to a guest speaker at the JournalismIS kick off at Ryerson. Photo by Dan Pearce

local level to Canadian public life. We're not talking about the value of an independent, reliable, ethical, impartial journalistic culture in Canada."

The advertisements, which began to appear across news out-

lets last weekend for the next four months, aim to rally the journalism community to increase awareness, recognition and support for professional journalism.

Ian Oliver, president of Metroland Media Group, agreed the me-

dia does a great job telling other people's stories, but not so much their own. And having professional journalists at the grassroots level is just important as covering stories on a national level, he said.

"Many people overlook the importance of community journalism. I think we're the fabric of the community," Oliver said in an interview.

"Metroland employs about 500 professional journalists — we're a significant part of the journalism world. And if Metroland isn't providing a forum for the community, investigating stories and providing information, nobody else is doing it."

The ads will promote 10 different principles key to journalistic standards, with messages such as "Journalism is committed to telling the truth"; "Journalism is getting answers" or "Journalism is essential to democracy".

Toronto Star reporter Chantal Hébert said she hopes the campaign sparks a conversation among the public about the role journalists

play in shedding light on important issues, but also in driving public engagement.

"I believe a better informed public will come to better informed decisions, but more importantly, a well informed public is one that will be more engaged — which is even more important than whether you think a decision is well informed or not."

She wrapped up with some advice for her fellow journalists.

"Beyond having a conversation... the best way to advance our cause is to do good journalism."

For more information visit www.journalismIS.ca or follow the Twitter hashtag #journalismis to become part of the conversation.

Campaign sponsors include Metroland Media Group, The Toronto Star, Ryerson School of Journalism, Unifor, Canadian Association of Journalists, The Globe and Mail, Bell Media CTV, Postmedia, Communications Workers of America, Newspapers Canada, TC Media, Winnipeg Free Press, CARTT, Gla-

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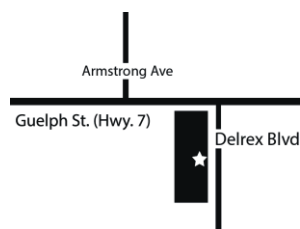
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