



# 2017 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY: TV



*“Supporting WKAR and the work they are doing with Curious About Careers has been both personally and professionally rewarding for me.”*

Sonia Rana, M.D., L.O. Eye Care

## 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 2017, WKAR provided these vital local services:**

- One Television Station with four channels
  - WKAR-HD
  - WKAR-Create
  - WKAR-World
  - WKAR-PBSKIDS
- Two Radio Stations
  - WKAR-AM 870kHz
  - 90.5 WKAR-FM
  - 94.5 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 have learned to develop more positive learning skills.

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.



## 2017 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

WKAR Television brought to our community a large educational initiative and a big celebration to go with it in 2016-2017. In January 2017, we officially launched the new PBS KIDS 24/7 channel and introduced our new educational platform: **WKAR Family**. This exciting era offered many new opportunities for the year.

With the addition of **WKAR Family**, we formed new partnerships and explored innovative approaches to connect with the station's longstanding commitment to our community. WKAR focused on several projects to extend our station brand to our communities, and continued to connect our audience to powerful ideas that inspire personal growth and positive change.

### Education

The new **WKAR Family** is a comprehensive initiative aimed at forming connections to help kids be resilient, lifelong learners. WKAR and MSU researchers collaborated to create original programming as a vehicle for outreach and research on early childhood development. A series of educational video segments produced by WKAR featured helpful tips on themes including "Learning Math Through Play" and "Infant Signs."

Along with **WKAR Family**, WKAR launched the PBS Kids 24/7 channel. Offering free, over-the-air educational children's programming is one of the most important things we can do as a station to help educate children who may not have access to paid television or to the Internet. With this mission in mind, WKAR worked with MSU College of Education, MSU College of Communication Arts and Sciences, and PBS KIDS to launch a research study that provided 1,000 kindergartners in the Lansing School District a PBS KIDS Playtime Pad. While the students use the tablet and games in school, MSU researchers will gather valuable data on how students learn through tablet-based instruction.

**Curious Crew**, the educational series featuring host Dr. Rob Stephenson and a crew of inquisitive kids, continued exploring STEM concepts for a fourth season. Episodes also included **Curious About Careers**. These short segments encourage girls to consider careers in STEM fields, with young investigator Janellyn exploring possibilities as she visits women at work.

**Curious Crew Roadshows** bring **Curious Crew** to neighborhood libraries, schools, STEAM fairs and community events to guide hands-on science investigations.

### WKAR Originals

2016-2017 political coverage included 2016 election coverage, featuring **MI First Election** brought together student reporters, faculty and media professionals to cover issues affecting first-time voters. Led by the MSU School of Journalism, with production and editorial support from WKAR, the multiplatform project featured live election night coverage with local cut-ins during **PBS NewsHour** on WKAR-TV, audio features on 90.5 FM, and all elements online.

**Michigan State of the State 2017** broadcast, during which Gov. Rick Snyder addresses the joint houses of the legislature. WKAR takes the lead on distributing this special to stations across Michigan.

**Off the Record with Tim Skubick** celebrated 47 years as Michigan's only statewide political talk show.

2016-2017 included broadcast of WKAR's music series **BackStage Pass** season 7. In spring of 2017, after several years focusing on outdoor music festival recordings, **BackStage Pass** returned to the studio

to capture special performances for broadcast in season 8. Hundreds of community members joined us for intimate concert performances from artists including Joshua Davis, Mama Sol and Tha N.U.T.S., and more.

The mix of festival and in-studio production makes **BackStage Pass** one of our top experiential learning opportunities for our student interns, providing key hands-on learning opportunities and real-world experience. On average, WKAR-TV employs about 20 MSU student interns.

## Expanding our digital reach to our community

WKAR television continued to expand its digital reach, streaming a number of unique program offerings via Livestream and Facebook Live. Highlights include:

- **NOVA Poisoned Water: A Community Conversation** brought together NOVA Senior Executive Producer Paula Apsell, program producers, and citizens of Flint for a preview screening of the NOVA documentary examining the causes and issues of the Flint Water Crisis.
- **Off the Record LIVE** presents live streaming of Michigan's only weekly public affairs program, offered hours before any broadcast as each episode is recorded Friday mornings.

## Community Engagement

A highlight of 2016-2017 was our first **PBS Kids Day at WKAR** in January 2017. This large engagement event saw more than 1,500 community members who participated in hands-on learning, gathered valuable PBS Kids/WKAR Family educational resources, and helped launch the PBS Kids 24/7 Channel. The event also featured Sparty, Clifford, Cat in the Hat, Dr. Rob Stephenson and the Curious Crew, as well as various community partners.

