



2021-22 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY: RADIO



WKAR News profiled the Stockbridge InvenTeam, one of 91 student teams from around the world taking part in NASA's Human Exploration Rover Challenge. From Left: Kaden Carpenter, Alayna Adkins, Brooklyn Rochow, Bryton Breese, Ben Chapman, Hythem Beydoun, Jack Hammerberg, Brock Rochow, Eliana Johnson, Bob Richards (instructor). Sitting: D.J. Chapman, Brianna Polenz

Connecting people to powerful ideas that inspire personal growth, exploration of our world and positive change.

LOCAL VALUE

WKAR's radio stations are a valuable part of Michigan's capital area advancement.

The stations provide public broadcasting service with **WKAR (AM)**, **WKAR-FM**, online, and the Radio Reading Service.

Serving a 60-mile radius from East Lansing, **WKAR** is involved with nearly 80,000 weekly listeners. **WKAR's** range of programming includes **WKAR News**, classical music, folk, and jazz.

WKAR staff participate in community events with station representatives serving on a variety of boards and community committees. Community support is provided through student learning internships.

FY22 KEY SERVICES

During FY22, WKAR provided these vital local services:

- Two Radio Stations
 - **WKAR (AM)** 870, 102.3 FM, & 90.5-HD2
 - **WKAR-FM** 90.5
- One Television Station with five channels
 - **WKAR-HD**
 - **WKAR-Create**
 - **WKAR-World**
 - **PBS Kids**
 - **Michigan Learning Channel**
- Online Streaming (24/7 Classical, Jazz, and News streams)
- **WKAR Radio Reading Service**
- National and local news, public affairs, arts and culture, health, science, and education programming.
- Music education throughout Michigan's capital area.

LOCAL IMPACT

WKAR's local services had deep impact in Michigan's capital region.

WKAR reached a weekly audience of nearly 80,000 listeners through the station's partnership with local educators, businesses, governments, arts organizations, schools, and social services agencies.

Through our timely local and national news reporting and coverage, **WKAR** helps local non-profits and government agencies reach and engage new audiences.

Volunteers at **WKAR's** Radio Reading Service read local newspapers to area listeners who are unable to see or turn a page.



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This past year at WKAR (July 2021-June 2022) was marked by more news, more classical and folk music, a new weekly jazz program, and a greater digital presence.

News that matters, Music that inspires

For nearly a century, **WKAR** from **Michigan State University** has informed and entertained listeners across the capital area of Michigan. That tradition continued in 2021-22, as **WKAR** filled the airwaves from Grand Rapids to Detroit with news, classical music, and an intense dedication to connecting with our community.

NEWS

Lansing's mayor was up for reelection in the fall of 2021. **WKAR News** host Sophia Saliby conducted interviews with all six mayoral candidates. All were broadcast on **WKAR-FM** and **WKAR (AM)**, as well as made available for on-demand listening at **wkar.org**. Leading up to this election, Sarah Lehr, **WKAR News** politics and civics reporter, compiled a voter guide to inform the Lansing area electorate what to expect on their ballot, and even how to submit their ballot early. Sarah also enlightened **WKAR's** audience of the biggest donors to candidates running for mayor in the cities of Lansing and Jackson.

Throughout FY22, **WKAR News** continued to provide constantly updated information about the evolving COVID-19 pandemic situation in Greater Lansing via the award-winning *Coronavirus in Michigan* blog.

Several stories focused on people of Asian American and Pacific Island heritage. In a report heard nationally on **NPR's** *Weekend Edition*, **WKAR News** host Megan Schellong retold the story of Vincent Chin, a Chinese American murdered 40 years ago, and how his death still inspires people to continue to fight for racial justice. During *AAPI Heritage Month*, Megan's reporting highlighted State Senator Stephanie Chang, who in 2014 was the first Asian American woman elected to the **Michigan State Legislature**. And, during *National Adoption Month*, Megan interviewed a transracial adoptee about her experience growing up in a multiracial family.

When 23 volunteer firefighters in the small Michigan **City of Charlotte** resigned *en masse* during March 2021, **WKAR News** followed the story from resignation, through negotiations for them to return, to receiving interim assistance from neighboring emergency response agencies. This original reporting included interviews with volunteer firefighters who resigned, **Charlotte** residents, and city officials.

