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 plus 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 on community boards and committees; and community support through student learning internships.

In 2019, 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
- Educational workshops
- Community-wide family events
- 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 station partnerships with local schools and agencies, WKAR Family initiatives centered on PBS Kids and additional resources reached thousands of local children and their families to better prepare them for school.

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.

“WKAR is a highly-valued asset to our community and we could not be happier to collaborate with such a caring, trusted, and purpose-driven organization.”

*Erik Larson, Executive Director*

*Impression 5 Science Center*
Connecting people to powerful ideas that inspire personal growth and positive change is the mission of WKAR. WKAR serves that mission through broadcast services WKAR HD, World, Create and PBS Kids 24/7; through research partnerships at our host Big Ten university; through a rich digital presence across multiple platforms; and through educational outreach and engagement events across our community.

**Technology**

During July 2018 – June 2019, WKAR continued its work as a leader in ATSC 3.0 broadcasting and NextGen TV innovation to benefit public broadcasting in communities across the nation. WKAR launched the Media Innovation Lab on the campus of Michigan State University in 2018. The lab is a hub for exploring NextGen TV applications for public alerting, educational content and fundraising for public broadcasters.

**Education**

**WKAR Family** is aimed at forming connections to help kids be resilient, lifelong learners. The initiative includes PBS Kids 24/7, video shorts offering research-based tips for parents and educators, and outreach to share PBS educational resources with parents and educators.

WKAR continued work through 2018-2019 to build a library of WKAR Family video shorts featuring research-based, helpful tips for parents and educators. The library of WKAR Family video shorts now exceeds 60 features available online and offered nationally for broadcast.

The **WKAR PBS Kids 24/7** channel continues to offer free, over-the-air educational children’s programming around the clock and WKAR's primary HD channel airs 57 hours of PBS Kids shows per week during daytimes.

In 2018-2019, WKAR Family’s **PBS Kids Playtime Pad Project** entered its second year. Over 2,000 PBS Kids Playtime Pads, pre-loaded with educational apps, have been provided to kindergartners in the Lansing School District.

The educational series **Curious Crew** continues to challenge kids to explore science through hands-on learning activities. Episodes include a **Curious About Careers** segments featuring young investigators exploring career possibilities by visiting women working in STEM-related professions.

**Curious About Careers** is also available as standalone shorts for broadcast and on-demand viewing online. **Curious Crew** and **Curious About Careers** are offered nationally each season through NETA.

The **Curious Crew Roadshow** visits neighborhood libraries, schools, fairs and community events to guide hands-on science investigations. In 2019, ten Roadshow appearances engaged more than 1,500 kids and parents.

**Political Coverage**

Political coverage in 2018-2019 included the **2019 Michigan State of the State** address and the annual **Evening with the Governor** series. WKAR distributes these specials to commercial and public media stations across Michigan.

**Off the Record** celebrated 49 years as Michigan's only statewide political talk show, with 52 new weekly episodes, and featured special debates with candidates for Michigan secretary of state and Michigan GOP senatorial elections.
The WKAR World channel aired congressional hearings and other special coverage live and with primetime repeats in 2019.

**WKAR Originals**

WKAR served as the presenting station for *J Schwanke’s Life in Bloom* and *Food Over 50*. These two new how-to shows are distributed through APT and air on Create TV nationwide.

**BackStage Pass** debuted its ninth season in October 2018. The new season showcases musical performances including blues artist Karen Lovely, pop-world group SIAS, reality show contestants Jack + The Bones, and more. *BackStage Pass* is distributed by NETA and airs in TV markets across the country.

As part of the 2018 MSU Homecoming activities, WKAR produced a special film screening of “The Road to Little Rock” and streamed live a conversation with Homecoming Grand Marshal Ernest Green, one of nine African-American teenagers seeking enrollment at an all-white high school in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957.

**Community Engagement**

In 2018-2019, WKAR connected with our community at more than 65 events drawing over 47,000 attendees, including nearly 7,000 at WKAR-hosted events.

Community screenings included the documentary *Making It: Latino Students Pathways to College*, in partnership with Detroit Public Television; and films in the *Indie Lens Pop-Up* series.

Summer/Fall 2018 included local events and partnerships around PBS’ national *The Great American Read* campaign. Locally, WKAR hosted screenings, voting centers and literacy events around the national initiative.

