

WMUK Station Activity Survey 2014: Telling Public Radio's Story

1. WMUK's approach to addressing identified community needs:

WMUK solicits input from our community on matters related to programming, music, station activities, events and news coverage. WMUK seeks comment about a wide range of community issues and interest from a diverse array of people, neighborhoods, organizations and groups in our coverage area. This includes our federally defined "city of license" Kalamazoo, Michigan. It also includes our broadcast coverage area of Southwest Michigan.

WMUK News holds several meetings each year with representatives of minority and neighborhood organizations to solicit input on community issues. WMUK also welcomes news coverage suggestions from individual listeners in person, by phone, mail and on our website.

WMUK's twelve-member Friends Advisory Committee provides input on community issues in three meetings each year and helps insure we are meeting community needs. WMUK has regular contact by e-mail, phone, and other means with area local governments and school districts. These governmental units include but are not limited to the City of Kalamazoo, the County of Kalamazoo, and the Kalamazoo Public Schools. WMUK also maintains regular communication with educational, environmental, arts, neighborhood, religious, human service, political, health care, business, labor and minority organizations in our city of license and surrounding areas.

Many WMUK staff members receive community input by serving on boards and committees of organizations such as the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, Kalamazoo Bach Festival, Gilmore Keyboard Festival and the Richmond Center for the Visual Arts.

Our approach to meeting the needs and interests gathered above is manifested in many ways. We produce a third stream on our website which reflects local music talent in jazz, classical, rock, gospel and acoustic music. We produce local programs broadcast weekly that meet the identified needs of specific music audiences, such as Grassroots (acoustic music), The Pure Drop (Celtic music) and Alma Latina (Hispanic music). We also produce programs featuring classical music and local or visiting musicians. We acquire and play programs which meet the needs of specific music audiences such as American Routes, Acoustic Café, Performance Today, Jazz Night in America and The Metropolitan Opera.

We produce short-form newscasts and stories to keep audiences updated on state and local events. WMUK produces two weekly thirty-minute public affairs segments (West Southwest) and five or six features on local arts and culture each week through Arts & More. All of these programs and features are posted online. Audiences for these stories are also engaged through social media. Acquired programs like Morning Edition and All Things Considered, keep listeners informed on national and international issues. WMUK broadcasts daily Public Service Announcements

2. Key Initiatives, partnerships and collaborations:

During the past year WMUK, was involved in a number of partnerships within our broadcast community. In February of 2014 we helped sponsor a local acoustic music festival, Cooper's Glen and promoted it through underwriting credits and on our acoustic music program, "Grassroots". WMUK staff were present at the festival to talk with audience members. WMUK staff and volunteers were also involved in recognizing and introducing performing artists.

In March of 2014, WMUK hosted NPR's "Wait Wait Don't Tell Me". We used the program and the reception which followed it to connect with local audiences. We also managed to place our community and our university on the national stage during the show and its underwriting credits.

Last March we engaged in the "Partnership for Fair Food" with Kalamazoo Community Foundation and Fair Food Matters, an organization dedicated to promoting healthy and affordable food and developing locally sustainable sources of food in Kalamazoo County. We helped trigger gifts to this organization and increased public awareness.

In the spring of 2014, WMUK engaged in a leadership role with BRAVO, a classical music competition recognizing and celebrating the musical talents of high school students in and around Kalamazoo. More than 400 teachers and 150 parents and were invited to extend an invitation to 30,000 students to participate in this program. Of that number there are typically 300 inquiries about the competition from which 30 participants are invited to audition. Of those who audition, typically 8 to 12 finalists emerge who are invited to perform at the final concert. The best performances from that evening concert are then broadcast on WMUK.

WMUK staff members participated as adjudicators and/or moderators for the final BRAVO concert. WMUK staff served on the steering committee for the competition. BRAVO offers the participants an opportunity to meet with music artists from the community in a forum designed to illuminate issues on the topic of being a professional performing artist. This forum takes place in WMUK's recording studio, and is followed by a tour of the station and interaction with WMUK staff involved in our classical music programs. Since its inception, over 300 students have performed the final concerts and had their performances rebroadcast on WMUK.

