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## OPINION

# BEHIND THE COVERAGE: HOW WE ARE COVERING COVID-19

COLLABORATION HAS BEEN KEY TO COMPREHENSIVE CORONAVIRUS COVERAGE, WRITES MELINDA CHEEVERS



MELINDA CHEEVERS  
Column

*It's about trust. Our relationship with our readers is built on transparency, honesty and integrity. As such, we have launched a trust initiative to tell you who we are and how and why we do what we do. This article is part of that project.*

They say it takes a village to raise a child, well the same could be said about covering a pandemic.

In the span of a matter of days, coronavirus brought many aspects of life in Ontario to a grinding halt: school was suspended, municipal facilities were shut down, Premier Doug Ford declared a state of emergency and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau closed the country's borders.

It was a lot and it was happening all at once.

As Ontarians were left to reconcile how these developments affected them and their lives, reporters in newsrooms across the province were doing the same while also trying to report on the decisions, provide important context and find answers to the questions many people had.

Torstar has 164 community journalists working in newsrooms across in Ontario. From the Ottawa Valley to Kitchener-Waterloo Region, Muskoka down to Niagara, and everywhere in between, our journalists cover a lot of ground.

Harkening back to the village metaphor, when covering this pandemic our

newsrooms came together to ensure we were able to provide strong, quality content that will help to guide our readers through this difficult time by keeping them informed with accurate, reliable journalism.

As coronavirus made its way to North America, our newsrooms began covering the potential impact it would have on our lives here. Working together - much like we did in the lead up to the 2019 Federal Election - reporters examined every aspect of the virus and what it means to our readers.

And as COVID-19 has reached our communities, with confirmed cases, we continue that coverage with a focus not just on how many cases there are and who has it, but rather by taking a deeper look at the economic and health implications of coronavirus on our communities and how it's impacting our lives and our relationships.

We've also been focusing on the good. The people who are helping during these times of uncertainty, the #caremongering crowd who have stepped up to assist neighbours and strangers, and the front-line workers who are providing essential services to our communities.

Collaboration has been key in making this a reality. We've been sharing stories between newsrooms and

working together with our sister papers the Toronto Star, Hamilton Spectator, St. Catharines Standard and other daily publications to ensure there is little duplication - rather than have multiple reporters working on the same story, by sharing copy we're able to divvy up resources, cover more ground and tell more stories.

One thing is for certain, there is no 'business as usual' happening anywhere in the province at the moment and that is especially true in our newsrooms. Our newspapers are now being assigned, edited and slotted not in the traditional bricks and mortar newsrooms we're all used to working from, but instead from the work-from-home stations reporters and editors have set up in their kitchens, living rooms and, for some I'm sure, bedrooms and basements.

Our industry, like many others, has seen significant disruption to how it operates but that hasn't stopped us from publishing the news. We are committed to keeping our readers informed, even as we navigate through these challenges ourselves.

Remember, news is available at your fingertips online — 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

*We welcome your questions and value your comments. Email our trust committee at [trust@metro-land.com](mailto:trust@metro-land.com).*

*Melinda Cheevers is managing editor of Niagara this Week.*

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