**PBS Kids Day at WKAR** in January welcomed over 800 kids and families to celebrate PBS Kids, explore hands-on activities presented by WKAR partners, and pose for photos with popular PBS Kids character *SuperWhy!*

WKAR could also be found in the community at the Great Dairy Adventure, Michigan BluesFest, East Lansing Arts Festival, MSU Science Festival, literacy events, Boys and Girls Club, school science fairs, teen parent workshops, book giveaways, and more.

**Leadership - Local to National**

WKAR is fortunate to have a leadership role to give our local community a voice within the public broadcasting system nationally. WKAR Director of Broadcasting and General Manager Susi Elkins serves on the PBS Board of Directors, on the board of America’s Public Television Stations (APTS), and the PBS Children’s Media & Education Station Leadership Committee. Additional WKAR staff members serve on national committees and share expertise through presentations at public broadcasting and industry conferences and exhibitions.

**In Conclusion**

The WKAR mission to connect people to powerful ideas brought forth NextGen TV technology, expanded the impact of our educational services, reached new audiences through digital media, and leveraged new partnerships to create fun, educational and informative experiences in our community.
**WKAR Impacts through Screenings and Open Discussion**

During Fall 2018 and Winter/Spring 2019, WKAR presented a number of Indie Lens Pop-Up events, featuring the Independent Lens films *Rumble*, *The Providers* (pictured), *Won’t You Be My Neighbor*, and *Charm City*. This series allows WKAR to connect with our community by featuring films about diverse topics followed by meaningful community dialogue. Discussion panelists include experts from Michigan State University and community organizations.

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**Political Programs Offers Insight into Key Michigan Issues**

WKAR political coverage in 2018-2019 included the 2019 Michigan State of the State address and the annual Evening with the Governor (pictured) series. Off the Record celebrated 49 years as Michigan's only statewide political talk show, with 52 new weekly episodes, and featured special debates with candidates for Michigan secretary of state and Michigan GOP senatorial primary elections. All programs were produced by WKAR and offered viewers key insight as well as meaningful dialogue via social media.

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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 (pictured), East Lansing Art Festival, MSU's Grandparents University, and the Capital Area District Libraries.
Create Content to Create Impact: WKAR’s Calendar Interstitials Focus on Early Learning

Concept
Based on the concept of “Learning Begins at Home,” WKAR formed partnerships with our local Ingham Intermediate School District and Ingham Great Start Collaborative to create local interstitials to highlight calendars that focus on early learning and literacy. The calendars are offered free to the public and provide easy tips for families to extend learning in their homes each day. Key points from the calendars were used to create educational content that airs on WKAR and shared via social media.

The calendars are user-friendly and unique as they can be used throughout the year. The concept was to encourage families to use the free calendars, year after year, as their children grow and develop, and work to improve early learning and literacy in our community.

Topics highlighted in the interstitials and in the calendars include activities to support learning and school readiness in the home, research-based developmental milestone information, and literacy skills crucial to a child becoming a proficient reader.

Reach in the Community, Impact
WKAR’s mission to decrease the negative impacts of the newly legislated Third Grade Reading Law instilled a sense of urgency concerning promotion and reach around this literacy initiative. The calendar interstitials began airing in February 2019 and continue to air regularly throughout the 24-hour viewing timeframe.

Families have provided positive feedback from seeing the interstitials on WKAR and on their excitement to learn about the calendars. To date over 6,000 calendars have been distributed to families including at direct engagement events by WKAR staff members.

In all, WKAR produced 13 learning calendar interstitials promoting literacy and school readiness in the home. Segments have aired over 300 times beginning January 2019 and continue to air daily on WKAR reaching over 246,000 families in WKAR’s local community.
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.

WKAR plays an essential role in Michigan’s Capital Region and at Michigan State University as a key source for quality children’s educational programming; as a showcase for 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.

“WKAR provides meaningful platforms that generate healthy community interactions.”

April Clobes
President, Michigan State University
Federal Credit Union

“This since my positive experience working with WKAR, I have personally leveraged their work to strengthen proposals to the National Science Foundation and shared clips of the Curious Crew series during my talks at conferences. For all of the positive contributions they have made in supporting the MSU community, engaging young people across the state, and attracting the next generation of leaders in STEM education, I believe WKAR is very much deserving of this award [Station of the Year] and I am grateful for their partnership.”

Lalita Udpa
Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Michigan State University

“We recognize the significant influence that WKAR has on our community, and we treasure the opportunity to partner with this station for this exciting event.”

Jennifer Sturdy, Vice President, Client and Community Relations Director, Office of the Regional President, Mid-Michigan, PNC