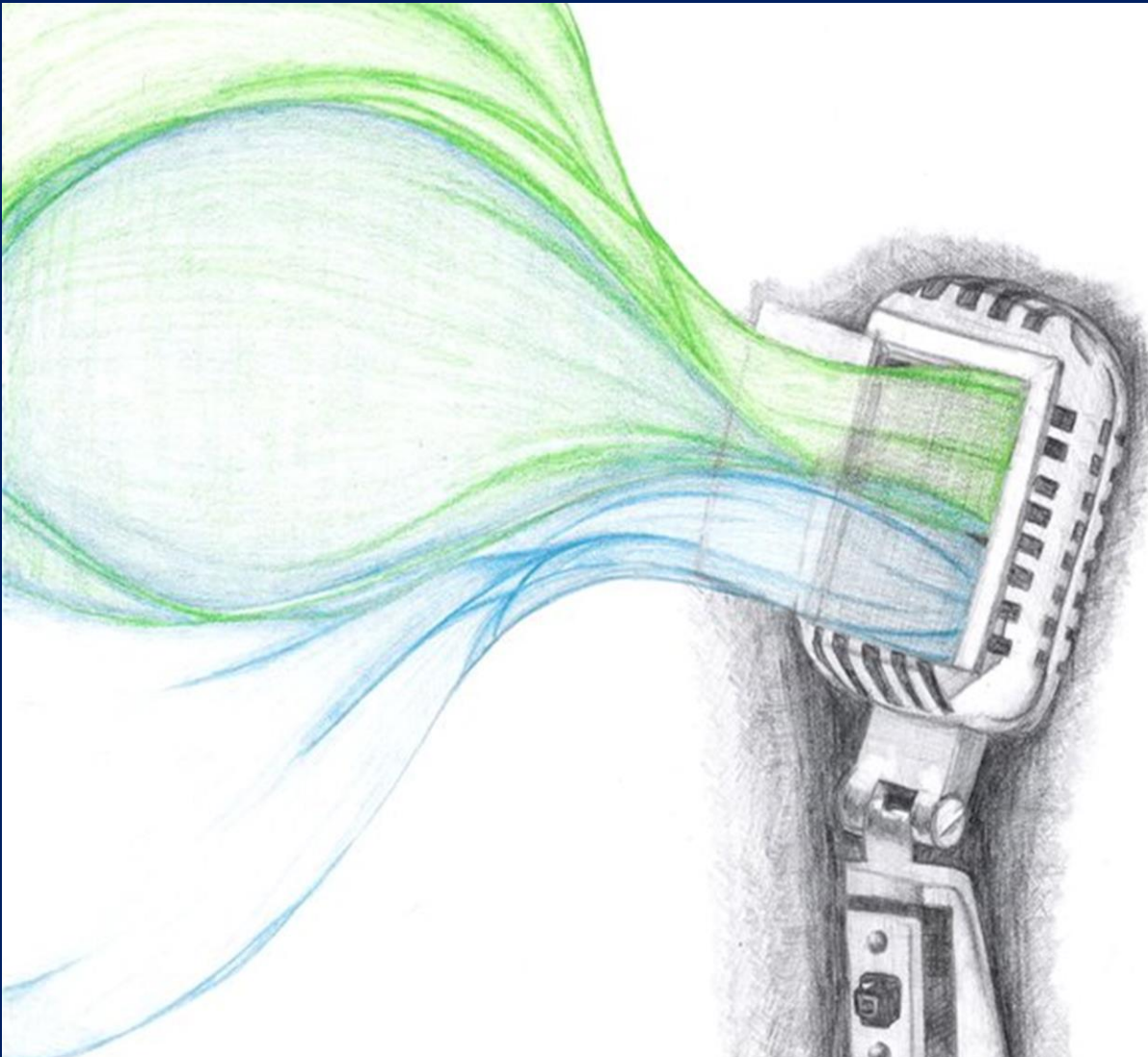


# 25 Reasons to Support Community Media

In honour of Ryakuga's 25 years of community broadcasting,  
empowering people and their communities

“All the Voices”



By: Mallery McGrath

### Reason 1: Get connected to your community

Many of us receive notifications and tweets from the global world we live in every day, but how do we receive information on what is happening in our communities? Local media such as community newspapers, local radio shows and community television channels are made by our community and for our community. It's local information for the local population!

