

Media Pitch — Senior Homelessness and Cognitive Screening

Feature/Trend Pitch Architecture

Portfolio Work Sample — Liz Sahadi Smith

Collection

Media Intelligence & Relational
Capital

Engagement Type

Media Relations, Reporter
Outreach

Format

Feature/Trend Pitch Email

Topic

Senior Homelessness, Cognitive
Screening Program

Submitted

2024



Outcome: Generated media coverage. Results from this pitch are not included in the 544-placement, \$18M earned media figure cited elsewhere in this portfolio.

How to Read This Piece

Work Submission

This is an original work submission: a feature pitch email demonstrating a distinct media register from the IV hydration pitch that also appears in this portfolio. The two pitches together show the full range of pitch architecture – breaking news and feature/trend – and the discipline of knowing which a story requires.

What This Shows

- Feature pitch architecture
- Trend-frame engineering
- Multi-partner story construction
- Soft-close strategy for relationship-based access pitching
- The ability to work both the breaking news and feature registers with equal fluency

The Strategic Frame — Why This Pitch Is Different

The IV hydration pitch worked because something was happening on the streets that morning — four IVs, 102-degree heat, a team on the ground. That is breaking news energy, and the pitch matched it: short, urgent, specific, sent while the story was live.

This pitch is a feature pitch. There is no event happening today. There is a program that has been running for five months, a demographic shift with a hard deadline, and a coalition of partners doing something the media has not yet told. Feature pitches require different architecture: lead with the trend that makes the story inevitable, place the program inside that trend as the local proof point, then invite collaboration rather than reaction.

"Silver Tsunami" Hook

Evocative, repeatable and already present in national journalism. A reporter who pitches this story to their editor can use that phrase in a single sentence and have the assignment approved. That is the job of the hook.

The Soft Close

"Let us know how we can help bring this story to life" — appropriate for a feature pitch, where the reporter needs time and access, not urgency.

The Pitch

Subject: Addressing the Growing Crisis of Senior Homelessness in Arizona

Arizona is on the cusp of a demographic shift that will redefine the challenges our community faces. By 2030, adults over 65 will outnumber children under 18 – a **silver tsunami** that is already increasing the number of seniors facing homelessness.

To address this growing need, this healthcare nonprofit has partnered with a regional shelter services organization and a cognitive care partner on a program designed to support older adults without stable housing. For seniors facing homelessness, especially those with impaired cognition, the program provides early screenings, follow-up testing and tailored referrals. Over the past five months, a multidisciplinary team has come together regularly to ensure these individuals have the support and care they deserve.

This is not just about healthcare – it is about protecting the most vulnerable members of our community. Many of these seniors face barriers that make recovery nearly impossible: managing chronic illnesses without housing, following discharge instructions without a safe place to store medications, or simply trying to stay well without a clean, stable environment.

This collaborative effort is making a difference, and the community has already expressed need for it to grow. It is a story of innovation, compassion and partnerships working together to meet one of the biggest challenges of our time. We would love to share how this program is changing lives and demonstrate the impact of these partnerships. Let us know how we can help bring this story to life.

Pitch Architecture — What Each Element Does

Element	Strategic Purpose
"Silver tsunami" frame	Repeatable hook already in national journalism — gives the reporter a one-sentence pitch to their editor
2030 deadline	Transforms a social issue into a ticking clock — makes the story time-sensitive without a single-day event
Two-month program run	Provides proof of concept without requiring the reporter to cover a launch
Multi-partner coalition	Expands the story's stakeholder footprint and increases the number of sources available for a feature
Soft close	Signals relationship-based access — the reporter can shape the story and get what they need, rather than receive a pre-packaged announcement

Reading the Two Pitches Together

This pitch and the IV hydration pitch were written for entirely different news moments, and they read differently by design.

IV Hydration Pitch

Breaking news energy – short, urgent, specific, sent while the story was live. Four IVs, 102-degree heat, a team on the ground. The pitch matched the moment.

Senior Homelessness Pitch

Feature pitch architecture – longer, trend-framed, relationship-based close. A program running five months, a demographic shift with a hard deadline, a coalition of partners doing something the media has not yet told.

- The difference in length, urgency and close reflects pitch strategy – not inconsistency. A communications leader who works both registers, and knows which one a story requires, turns media relationships into durable institutional assets.

About Liz Sahadi Smith

Strategic communications executive with 25 years of experience architecting institutional narrative, governing AI-era brand reputation and building resilience infrastructure for organizations operating under high public scrutiny.



Narrative Arbitrage — Category Engineering

Engineered the climate-adaptive healthcare category to bypass political friction and generate **\$18M in earned media value**. The category was adopted by partner organizations statewide.



Algorithmic Brand Governance

Architects organizational Share of Model strategy, ensuring authoritative citation status in AI-generated outputs and governing how institutional reputation is synthesized across media and information platforms.



Resilience Architecture — Reputational De-risking

Designs crisis communications infrastructure that outlasts staff transitions and survives narrative hijacking. Built systems that achieved **143% positive sentiment** across 113 consecutive days of record heat and contributed to the first heat death decline in a decade.



Relational Capital Stewardship

Manages high-value media and institutional relationships as balance-sheet assets — PBS/WETA documentary feature, coverage in The New York Times, Reuters, AP, NPR, BBC and Politico. **91% award win rate** — 20 wins from 22 submissions.



Growth Operations — Narrative ROI

7x donation increase in one week: \$15,000 annually to more than \$100,000 in seven days. Verified by Chief Development Officer. 544 national media placements generating \$18M in earned media value, verified by Cision.

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