



2018 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY: TV



“WKAR provides meaningful platforms that generate healthy community interactions. There is nothing more important to our work than developing strong relationships with community partners.”

April Clobes, President, MSUFCU

Connecting people to powerful ideas that inspire personal growth, exploration of our world and positive change.



WKAR Television is a valuable part of Michigan’s Capital Region.

The station provides public broadcasting service on four WKAR television stations (as well as WKAR Radio).

Serving a 19-county viewing area, WKAR is involved with those communities through a variety of activities including: Ready to Learn; WKAR Family, public community screenings and discussions; participation in community events and with station representatives serving on a variety of boards and community committees; and community support through student learning internships.

In 2018, WKAR provided these vital local services:

- Four Television Stations
 - WKAR-HD
 - WKAR-Create
 - WKAR-World
 - WKAR-PBSKIDS
- Three Radio Stations
 - WKAR-AM 870kHz
 - 90.5 WKAR-FM
 - 105.1 WKAR-FM
- Online Streaming of TV and Radio programming
- Ready To Learn educational workshops
- Indie Lens Pop-Up screenings/discussions
- National and local programming including news, public affairs, arts, health, education.
- 60+ hours of children’s programming per week.

WKAR’s local services had deep impact in Michigan’s Capital Region.

Through the station’s partnerships with local schools and agencies, WKAR Family initiatives have reached thousands of local children and their families who are prepared for school and are better supported through PBS KIDS and WKAR resources.

Locally produced programs target issues of importance to the community, and our free public screenings feature speakers and panelists of local experts and MSU faculty who lead dynamic discussions with participants.



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2017-2018 was a year of firsts for WKAR as we formed new partnerships and explored innovative approaches to further the mission of public broadcasting. As we reflect on WKAR's accomplishments over the past year, we are humbled by the support of our community and grateful for the capacity to serve.

Innovation

WKAR strives to be the leader in broadcast innovation, and, in spring 2018 became the first public television station to be granted an experimental license for broadcasting in ATSC 3.0. We were honored to host FCC Commissioner Michael O'Reilly for a visit in June, when he came to make the announcement. WKAR began broadcasting in the new standard in September, and we're preparing to celebrate the **NextGen Media Innovation Lab** grand opening at WKAR/MSU this winter. The purpose of the Lab is to facilitate research and the creation of applications for the new television standard, with a focus on education and public service.

Education

WKAR Family is our comprehensive educational initiative aimed at forming connections to help kids be resilient, lifelong learners. Within WKAR Family, WKAR and MSU researchers collaborated throughout 2017-2018 to create a set of video shorts featuring helpful tips for families and caregivers on topics including literacy, exercise and eating healthy. Our education team leveraged PBS KIDS programming through events and engagements to improve literacy in our communities, and completed a series of **Ready To Learn** workshops in the Lansing and Jackson areas through a PNC Grant the station received. In addition, WKAR received a CPB Education Innovation Grant to provide parent engagement.

WKAR also partnered with MSU's College of Communication Arts and Sciences, MSU's College of Education, PBS KIDS, and the Lansing School District to launch the **PBS KIDS Playtime Pad Research Project**. This collaboration and study made it possible to give a tablet with a specialized educational app to each of the 1,000 Lansing kindergartners.

PBS KIDS Day at WKAR took place in January and celebrated the 2nd birthday of WKAR Family and the PBS KIDS 24/7 channel. Our featured guests were Splash and Bubbles, and Rob Sams and Laura Sams from the series "Get Your Feet Wet!" We welcomed more than 400 families to explore, investigate, and have fun with PBS KIDS and WKAR Family resources.

Original Content

In its fourth season, WKAR's educational series **Curious Crew** continued to challenge kids to "keep experimenting" through a hands-on learning approach focused on STEM. Casting Call for Curious Crew drew 175 young scientists to the station and encouraged them to have fun and notice science in their everyday lives. In 2018, we added new segments encouraging girls to consider careers in STEM fields. **Curious About Careers** features a young investigator exploring possibilities as she visits women at work. Full Curious Crew episodes and Curious About Careers segments are offered to Michigan stations, nationally through NETA, and available at wkar.org.

Curious Crew Roadshows are local engagements that bring the Curious Crew to neighborhood libraries, schools, STEM fairs and community events to guide hands-on science investigations.

Political coverage in 2017-2018 included **Off The Record with Tim Skubick** which celebrated 48 years as Michigan's only statewide political talk show, with another 52 episodes. New, in early 2018, is the addition of a livestream of each episode online and on Facebook LIVE.



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WKAR's original music series, **BackStage Pass**, features live studio and festival performances and offers a look behind the scenes as artists reveal the inspiration behind the music. Season 8 showcased nationally renowned acts ranging from Michigan folk standout Joshua Davis, Flint hip-hop artist Mama Sol, and more. BackStage Pass is distributed by NETA and is seen in over half U.S. TV markets. Other key local impact projects in 2018 included collaborations with researchers around breast cancer, diabetes awareness, and other health-related grants.

Community Engagement

WKAR hosted many public events and engagements throughout the year. In 2017-2018, guests were treated to four screenings of Independent Lens films, which are followed by discussion with a panel of local experts on the topic. We strive to not only show the film, but to create open discussion on what the film means to our community.

Of particular note, WKAR hosted just over 200 students and community members in our studios for a screening of the film "Dolores" which also featured a conversation with Dolores Huerta herself. This unique and free community event offered WKAR an opportunity to collaborate with 19 different organizations to convene a diverse group of people for conversation. Organizations included MSU's Documentary Film Lab, The Chicano/Latino Studies Program, MSU's College of Communication Arts and Sciences, MSU's Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives, and more.

