



2016 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY: TV



“This station is a vital part of our community because of the value it has for its viewers.”

Deborah Zeiler
WKAR Viewer and Supporter

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 advancement.

The station provides public broadcasting service on three 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; 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 2016, WKAR provided these vital local services:

- One Television Station with three channels
 - WKAR-HD
 - WKAR-Create
 - WKAR-World
- Two Radio Stations
 - WKAR-AM 870kHz
 - WKAR-FM/HD 90.5
- 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, Ready To Learn has reached over 100,000 children and their families who have learned to develop more positive learning skills through workshop participation.

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 undertook a bold challenge in 2015/2016: lead the way into a new, exciting era of television broadcasting. The capital region's source for PBS and local original TV, WKAR formed new partnerships and explored innovative approaches to extend the station's longstanding commitment to connecting people to powerful ideas that inspire personal growth and positive change.

Here's where that commitment led us.

WKAR Originals

Political coverage included the **Michigan State of the State** broadcast, during which Gov. Snyder apologized to citizens for government's handling of the Flint water crisis. WKAR takes the lead on distributing this special to stations across Michigan, along with **Evening with the Governor**.

Off the Record with Tim Skubick celebrated 45 years as Michigan's only statewide political talk show, with another 52 episodes. Highlights included the broadcast with former Rep. Todd Courser following his resignation from the Michigan House, examination of the refugee situation in Michigan with Sen. David Knezek and Skubick's one-on-one interview with Frank Kelley, the nation's longest serving state attorney general.

WKAR's music series, **BackStage Pass**, featured debut broadcasts of 20 episodes, plus new recordings at Lansing JazzFest and Michigan BluesFest. **BackStage Pass** is distributed by NETA and has been seen in over half of the TV markets across the country.

Forte follows high school students through rehearsal, performance and life as they strive for excellence at judged music festivals in Michigan. WKAR visited schools in Flint, Grand Haven, and points in between for seven new episodes.

Early in 2016 we celebrated 27 seasons of **QuizBusters**, with over sixty teams competing for titles and prizes including more than \$30,000 in scholarship offers at MSU.

WKAR also produced annual local specials including the **31st Annual Silver Bells in the City**, a two-hour live production featuring an electric light parade and the lighting of the state Christmas tree.

Community Engagement

Fall 2015 and Winter 2016 introduced the **Indie Lens Pop-Up** series, featuring the Independent Lens films **Stray Dog, Autism in Love, In Football We Trust, Peace Officer** and **The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution**. This series allows WKAR to connect with our community by featuring a film and post discussion. The post discussion panelists include experts from within Michigan State University as well as in community organizations.

WKAR's **An Evening with WKAR** event follows a similar format as the Indie Lens Pop-Up series and featured the films "The Raising of America" in March 2016 and "Beyond Bollywood" in April 2016.

WKAR once again participated in the annual Michigan State University **Homecoming Parade** to support and interact with our local East Lansing community.

Masterpiece Preview Screenings continue to be extremely popular. The final season preview screening of **Downton Abbey** drew over 540 enthusiastic fans to WKAR Studio A across multiple sold-out showings.

Programs are available online and engagement is fostered across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Education

WKAR Family is a new, comprehensive initiative aimed at forming connections to help kids be resilient, lifelong learners. WKAR and MSU researchers collaborated through 2016 on the plan to create original family programming as a vehicle for outreach and research on early childhood development. The groundwork is now laid for WKAR Family to debut in 2017 alongside the launch of the new **WKAR PBS Kids 24/7 channel**.

For its third season, educational series **Curious Crew** added a new segment encouraging girls to consider careers in STEM fields. **Curious About Careers** features young investigator Janellyn exploring possibilities as she visits women at work. Janellyn meets and is inspired by nuclear physicist Artemis Spyrou, pediatrician Mona Hanna-Attisha and energy manager Mary Palkovich, to name just a few. Curious About Careers segments have been packaged as standalone shorts for broadcast and on-demand viewing online. Full Curious Crew episodes and Curious About Careers segments will be offered to Michigan stations and nationally through NETA as part of the WKAR Family initiative launching in 2017. CuriosityGuides for free download provide step-by-step instructions to help viewers conduct their own investigations at home.

Curious Crew Roadshow, in partnership with Capital Area District Libraries (CADL), brings the Curious Crew to neighborhood libraries, schools and community events to guide hands-on science investigations.

WKAR Ready To Learn (RTL) continues to offer workshops to help parents learn how to work with their children to increase literacy skills. In partnership with Capital Area Head Start program, RTL has reached over 80,000 children and teachers since inception. In addition, WKAR brought **PBS Kids Day** to the CADL Downtown Lansing branch in October to promote good reading and learning habits.

Community in Crisis

With the **Empower Flint** mobile app, WKAR and MSU put the power of information in the hands of residents navigating the challenges of the ongoing water crisis in Flint. The app provides water related news, safety tips, lead level updates and more. Developed in collaboration with the people of Flint, the app has had more than 20,000 screen views since it launched in March 2016.

Faces of Flint examines day-to-day life in a city where the water supply is not safe. Produced in collaboration with the MSU School of Journalism, the series features video shorts and audio features aired on WKAR TV, 90.5 FM and AM 870, and available online. The video short, "Faces of Flint: Hard to Swallow," by hip-hop artist Mama Sol, has been viewed more than 50,000 times on Facebook.

WKAR Impact through Screenings and Open Discussion

Fall 2015 and Winter 2016 introduced the **Indie Lens Pop-Up** series, featuring the Independent Lens films **Stray Dog**, **Autism in Love**, **In Football We Trust**, **Peace Officer** and **The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution**. This series allows WKAR to connect with our community by featuring a film and post discussion. The post discussion panelists include experts from within Michigan State University as well as in community organizations.



WKAR and MSU offer Tuition Scholarships to QuizBusters Champs

QuizBusters features over 60 high school teams competing for bragging rights and tuition scholarship offers to Michigan State University. Fall 2015 brought QuizBusters' 27th season and an updated set and lighting design optimized for HD production.

This series is so popular that over one-third of the competing schools come from outside WKAR's coverage area.



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. In its third season, 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 and the Capital Area District Libraries.





WKAR Responds to a Community in Crisis: Flint

Concept

Faced with an ongoing water crisis, the residents of Flint, Michigan were looking for help and a place to share their stories and WKAR responded.

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Reach in the Community

A highlight of the WKAR Indie Lens Pop-Up film screening series was the presentation in Flint, Michigan, of **T-Rex: Her Fight for Gold**. This film, based on Olympic boxing champion and Flint native Claressa "T-Rex" Shields, gave WKAR a unique opportunity to engage the Flint community through a film they were personally connected to, and with meaningful discussion that took place after the film. The post film discussion, led by Shields' coaches and the filmmaker, delved into challenges faced by many young Flint residents today. More than 100 community members came out to see the film at Berston Field House, the gym where Shields trained.



Impact and Community Feedback

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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, both membership and viewership are up and our audiences are more diverse.

“We recognize the vital work that is done by public broadcasting and, especially, WKAR. Its relationship to Mid-Michigan and to Michigan State University makes for a more informed, sophisticated, and educated community. It adds to the richness and fabric of our community.”

- Stephen L. Hicks
Co-CEO, Siena Wealth Advisors

“My laboratory was recently featured in the children’s science program called Curious Crew. WKAR provides our community with the opportunity to be exposed to a wide array of areas including science, engineering and history. WKAR’s work is far reaching into our community and provides programming with both entertainment and educational value.”

- Dr. Tamara Reid Bush, PhD
Dept. of Mechanical Engineering
Michigan State University

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.
