

WMUK Station Activity Survey 2015: Telling Public Radio's Story

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

WMUK solicits community input through a number of means. First, WMUK News holds several meetings each year with representatives of minority and neighborhood organizations to solicit input on community issues. We meet in sites within the community to solicit this input. WMUK also welcomes news coverage suggestions from listeners by phone, mail or on our website.

WMUK also solicits input from our community on matters related to programming, music, station activities, events and news coverage. WMUK has held forums on police and neighborhood relations attend by a diverse array of populations, 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's twelve-member Friends Advisory Committee provides input on community issues in up to three meetings each year and helps insure that we meet community needs. WMUK has regular contact by e-mail, phone, and other means with local governments and school districts.

These governmental units we communicate with 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.

WMUK staff members gather community input by serving on boards of organizations like the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, Kalamazoo Bach Festival, Gilmore Keyboard Festival, High School radio station WKDS 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 such as American Routes, Acoustic Café, Performance Today, Jazz Night in America and The Metropolitan Opera to meet the needs of specific and varied audiences. Issues related to the environment are addressed by programs like The Bioneers and in other local news features.

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 weekly features on local arts and culture through Arts & More and Between the Lines. 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 Consider, 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 2015 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 our Spring Pledge Drive in 2015, WMUK created the Partnership for Connected Trails with the Kalamazoo Community Foundation and Kalamazoo River Valley Trail Way, dedicated to providing recreational trail ways throughout our broadcast area. Because of this partnership member donations to WMUK were matched by the Kalamazoo Community Foundation. \$15,000 was raised to improve trails for those who live in Southwest Michigan.

In the spring of 2015, WMUK once again 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. Last spring WMUK staff members participated as adjudicators and/or moderators for the final BRAVO concert. Since its inception, over 300 students have performed the final concerts and had their performances rebroadcast on WMUK.

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 members 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 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 due to involvement and promotion by WMUK. WMUK's local acoustic music program "Grassroots" helped to create interest for the Cooper's Glen Festival." Tom has repeatedly cited the demonstrable impact of WMUK's partnership through surveys his organization conducts.

The impact and value of the Partnership for Connected Trails (described above) and our StoryCorps OutLoud Honoring Identity project (outlined below) are summed up in the words of the Kalamazoo Community Foundation's Communications Director Tom Vance. Tom observes: "Our partnerships with WMUK are a vital way for us to connect with the community at many levels. This past year, we partnered with WMUK so that we could provide matching funds during the spring membership drive to benefit the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail. Also during 2015, we were honored to support the StoryCorps OutLoud initiative. Our collaborations with WMUK align perfectly with our mission of making life better in Kalamazoo County, and with our vision of a community where everyone can reach their full potential."

WMUK continued 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 continue without WMUK's promotion, mention and interviews featured speaker interviews

WMUK's coverage and playing of classical music has assisted the work of many classical music organizations in Southwest Michigan: Margaret Hamilton of the Stulberg International String Competition observed the following: "WMUK has been an extraordinary partner to the Stulberg International String Competition. We owe a special debt of gratitude to host Cara Lieurance for her in-depth interviews with Stulberg medalists, special programming on the Competition and features on the WMUK website that blend words, music and images. WMUK provides a level of support for classical music that is unparalleled, and support that is especially critical for the rising young artist. The station helps us to build awareness, interest and audiences, shining a light on the best that our community has to offer."

Finally, Anne Harrigan of the Battle Creek Symphony Orchestra has these comments about her organization's relationship with WMUK and the impact on her audiences: "WMUK radio has had a tremendous positive impact on the program of the Music Center and on the quality of life

of Battle Creek and Calhoun county residents. The station does regular, in-depth programs delving into the repertoire of each Battle Creek Symphony concert the week of the performance, and broadcasts the performances afterward. We have many residents in Calhoun County who are no longer able to go out at night, and these programs and performances are a lifeline to the outside world for them. Every time I do an interview with Cara Lieurance, I get notes and emails from residents saying how much they appreciate them.