### Reason 2: Get engaged in your community:

Local media communicates the current happenings, initiatives and opportunities in your community. You can find a cause you're passionate about, learn about volunteer opportunities with local grassroots groups or attend a local event to share ideas. Local politicians will even do interviews with local media venues on their plans and hopes for the community. It's a great way to get involved in your community and to get to know your community leaders...while maybe becoming one yourself!

### Reason 3: Transparency of Community Leadership

As mentioned in Reason 2, politicians often times engage in local media. Whether it is elected municipal leaders or committee members, creating platforms for them to discuss ongoing projects, their stance on community matters and future plans is a means of clear communication from leaders to the people in which they serve.

### Reason 4: Networking

When you become involved in the creation, facilitation or producing of community media, you meet a variety of people who are a part of a wide range of activities and endeavors in the community.

If you're interviewing a local coach, the newly elected mayor or a farmer about this year's crop you're bound to do some networking.

### Reason 5: Grassroots efforts get a platform to be heard

Where else can you find out about the great work committees, town councils or other community groups are doing in your town and region?

Community media, in comparison to mass media, concentrates on the ordinary happenings that influence a community and its people. *It's that ordinary vibe that makes community media extraordinary.*

### Reason 6: Accessibility

Community media is accessible. No gadgets, high speed internet access or satellite television is required to tune into your community. Community newspapers are readily available in stores and community locations, while community radio is broadcasted with local antennas and a local television studio is often in a central location and available on a local channel.

#### Reason 7: Preserve oral culture

Speaking from personal experience, community radio is an invaluable tool for preserving oral culture. In rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador so many traditions such as recitations, storytelling and singing are passed from generation to generation orally. Community radio allows for the entire community to hear live and previously recorded entertainment, exposing a whole new generation to that traditional oral culture.

#### Reason 8: The Sharing of Local Knowledge

When local people create local media, local knowledge is bound to be shared. Interviewing a local farmer or fisherman on their experiences in the area or seniors who have witnessed the passing of time and seasons will share knowledge that is unique to that geographical place. How special is that?

#### Reason 9: Pride of Place

As a continuum to Reasons 7 and 8, Pride of Place is created when such specialized knowledge and specific traditions are shared that are a part of your community. Such sharing of material is a tangible representation of information created and sustained in a place.

#### Reason 10: Intergenerational Learning

Similar to the preservation of oral culture and sharing of local knowledge, intergenerational learning is another reason to support community media. While seniors share their individual expertise and stories, youth also bring a wealth of information to local media including information related to youth engagement in the community, youth concerns and how to create/sustain a community where youth want to stay.

#### Reason 11: Preserve a community's history

Evidently similar to the preserving of oral culture, community media is a means of preserving a community's history as you often interview seniors and talk about traditions, but you also consistently capture the present. Media is often recorded and stored for an infinite amount of time and by doing so a large repertoire of community events, interviews and traditions will have been saved and will continue to be available.

#### Reason 12: Inclusivity

There is a role for each person in the community in the creating of community media. Be the interviewer, the interviewee, the editor, the announcer, a person who handles the technology, be involved in set up behind the scenes, arrange interviews, and suggest programming. Most importantly be engaged in what the community media offers.

### Reason 13: Youth Empowerment

Every youth should have the opportunity to participate in community media. Having witnessed the empowerment that one receives as a result of participating in community radio is inspiring. To echo the inclusivity of community media, youth can also find a volunteer role in such settings and consequently learn about their community, gain interviewing skills, public speaking skills, learn about broadcasting technology, etc.

### Reason 14: Promotes local businesses

It might be rare for the local corner store in a small community to have an advertisement on a large radio station, but it's common for community radio. Local stores, B&Bs and restaurants can be heard regularly on community radio discussing business in the community (e.g. the impact of tourist season in NL). It's also a fun project for youth to create jingles and radio commercials for local businesses!

### Reason 15: Community Promotion

Speaking of promoting local business, community media promotes its own community as well. It's likely that neighboring communities in the region will become interested in the media happening in your community and will want to participate, share, and receive information from the local media outlet.

