

## **Overlooked in Appalachia: Shining a light on regional issues**

Overlooked in Appalachia is a magazine born out of the desire to cover issues that the Appalachian region and communities face on a daily basis. This project began in August of 2019 and was published in December of 2019.

“If I could only choose one word to describe Overlooked in Appalachia, it would be special because it takes issues that are commonly overlooked in the Appalachian region and brings them to the forefront.” Said Michaela Platt, former Overlooked in Appalachia reporter and editor.

The magazine has been created by a group of passionate students and strong community leaders that have decided to face these issues and to educate the people inside and outside of the beautiful region.

“Overlooked in Appalachia is important because it sheds light on an issue that is often brushed under the table both in our region and in the country as a whole.” Said Kate Trabalka, former Overlooked in Appalachia reporter. “Through our coverage of these topics, we are able to educate more people about them.”

Last year, the reporters of the publication covered the opioid crisis.

“My beat was education but less so education about opioids and more so education about opioid reversal drugs and how university’s in our region protect our students from the opioid crisis.” Said Trabalka.

With different viewpoints and subjects, the publication’s content covered a wide range of how the crisis does not only result in consequence for the user but also for the community.

“The content varies from how the opioid epidemic has affected everyone from babies to rappers and everywhere in between.” Said Platt. “When you’re able to cover an issue from so many different viewpoints, you’re better able to paint the full picture for the reader.”

Reporters wrote in-depth articles and recorded videos and podcasts with in-field professionals to better understand how the opioid crisis happened and when it got out of control.

“Through the interview process for both my story and the video and podcasts, I met a variety of people within the university and the surrounding community who are trying to protect students from the opioid crisis.” Said Trabalka. “I also learned about several programs that are very helpful within the university geared towards protecting students. My peers and I put a lot of work into the publication through both the interview, writing and editing processes.”

Overlooked in Appalachia’s unconventional viewpoint makes the publication unlike any other in the area. The group behind it finds that facing these issues can make a difference in the future

by educating and letting people see what is happening behind the curtain. They found that people from the region did not know about these tough topics of discussion.

“Overall, my experience writing for Overlooked in Appalachia was amazing, mostly because it made me uncomfortable talking about subjects like opioids, overdoses and some peoples genuine need for pain relief was not an easy thing to do.” Said Platt. “But because I did it, I have a better understanding on how to report on tough issues and help my community.”

The publication will continue to report on shadowed issues with a new topic launching in February of 2020. Reporters will be following and conveying the message about climate change and social issues in the Southern Appalachia region.

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