2020
LOCAL CONTENT & SERVICE
REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

OZARKS
public broadcasting
MISSION

OUR FOCUS

The team at KSMU Radio and Ozarks Public Television takes the role of serving our audience and upholding their trust very seriously. We strive to keep listeners and viewers across the Ozarks informed, entertained, and inspired through in-depth news coverage, quality educational content, and the civil exchange of ideas. A range of local and national content is distributed through a variety of media platforms and audiences are connected in meaningful ways. We are committed to:

ENGAGING CITIZENS through local outreach initiatives.

EDUCATING FAMILIES from cradle to college and far beyond.

CELEBRATING DIVERSEITY to develop cultural competence and create inclusive communities.

DOCUMENTING, PRESENTING, AND PRESERVING the history and culture of the Ozarks through local programming initiatives.

OUR IMPACT

Ozarks Public Broadcasting reaches our entire community. Because Ozarks Public Television and KSMU Radio are available at no charge, through over-the-air broadcast, we’re able to serve all families in our area—regardless of their financial means. Every child in the Ozarks has access to educational programming that promotes success in school, and every resident has access to information and ideas that promote community engagement.
Tiny Desk Contest
KSMU invited emerging local musicians to compete for a chance to play at NPR’s iconic Tiny Desk by submitting a video performance of an original song. KSMU’s Jessica Balisle spoke with NPR's Bob Boilen, host of All Things Considered, about the contest and why artists should enter. Local submissions were featured on KSMU’s Facebook page.

The Vote
In celebration of 100 years of women’s suffrage, OPT hosted online preview screenings and virtual panel discussions highlighting American Experience’s The Vote. Participants discussed the historical movement, challenges still faced today, and current issues related to voting rights.

Election Coverage
KSMU has a long and proud history of reporting on local and statewide elections, and 2020 was no exception. Candidates and issues were covered extensively by our news team. Furthermore, a partnership with a coalition of ten community organizations resulted in forums presented online and on-air. The forums covered candidates for state house districts and topics including Amendment 2, Missouri’s Medicaid expansion, and Amendment 3, the “Clean Missouri” ballot issue.

Virtual Career Fair
Area college students interested in careers in media were invited to our Virtual Career Fair. Tours of OPT and KSMU were offered via Zoom to give students a behind-the-scenes look at the stations. Students could also schedule remote one-on-one discussions with staff working in their preferred area of interest, to provide feedback on resumes, answer questions, and more.
**EARLY LEARNING**

**PBS KIDS Talk About**
In 2020, PBS premiered a new online video talk series, “PBS KIDS Talk About,” featuring authentic conversations between kids and parents and reflecting the core values of kindness and curiosity. OPT promoted the series through social media, highlighting topics such as feelings, relationships, bravery, and self-confidence.

The series moved beyond the digital platform with a half-hour on-air special hosted by Amanda Gorman, which explores race and racial justice topics in an age-appropriate way. “PBS KIDS Talk About: Race and Racism” includes relevant content from Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood, Arthur, and Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum and offers ideas to continue this important conversation at home. Additional resources like articles, book lists, activities, and more are available online at PBS KIDS for Parents.

**Poetry Pals**
The Springfield-Greene County Library District, KSMU Radio, and legendary children’s author and poet David L. Harrison teamed up to offer listeners “Poetry Pals” – a weekly children’s radio series on KSMU. The series ran May through July and featured children’s poetry read on-air by Harrison and local librarians.

**Learn at Home Resources**
In a school year like no other, OPT’s commitment to providing parents and educators tools and resources is stronger than ever. To help ensure that the Ozarks’ littlest learners have what they need to constantly continue their education, OPT provides weekly learn at home materials for kids pre-K to 2nd grade.

OPT PBS KIDS airs round-the-clock children’s programming focused on teaching foundational skills for literacy, STEM, and social emotional learning. Weekly educational themes correspond between on-air programs and printable worksheets. Activity kits are available for download via our website and monthly e-newsletters and printed materials are mailed to any families who request them.
Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Ozarks Public Broadcasting’s internship program provides a rich training ground for students, and our interns contribute greatly to our mission and service. Diversity and inclusion have always been central values in the selection and training of interns. This year, we have made a further commitment to equity in our internship program by converting all station internships to paid positions. This is an important step, as unpaid internships exclude those students who cannot afford to work without pay – often students from historically-marginalized groups.

COVID-19 Response
The KSMU News Department responded quickly to the pandemic with in-depth coverage to ensure listeners have critical, up-to-date information. From details about how and where to seek help if you have symptoms, to stories on how the virus affects everything from local businesses to musicians, all the coverage can be easily found in one place, prominently featured at the top of KSMU.org.

Local reporters have produced more than 800 stories on the pandemic. All are either local or state stories, and while many are short, several feature in-depth coverage of things like rural experiences, health care policy, senior citizens, and the homeless population.

Throughout the pandemic, KSMU has stayed committed to our intern program, transitioning reporters to “correspondents” who filed stories electronically from their homes. Importantly, radio stories also fostered human connections, sharing reminders and tips for checking on and staying in touch with elderly neighbors.

OPT WORLD Channel
Over the course of a single week, OPT launched a brand new channel in an effort to provide 6th-12th grade learners with At-Home Learning material. Each weekday OPT WORLD offers a five hour block of programming specifically designed with educational content for middle and high school students. This is a great resource for all students, but especially helpful for those without home internet access.
**REGIONAL STORYTELLING**

*Ozarks Alive: Time Capsule*

“Ozarks Alive: Time Capsule” is a monthly radio feature highlighting poignant people and places that showcase traditions and history from throughout our region. Kaitlyn McConnell, author, historian, and creator of the website “Ozarks Alive,” produces this all new radio program.

*Sense of Community*

This quarterly KSMU series explores beyond the headlines to provide coverage of issues facing people and organizations in the Ozarks. Recent topics included a series on “Race and Racism in the Ozarks,” and back-to-back week-long series on the pandemic. “Unsheltered” took an intimate look at how the pandemic has affected our homeless population and “On the Front Lines” dug deeper into the personal experiences of healthcare, law enforcement, grocery, and school employees.

The TV component of this series covered topics like healthcare, unemployment, helping seniors, voting, and navigating school, all during the pandemic.

*Springfield, MO—Upping the Odds*

After introducing a variety of people, accomplishments and events unique to Springfield, MO with *What Are The Odds?*, OPT continued these regional stories with the sequel, *Springfield, MO—Upping the Odds!,* which debuted in February of 2020.