### Reason 16: Community Networking

When local groups, grassroots committees and local citizens come together on local media venues, it allows for discussion and the sharing on commonalities. As a result, collaboration can occur as the needs of the community and groups are identified in a way that allows the engaged audience (the community!) to become involved.

### Reason 17: It strengthens a community's identity

When you are creating community media, you are creating a representation of your community, something that reflects identity of the place. The local people, the local concerns and local culture are at the forefront of the broadcast or publication. With such character reflected in community media, a place's individuality is easily identifiable and strengthened in such a global world.

### Reason 18: Provides or supports a sense of belonging

Similar to Reason 17, when your community is reflected in a media outlet amongst such mass media and your place is identifiable, relatable and familiar, it seems that it can inspire and foster a sense of belonging.

Reason 19: It allows for dialogue between the people and local government

One of special things about community media is that it allows for two way communication, unlike mass media. For example community radio will often host phone in shows and/or send roving reporters through communities for opinions from the local people while trying to incorporate as many opinions and voices as possible. A basic principle of participatory media is, after all, "all the voices."

Reason 20: People who live outside the community, who still want to be informed can stay informed

From personal experience, when rural communities in NL have hosted special, one time community radio events where it was being live streamed, people from around the globe who were from or had a connection to the area were tuning in and engaging via social media. People listened live from smart phones, tablets and computers to the familiar voices of home.

Reason 21: Preserving of local language and dialect (especially in community radio!)

While this inevitably relates back to the preserving of oral culture, it is an utmost personal interest, specifically for words and pronunciations from rural Newfoundland and Labrador. What joy it brings to hear the distinct, yet familiar, comforting dialect of the place you belong. Such language and dialect can be expressed over community radio and as a result will be remembered and shared

Reason 22: Socializing opportunity

Writing from personal experience, community radio events which I have participated in have brought socializing opportunities with it, both for the participants and listeners. A community radio studio/set up should be a common space, where people gather comfortably to discuss concerns on air and of course chat off air over a cup of tea. Likewise, the people who listen from their home can feel engaged and entertained.

Reason 23: When you support community media you are supporting your community

Whether you volunteer or are engaged in community media by listening to a broadcast or reading a local newspaper you are acknowledging and involving yourself in the community, and without the participants it would not be possible.

Reason 24: When you join community media, you will be joining an array of communities around the world who are utilizing locally made media

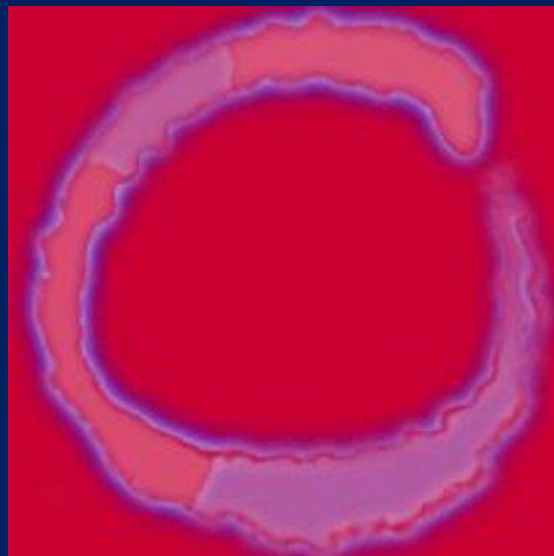
Yes, community media is not just a regional concept. Communities from Newfoundland and Labrador to Australia to Paraguay are home to community radio channels, made by the people and for the people.

Reason 25: You never know...

My 25<sup>th</sup> reason to get involved in community media, in honour of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ryakuga, is that you never know what it might lead to. On a personal note I got involved because I was working for a regional newspaper at the time and was asked to do a story on the organizing and broadcasting of a one-time community radio event that Ryakuga and government partners were doing in my community. Off I went to a planning meeting unsure of what to expect, and before long I was involved in the broadcast which consequently sparked my interest in community, specifically municipal politics which lead me to run in the next election, and the rest is history.

7 years later I'm still in awe of the tremendous work that Ryakuga does, and has been doing for 25 years!

*Bravo, Ryakuga! Here's to more voices,  
more community engagement and more  
grassroots participatory media.*



*Congratulations  
on 25 years!*