WKAR's Indie Lens Pop-Up film screening series offered screenings of **Meet the Patels**, **The Bad Kids**, **National Bird**, and **The Real Boy**. After each screening, community members were able to engage in meaningful dialogue about the diverse film topics and interact with a panel of experts. The panelists were from local community organizations. In total, Indie Lens Pop-Up events reached more than 400 people.

Also screened was **Invisible Wounds**, produced by our MSU colleagues in cooperation with the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency and the Michigan State Police. The film explores issues faced by war veterans suffering from post traumatic stress disorder and ways the community can help.

Festivals such as the East Lansing Art Fair (ELAF), Lansing Jazz Fest, and the Michigan BluesFest allowed WKAR to interact directly with the community we serve. At the ELAF, we hosted two booths, one that represented all station efforts and a second focused on kids activities featuring our Curious Crew. In addition, our staff members hosted stages across the festival.

Through collaborative educational efforts, innovative original programming, and meaningful engagement, WKAR strives to make a continual positive difference in our local community.



### WKAR Impact through Screenings and Open Discussion

During Fall 2016 and Winter/Spring 2017, WKAR presented a number of **Indie Lens Pop-Up** events, featuring the Independent Lens films **Meet the Patels**, **The Bad Kids**, **National Bird**, and **Real Boy**. This series allows WKAR to connect with our community by featuring films about diverse topics and post meaningful community dialogue. The post discussion panelists include experts from within Michigan State University as well as in community organizations.

### WKAR and NOVA bring *Poisoned Water* screening and discussion to Flint

In May 2017, WKAR worked very closely with NOVA producers to bring a special screening of NOVA's **Poisoned Water** documentary to the citizens of Flint, Michigan. The film explains the science behind the Flint Water Crises. The capacity crowd watched the film before it premiered on PBS, and then heard from a panel of experts, all of whom were part of the production. After the discussion, many residents shared their thoughts, asked questions, and carried meaningful dialogue.



### 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 and the Capital Area District Libraries.



## WKAR launches the new PBS KIDS 24/7 Channel and WKAR Family with a Community Event

### Concept

The community was invited to the PBS KIDS Day to help launch WKAR Family and the PBS KIDS 24/7 channel.

### Reach in the Community

Beginning a month prior to the event, WKAR promoted PBS KIDS Day at WKAR via social media, WKAR radio, Lansing State Journal ads, and on wkar.org.

Roughly 1,500 people visited the WKAR Public Media studios at Michigan State University's College of Communication Arts and Sciences on Saturday, January 14, to celebrate the launch of a new, free, localized 24-hour kids channel and multiplatform services from WKAR Public Media.

The channel, called WKAR PBS Kids, broadcasts PBS KIDS shows 24/7 with a particular focus on kids aged two through eight.

At the kick-off event, children and families got their photo taken with Cat in the Hat, Clifford the Big Red Dog and Sparty. Many also explored and played science games at the Curious Crew station, touched real sheepskin and wool at the MSU Extension Science Work Group station, held snakes and saw an owl up close at the Potter Park Zoo station and did a science experiment at the Impression 5 station. Early Childhood Education experts and the Michigan Digital Library were also in attendance to answer questions and provide assistance to local families.

### Impact and Community Feedback

PBS KIDS Day at WKAR allowed hundreds of families to explore and learn about topics from science to art. WKAR also received a large positive reaction from attendees and the online community, with many looking forward to future WKAR Family events.





*“Our daughter Isabelle has enjoyed participating in the Curious Crew audition, filming, and special events. Curious Crew has given her the opportunity to meet new friends, learn about science and public broadcasting, and volunteer to work with the community to show her love of PBS and Curious Crew. Everyone at the studio has been so welcoming and friendly, and we are happy to be a part of the WKAR family.”*

**Jen and Jeremiah Kosto**

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.

---

*“Thank You Curious Crew for allowing Malik to be part of a fabulous program! You have made an atmosphere for students to love science and keep them thinking.”*

**Amanda Moran**

---

*“Over overall experience in working with WKAR continues to exceed my expectation as they play such an influential role within our community. The completed program clearly has a positive impact on business – establishing positive public relations while educating the community on research that is taking place at MSU.”*

**LeeAnn Kaiser, MS  
MSU Center for Orthopedic Research**

---

**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.**

---