In April 2022, **WKAR (AM)** increased service to the regional Latinx community by launching weekly radio broadcasts of our Spanish-language news and public affairs podcast *¿Qué Onda Michigan?*, hosted by Michelle Jokisch Polo. The podcast features original content as well as reporting by **WKAR News**. **WKAR's** original Latinx reporting led to a partnership with the **College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)** at **Michigan State University**, in which **CAMP** provided funding for an **MSU** student intern dedicated to Latinx news reporting.

Other impactful Latinx reporting included Michelle's story detailing a ban on Spanish and Swahili dictionaries by the **Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC)**. This story was broadcast nationally on **NPR's** *Morning Edition* and attracted the attention and advocacy of several Michigan legislators. **MDOC** eventually lifted its ban on foreign language dictionaries, and the **American Civil Liberties Union** has urged **MDOC** to lift its ban on all foreign language books.

WKAR News host Sophia Saliby produced Lansing *ArtPath Profiles*, a series of reports informing listeners of an annual art exhibition along the city's beloved River Trail. The collaboration with the **Lansing Art Gallery & Education Center** was a multimedia project featuring artist profiles and interviews, along with vibrant descriptions and photographs of the pieces themselves. Sophia also extensively covered Michigan's LGBTQ community with pieces that included conversations over transgender athlete rights, the debut of nonbinary driver's licenses, and the story of Michigan's first LGBTQ Pride celebration.

From telling the story of Lansing's Mullet Queen, a story broadcast nationally on **NPR's** *Weekend Edition*, to providing Lansing-area residents a sense of normalcy by highlighting reopening plans of the locally iconic **MSU Dairy Store**, the **Lansing Symphony Orchestra's** first indoor concert in nearly two years, and the return of tailgating on the **MSU** campus (also broadcast nationally on **NPR**), the original reporting of **WKAR News** and its service to mid-Michigan were unmatched during FY22. **WKAR News** content is heard on **WKAR (AM)** and **WKAR-FM**, and is available online at **wkar.org** and through the **NPR One** app.



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CLASSICAL

WKAR's classical music programming remains a mainstay for **90.5 WKAR-FM**. **WKAR** also operates **WKAR Classical**, a 24/7 web stream devoted entirely to classical music programming. During 2021-22, **WKAR** broadcast 2,028 hours of locally produced classical programming presented by **WKAR's** classical music hosts. In addition, **WKAR** also broadcast 52 hours of classical music programming produced by and made available to us by partner stations in Michigan.

WKAR's flagship Michigan music program, *Great Lakes Concerts*, began its fourth season highlighting a variety of ensembles in Ann Arbor, Interlochen, Jackson, Lansing, and Traverse City, the **Saginaw Bay Symphony** and the **Michigan Philharmonic** in Detroit; as well as smaller in-state partnerships with the **Absolute Music Series** in Lansing and the **Baroque on Beaver Island Festival** right in the middle of Lake Michigan. The program continues to fulfill its goal of knitting together more of The Mitten's classical music makers into hour-long programs.

Other unique local classical music initiatives included a special in August for the passing of Kenneth G. Bloomquist, longtime conductor of the **Spartan Marching Band**, who also shepherded **MSU** from the **School of Music at Michigan State** into its own college at the university. For the sixth year running, **WKAR** celebrated **International Women's Day**. On that day **WKAR** played works spanning centuries composed by women, most of whom greatly had their music suppressed because of their gender. **WKAR's** classical hosts also provided an online resource to allow visitors at wkar.org to explore the lives of these women more in depth.

FOLK

Folk With Matt Watroba, hosted by local folk legend Matt Watroba, features acoustic folk, blues, bluegrass, and more, performed by artists from the Great Lakes region and from all over the world. The program is broadcast twice each week, with an original 3-hour episode airing Sunday nights at 6 PM exclusively on **90.5 WKAR-FM**, and an encore broadcast of the first two hours of the program Saturday evenings at 6 PM.

JAZZ

In November 2021, Lansing's locally programmed community station, **WLNZ**, was forced to change to an out-of-market all-news format due to a lack of funding. While this was an unfortunate cultural loss for the community, it was an opportunity for **WKAR-FM** to expand its lineup of local music shows. Michael Stratton, who hosted a weekly jazz music program on **WLNZ** for many years, moved his program over to **WKAR-FM**, re-launching it as *A Groove Supreme* on December 25. It was a Christmas present welcomed by jazz fans in mid-Michigan. *A Groove Supreme* is heard Saturday nights at 8 PM on both **WKAR-FM** and the **WKAR Jazz** web stream.