In fall 2017, WKAR engaged around **The Vietnam War** documentary series from Ken Burns and Lynne Novick that aired on PBS nationally, bringing the national campaign to our local community and honoring and remembering our veterans and their families. Events included: Oct. 5, 2017: Screening and discussion **The Vietnam War: An Evening With WKAR** featuring veterans of Vietnam and an exhibit from our MSU Museum and MSU archives; Nov. 2, 2017: **A Service of Remembrance** at the Michigan Vietnam War memorial; and Nov. 10, 2017: **Pop-Up Stories: Stories from the Frontlines**, a story-telling event.

In June 2018, we welcomed PBS President Paula Kerger to our station for a series of events, meetings, and tours.

WKAR was also around town at local events, including the Great Lakes Folk Festival, East Lansing Arts Festival, Lansing JazzFest and Michigan Blues Fest.

In response to a challenging time on our University campus in early 2018, WKAR partnered with local organizations to connect those affected by the Larry Nassar scandal, with free information, resources, and services on issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, and more. The collaborations yielded a series of :30 segments called **WKAR Connects** and provided a much needed service for organizations trying to reach the people who need them most.

Through researched-based collaborations, creative original programming, innovative technological advances, and meaningful engagement, 2017-2018 offered WKAR a path to continue positive impact in our local community and beyond. We plan to continue this move forward with additional partners, programming, and engagement and look forward to serving our local communities and more.



WKAR Impacts through Screenings and Open Discussion

During Fall 2017 and Winter/Spring 2018, WKAR presented a number of **Indie Lens Pop-Up** events, featuring the Independent Lens films **I Am Not Your Negro**, **Tell Them We Are Rising**, **Dolores**, which featured Dolores Huerta (pictured), and **Wendell Berry's Kentucky**. This series allows WKAR to connect with our community by featuring films about diverse topics followed by meaningful community dialogue. The post discussion panelists include experts from within Michigan State University as well as in community organizations.

Convening Conversation Around *The Vietnam War*

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Curious Crew takes STEM Investigations on the Road

WKAR's original kids science program, **Curious Crew**, features Michigan students and host Rob Stephenson as they take a hands-on approach to investigating principles of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Curious Crew took those investigations on the road to engage with the WKAR community at events such as MSU Science Festival, East Lansing Art Festival, MSU's Grandparents University, and the Capital Area District Libraries.



WKAR Collaborates, Brings PBS KIDS Playtime Pads to Lansing Kindergartners

Concept

Create meaningful collaborations with community partners and university contacts to impact and engage our young learners within our largest, local school district. The **Playtime Pad Research Project** investigates the effectiveness of tablet-based learning initiatives in early childhood math literacy, while providing access to the latest digital learning tools for students, teachers, and parents. Initiated by WKAR and MSU's College of Communication Arts and Sciences, the project is a unique partnership connecting PBS KIDS content, researchers in the College of Education at MSU, and teachers and families in the Lansing School District.

Reach in the Community

By December 2017, all 1,006 kindergartners in the Lansing School District received a PBS KIDS Playtime Pad equipped with PBS KIDS games and videos, and a special Math Games Study app designed by PBS KIDS software developers in consultation with early childhood education researchers at MSU. The project studied the effectiveness of tablet-based learning in early childhood math literacy, while providing access to the latest digital learning tools for students, teachers and parents. The Lansing School District is the largest in WKAR's viewing area, and serves families and students in need.

Through the partnership created, this project was funded in part by National Science Foundation, College of Communication Arts and Sciences, WKAR Public Media, Office of the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies at MSU, and Lansing Rotary Foundation.

Impact and Community Feedback

One year into the research project, teachers, researchers, and families all have indicated positive impact and insightful results. We continued this project and collaborations for a second year, launching in Fall 2018, that included new research initiatives identified by Lansing schools as vital to better meet Michigan's third grade literacy benchmarks.



This past year, WKAR helped children learn to read, get excited about science, and be ready for school.

We expanded our programs and specials to showcase Michigan Capital Region talents and professions, and we addressed timely issues.

We increased awareness around local issues, provided discussions, and featured world-class MSU researchers.

As a result, membership and viewership are up and our audiences are more diverse.

“On behalf of the Lansing School District, we would like to thank WKAR for their unbelievable support and commitment to the kindergarten students in our district. Over the last few years, the WKAR team launched the Playtime Pad initiative in partnership with the Lansing School District to provide a free Playtime Pad to every kindergarten student in the Lansing School District. This initiative continues to bring a lot of joy and educational value to our students and staff. The WKAR staff are a joy to work with and so professional in their support and delivery of the Playtime Pads to our schools and students.”

Eldon McGraw
Director of Community and Outreach
Lansing School District

“WKAR-TV makes good on its mission to provide programming and community events that educate and inspire.”

Geri Alunit Zeldes
Professor, MSU College of Communication Arts
and Sciences

“We are proud of their continued efforts, collaborations, and community support.”

Mark Buzzitta, Capital Area District Libraries

WKAR plays an essential role in Michigan’s Capital Region, as well as at Michigan State University, as a key source for quality children’s educational programming, showcasing local artists, musicians, and nonprofit community organizations, and offering a variety of engaging forums for community members to share their talents, interests, concerns, and cultural backgrounds.