Throughout the year, WMUK regularly records and broadcasts live performances by several music organizations within the community, including the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, Fontana Chamber Arts, Western Michigan University School of Music and the Saugatuck Chamber Music Society. In addition, Cara Lieurance conducts live interviews with the staff, conductors and artists from these and other organizations. WMUK continues to broadcast special

presentations by Maestro Raymond Harvey to illuminate upcoming performance by the Kalamazoo Symphony. During the summer months WMUK partnered with the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo to help bring attention to a free series of Concerts in the Park through promotions on our air. WMUK Staff members were present to talk with the audience, emcee and introduce musical performers.

Last year, WMUK worked with WMU's Center for the Humanities and the Kalamazoo Public Library to promote local and visiting speakers and authors, and to provide and disseminate information about their lectures or their works. Finally, WMUK staff were also present as judges for The Kalamazoo Fret Board Festival and the Glass Arts Society Competition.

A key partnership for WMUK news has been with M-Live (the Kalamazoo Gazette) in coverage of public affairs issues on West Southwest and in cohosting candidate debates in our area.

3. Impact of key initiatives and partnerships with community organizations:

Our involvement with the Cooper's Glen Acoustic Music Festival is an excellent example of the benefits such a partnership can bring to a small non-profit. Tom Nehil, President of the producing organization, Great Lakes Acoustic Music Association has observed that the Festival continues to be "successful to no small degree thanks to WMUK and its programming in the area of traditional music." WMUK's local acoustic music program "Grassroots" was particularly valuable in creating interest for the Cooper's Glen Festival." Tom cites the positive impact of the partnership with WMUK through surveys conducted by his organization: "Many of our attendees indicate that it is through WMUK that they have heard about our events."

In our Spring Pledge Drive of 2014, WMUK created the Partnership for Fair Food with the Kalamazoo Community Foundation and Fair Food Matters, a local organization dedicated to promoting healthy and affordable food and developing locally sustainable sources. Erica Barajas, Executive Director of Fair Food Matters had this to say about the impact of the partnership: "Because of WMUK, we were able to receive a matching gift from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation to support our work to improve access to healthy food. We also received increased exposure through the partnership that has increased community awareness and support of our work. Thank you, WMUK, for creatively supporting organizations like ours!"

WMUK's partnership with the Center for the Humanities at Western Michigan University has also produced positive results. In a short time, the Center's audiences have grown within the community and the university. According to Center Director, Katherine Joslin, this growth could not have happened without WMUK's promotion, mention and interviews of the Center's featured speakers. In five years audiences for the Center have gone from 30 to 1500 this fall.

Other WMUK partnerships also had measurable impact. The Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo has noted increased awareness for both All Ears Theatre and their Concerts in the Park series as a result of their partnership with WMUK. The Glass Arts Society continues to cite increased

interest and attendance by the public at its events as a result of its partnership with WMUK. Several other music and cultural organizations have noted increased attendance at concerts because of interviews or play on WMUK.

One initiative of our news department has been on veterans and the issues that face those transitioning to civilian life. In the past year, for example we had a story about Michigan's "Buddy to Buddy Program". One WMUK news story focused on a writing project by local veterans on the campus of Western Michigan University. Margaret von Steinen, Communications Officer for WMU's Haenicke Institute for Global Education detailed her reaction to such stories: "As local media outlets have pulled back their resources aimed at reporting important news and events, I am very grateful to have WMUK as a primary source to learn about what is going on in West Michigan. It is also heartwarming that the station is very dedicated to honoring our military vets through a wide variety of programming. Thank you!"