COMMUNITY

Post-COVID meant a return to the concert hall in 2021-22, and **WKAR** personalities joined Jody Knol as he resumed his PreView Conversations with guest artists and composers visiting the **Lansing Symphony Orchestra**. In November, the **Jackson Symphony Orchestra** invited Jamie Paisley to perform on stage during their performance of "Symphonie Fantastique" by Berlioz. Jamie also interviewed members of the famed **Canadian Brass** as well as members of the UK's **Academy of St. Martin in the-Fields**. Jamie continued to serve as concert guide for the **Absolute Music Chamber Series** in Old Town Lansing, creating a host experience both in person and for the streaming audiences at home with customized videos serving as musical introduction.

WKAR Promotes Community Dialogue

Several key local elections took place in 2021.

WKAR News interviewed candidates and voters participating in the mayoral and city council races of East Lansing, Jackson, and Lansing.

WKAR's *Current Sports* show sought opinions from listeners about the Big Ten Conference's new COVID-19 forfeit policy that could lead to losses for teams who aren't vaccinated.

Muchos reportajes de WKAR fueron traducidos al español para la comunidad hispanohablante de Michigan.



WKAR Engages with our Community

Great Lakes Concerts brings performances from concert halls around the state into the homes of classical fans with weekly broadcasts

WKAR's Jody Knol and pianist and composer Conrad Tao at a **Lansing Symphony Orchestra** PreView Conversation at the **Wharton Center for Performing Arts** (pictured at left)

International Women's Day was recognized by dedicating the entire day to airing works by women composers

WKAR's classical hosts produced a music special in honor of the late Kenneth G. Bloomquist, longtime conductor of the Spartan Marching Band



WKAR News

Politics, education, health and safety, and reaching out to underserved communities were cornerstones of news coverage provided during 2021-22

WKAR's Politics and Government Reporter Sarah Lehr (shown at right) participates with the **Lansing Area Guerilla Gardeners** in a radical act of beautification

WKAR began broadcasting *¿Qué Onda Michigan?*, a Spanish-language news & information podcast

WKAR News won the Outstanding News Operation award from the **Michigan Associated Press Media Editors** for the second consecutive year





In a story heard nationally on NPR's Weekend Edition, Ashley Medina (above), Lansing's Mullet Queen, applies her unique skills.

WKAR engaged with our community through live and virtual hosting and by leading discussions at live and virtual music performances.

We expanded our programs and specials to showcase Michigan Capital Region talents and professions.

We increased awareness around local issues, providing timely and quality news content and discussions.

As a result, membership and listenership are up and our audiences are more diverse.

"Jody and Jamie are the best! I especially love The Fugue, and Fiesta. It's so good to have classical music during the day."

Jane from Mason, MI

"Being an alumnus of Michigan State University, I absolutely love that the university has this wonderful radio station serving this area and beyond. Classical music is my favorite and I listen every day. Nothing compares to the soothing sound of great orchestral and choral works. Thank you WKAR."

Lucinda from Brooklyn, MI

"I start every morning with WKAR and drive home with them every afternoon. I know I can count on them to provide clear and unbiased investigative journalism. A democracy depends on this. Keep up the good work!"

Mary from East Lansing, MI

"First time donor, but have found myself listening more and more often lately (looking for some peace and calm when the world seems so turbulent)."

Jessica from South Lyon, MI

"Thank you for bringing back HD broadcasting. And HD2 with BBC news is a nice addition to morning edition."

Sharron from East Lansing, MI

Thank you very much for promoting the Lansing School District; its students, programs and staff. You captured the academic teaching component for a Bilingual student but also how they learn the basic skills of water safety. Gracias for your partnership!

Sergio Keck

**Deputy Superintendent of Special Populations
Lansing, MI**

WKAR continues to play an essential role in Michigan's capital area as a key source for quality news, music and cultural programming, giving a voice to a broad and deep variety of conversation, community, concerts, and more. WKAR commits to expanding its community relationships to better share the talents, interests, concerns, and cultural backgrounds of the people in mid-Michigan.