WMUK radio also helps us to get the word out, not only for Battle Creek Symphony performances, but for our educational programs like our free lessons and choruses for at-risk families, pre-primary music education classes, and our choruses like the Battle Creek Community Chorus and the Battle Creek Boychoir and Battle Creek Girls Chorus.

Battle Creek is not a wealthy community, and to sustain an educational arts program such as the Music Center and the Battle Creek Symphony is critical to the cultural vitality of the area. WMUK is a strong advocate of our programs and a key component of our continued success.”

4. Meeting the needs of minorities and diverse audiences:

One way that WMUK meets the needs of minorities and diverse audiences is through our coverage of programs and activities relevant to music and the arts. WMUK believes that such coverage provides an avenue for understanding and appreciation of minorities and other cultures.

WMUK serves needs of Hispanic listeners, for instance, through “Alma Latina”, a Spanish language music program, produced by WMUK. The program is now in its 37th 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 2015 WMUK launched a new series, “Between The Lines” produced by Zinta Aistars, which focuses on literary artists in Southwest Michigan. Several of the following writers covered and interviewed in this series were minority artists and/or addressed minority issues including the following: Iliana Rocha, whose poetry touches on issues affecting Mexican Americans and Native Americans; Desiree Cooper whose writings address racism; Morowa Wejide, an African American author who brought her own perspective on children with autism; and author, T. Geronimo Johnson, who shared insights on problems encountered by African Americans in the publishing industry.

WMUK’s “The Library” a weekly program produced by Mark Tomlonson, continued to featured readings from the works from African American, Hispanic, Asian American and Native American authors, as well authors representing the LGBT community.

WMUK's classical music host, Cara Lieurance, continued a series of performance interviews with minority musician, Jon Boyd. Boyd's pieces focused on the rich history of music performed and written by individuals of mixed or non-European ancestries. The series continues in 2016.

In 2015 WMUK's Arts & More segments on 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 in Southwest Michigan including the African American, Hispanic and Native American communities, as well as a number of stories focusing on the LGBT population.

In 2014 and 2015, WMUK news produced a three-part series of stories on neighborhood and police relations in Kalamazoo. In October of 2014, the series was launched 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 2015 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.

One of the station's key partnerships with organizations serving minority needs during the past and current year, was WMUK's collaborative effort with The Resource Center of Kalamazoo, the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership and the Kalamazoo Community Foundation. This project, begun in June of 2015, was entitled "Honoring Identity", featured a StoryCorps OutLoud residency designed to record stories from the LGBT community and a presentation by StoryCorps founder, Dave Isay. Also included in the project was a presentation by activist, Crispin Torres on Transgender Day of Remembrance. Finally, a listening event in January of 2016 will provide the public with an opportunity to hear edited stories of local participants from the OutLoud Initiative as well as their comments and observations. Many of these stories focused on the history and culture of Kalamazoo's LGBT community.

Another way that WMUK meets needs of minorities and diverse audiences is through the ongoing collaboration with the Society for History and Racial Equity (SHARE). This past year, WMUK helped to promote the services and events of this organization. Because of on-air announcements and coverage of the SHARE activities on WMUK's features like Arts & More, WMUK has been recognized by the SHARE's leadership as important in bringing this organization to the attention of those who might have otherwise been unaware of its services.

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

In addition to news, a major emphasis of WMUK's is on the arts, music and culture. Our CSG grant enables us to extend our coverage of the arts and cultures to the music, arts and culture of our local community. This expanded arts coverage 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. WMUK has been able to reach more listeners with more music and more coverage of the culture in our community. Many of the cultural organizations in our community have corroborated that statement. Many more have cited increased attendance and participation throughout the community as a result of efforts WMUK is able to make through its CSG Grant. The CPB Community Service Grant has been instrumental this year and in many other years 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 LGBT community, through our recent Honoring Identity Project. Membership and underwriting dollars alone are not sufficient to pay for the rich array of programs and services that our audiences have come to expect. Consequently, WMUK’s impact in the community would be lessened without CPB funding through our CSG Grant.

Most importantly, 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 depend on from this local public radio station.