WMUK partnered with the Southwest Michigan Black Heritage Society in 2014, to help bring attention to and promote the services and events of this organization. Donna Odom, the Society's Director had this to say about the partnership with WMUK: "Having WMUK as a media partner for two of our major events this year proved to be an excellent marketing strategy. The regular announcements during the morning show kept the events in the minds and thoughts of the listening audience and brought in a significant number of people who would not otherwise have known about them. We look forward to future collaborations."

4. Meeting the needs of minorities and diverse audiences:

WMUK engaged in a number of partnerships with minority organizations and those serving diverse audiences in 2014. These partnerships such as those with the Southwest Michigan Black Heritage Society, the Haenicke Institute (in FY 15) and Fair Food Matters are referenced above.

In addition, WMUK made extensive efforts in 2014 to broadcast programs designed to meet the needs of minority audiences in our service area. Each Sunday afternoon WMUK presents "Alma Latina", Spanish language music program, produced by WMUK. The program is now in its 36th year and is the oldest continuously running Spanish language program in the state. Alma Latina is followed by just under 1,000 Spanish speaking residents of Southwest Michigan weekly. In December of 2014, WMUK began efforts to include a Spanish language segment of news and information within this weekly Spanish language program.

In 2014 WMUK also extended involvement with our local Hispanic community through co-sponsorship of the annual banquet honoring Caesar Chavez and through coverage of events at a local elementary school with an emphasis on bilingual education.

In 2014 WMUK's five minute Arts & More segments on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturday mornings have continued to be an excellent means of focusing on and exploring events and

cultural activities of minority populations. Last year, Arts & More features told the stories of the various ethnic and minority communities that comprise Southwest Michigan.

Through Arts & More and some of our news features we have also been able to focus the public attention on stories from the GLBT community. One example of this was a news story on the local observance of the Transgender Day of Remembrance in November.

In October of 2015, WMUK news produced a series of stories on neighborhood and police relations in Kalamazoo. The series concluded with a live public forum at the Kalamazoo Public Library featuring community leaders, representatives of minority organizations serving local neighborhoods and Kalamazoo's Chief of Police.

In November of December WMUK began discussions with The Resource Center of Kalamazoo and the Arcus Center for Social Justice regarding plans for bringing in StoryCorps Outloud component in FY 16. In January of 2015 WMUK staff engaged in LGBT diversity training through WMU's Office of Inclusion.

WMUK's Mark Tomlonson, in his locally produced program, The Library, read from the works from African American, Hispanic, Asian American and Native American authors, as well as authors representing the LGBT community. This activity will continue in FY 2015.

WMUK's classical music host, Cara Lieurance, conducted a series of performance interviews in 2014 and FY 15 with minority musician, Jon Boyd, who commented on the rich history of music performed and written by individuals of mixed or non-European ancestries.

Finally, in 2015 WMUK will partner with the Kalamazoo Community Foundation and with Kalamazoo River Valley Trail to trigger matching gifts for KRVT and raise awareness of the services of this organization for all citizens in our area.

5. Impact of Corporation for Public Broadcasting Community Service Grant Funding:

Without CPB funding, WMUK, would fall short of funds needed to acquire and produce programs that bring local and national news and culture to our audiences. CPB funding is essential to providing most of the programming public radio listeners cherish and expect from their local station. Our CSG makes it possible to focus on the arts of other cultures and the great music and arts organizations of our local community. This expanded coverage of the arts and culture is present on both WMUK 1 and WMUK 2, our secondary channel, as well as on our recently added (FY 2015) third audio channel, "Park and Westnedge" which features local music. There is no question that WMUK reached more listeners with more music, arts and news stories in our community. There is no question that the information we provided as a result of the CSG Grant increased attendance and participation throughout the community. The CPB Community Service Grant was also instrumental in WMUK's efforts to engage new and diverse audiences in our community, including Hispanic American, Native American and African

American audiences, as well as audiences in the GLBT community and our local veterans. Although membership and underwriting dollars have been steady, these funds alone cannot pay for the rich array of programs that our audiences are used to and demand. Consequently, WMUK's impact in the community would be lessened without CPB funding through our CSG Grant.