



2024 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

“The spirit of Fred Rogers’ legacy of education, community, and compassion lives on through our work of addressing critical needs in our region. From award-winning programming and literacy initiatives to local journalism ... we are the place you can trust to learn about the amazing things happening in our community.”

- LVPM Board Chair, Mike Keim

Engage everyone in our community through our public media resources to make the Lehigh Valley better tomorrow than it is today.



PBS39 is a valuable part of the Lehigh Valley area’s advancement.

In 2024, PBS39 provided these vital local services:

- Community/School Services
- Only dedicated education & environmental beat reporter in region.
 - Free books through the Book Nook program.
 - Spanish-language literacy and exposure to the arts.
 - Educational roundtables on important community topics.
 - Free local digital news service.
 - 24/7 broadcast news radio.
 - High School academic quiz program.
 - Video production immersion program for students.

PBS39’s local services had deep impact in the Lehigh Valley area.

- 111 partner organizations
- 88 volunteers
- 1,700 volunteer hours
- 850+ hours local content
- 300,000+ monthly unique visitors to digital news service
- 6,360 children served in 136 educational programs
- 68 events engaging 7,300 families

In fiscal year 2024, **Lehigh Valley Public Media** (LVPM) home of PBS39, 91.3 WLVR, and LehighValleyNews.com, made significant impact on the local landscape through its community building programming, timely discussions on current events, and initiatives that supported education and career readiness.

One standout program, *A Community Conversation*, a PBS39 **original series**, addressed critical topics such as health, confidence in the election process, and the local impact of foreign conflict. By engaging community leaders and experts, we encouraged open dialogue on complex issues in a trusted environment.

LVPM also helped enhance **career readiness** through the *Good News Tours* program. This initiative gave students hands-on exposure to media production and local journalism. The tours provided valuable career insights to over **500 students**. Educators praised the program for its real-world relevance and career development opportunities.

In **local journalism**, LehighValleyNews.com saw an average of 350,000 unique monthly visitors, providing in-depth coverage of local stories across arts, culture, health, and education. With WLVR, an NPR-member public radio station, and PBS39, LVPM reached a wide audience and tied local news to current state and national news, ensuring important local news is shared across multiple platforms.

Trust in Our Elections, a major initiative started in late-2023, emerged from a programming error in Northampton County's voting machines that shook public confidence. LVPM responded by breaking down the election process and addressing misinformation. Partnering with the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce and Keep Our Republic, we hosted live Q&A forums, providing valuable insights on election fairness. This initiative **set the stage for further collaboration** with newsrooms across the nation to safeguard election information.

LVPM also made a **significant impact on learning** through programs like *Book Nook*, which distributed over 5,300 free new books to 1,500 families at ten (10) locations. The program promoted literacy and a love for reading in **underserved communities**. Additionally, *Arte y Español*, a partnership with the Allentown Art Museum, provided Spanish language story time and crafts to 258 children and received 100% positive feedback from parents.

Other **education programs**, such as *Crazy8's Afterschool Math*, engage students with hands-on math activities, building critical thinking and problem-solving skills. *Scholastic Scrimmage*, a popular academic competition, hosted 184 students from thirty (30) high schools, rewarding top-performing teams with scholarships and showcasing academic achievement.

Finally, LVPM's Summer Series hosted 307 attendees at free, family-friendly events focused on STEAM education and the arts. The success of this program led to expanded offerings in 2024, doubling in size and reaching even more families.

Through these programs, LVPM is continuing to provide valuable resources that foster understanding and make a lasting positive impact on our Lehigh Valley community.

Local Programming: A Community Conversation

Addressing the issues impacting the Lehigh Valley today:

- Trust in Our Elections
- The Cost of Diabetes
- Mideast Crisis Hits Home

This PBS39 original program encourages dialogue on important and often complex subjects. Its focus is understanding and problem-solving that fosters a sense of shared responsibility for improving the community. We join community leaders and subject matter experts in respectful, relevant, and impactful conversations.



Career Readiness: Good News Tours

Interactive hands-on media production tours resulted in:

- 16 Community Partners
- 21 Programs Offered
- 513 Students Engaged

This LVPM program provides visiting students with valuable exposure to media production, radio, and local journalism through discussions with our industry professionals, followed by hands-on experience behind and in front of the camera. Aligned with state academic standards, the program offers critical pathways to education and practical experience in production and news-related careers, addressing a strong community need for skill-building and career readiness. Resources are provided to support independent production and exploration. **[100% of the educators surveyed said they found the experience valuable to their students!]**



Hyper-Local Journalism: PBS39, WLVR &

LehighValleyNews.com

Our news team of seventeen (17) journalists' powers:

- LehighValleyNews.com, a daily digital news website averaging 350,000 unique visitors per month.
- WLVR, an NPR-member public radio station with sixteen (16) local newscasts per day.
- PBS39, a television station with local public affairs programming.

We cover local news in the Lehigh Valley, focusing on a two-county area that comprises the third-largest metropolitan region in Pennsylvania.



Trust in Our Elections

Never had the scrutiny of our democratic elections – and the people who run them – been so great.

In November 2023, a programming error in Northampton County, Pa., voting machines shook voter confidence and served as a launching point for what would be a yearlong focus by Lehigh Valley Public Media on the electoral process.

It would come just as millions of Americans prepared for 2024, a presidential election year in a divided nation and a swing state region that routinely gains national attention as a political bellwether.

How could we be sure our elections were fair and accurate?

The purpose of our project was simple: Break down the election process and lay open how elections are run, supervised and calculated.

Through our digital news reporting, public affairs TV broadcasting and public radio station, our work with community partners would carry us into 2024 and all the way through an historic presidential election.

Our mission was to dispel misinformation and demystify the election process.

A live, hourlong program, “Beyond the Ballot,” broke down the November 2023 election results, examined what went wrong and looked ahead to plans for the 2024 presidential vote and the safeguards against errors. We hosted this in partnership with the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce.

In the spring of 2024, we partnered with the civic education group Keep Our Republic to present “A Community Conversation: Trust in Our Elections” – a live-audience Q&A forum that featured bipartisan local, state and federal officials intimately involved in coordinating elections. It received statewide acclaim and was streamed online and across our social media.

It would pave the way later in the year for our participation with seven (7) other newsrooms across the nation in a **Safeguarding Election Information** project. Coordinated by the University of Texas at Austin’s Center for Media Engagement, we collected examples of election misinformation, published our findings to set the record straight, and shared best practices across other newsrooms and news platforms.

Community partners in that initiative included the Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley and the Lehigh County League of Women Voters, since a focus of the nationwide project was non-English-speaking voters, first-time voters and older voters.

While our focus was the nearly 1 million people in the greater Lehigh Valley area, our reach through our digital presence, social media and TV audience extended far beyond that.

“On behalf of the board of *Keep Our Republic*, thanks very much for the great planning and execution of such a memorable event. **Thanks for the work you are doing for the community.**”

Ari Mittleman
Executive Director, *Keep Our Republic*

Education in the Community

Book Nooks | The Book Nook program is committed to literacy and providing children across the Lehigh Valley with access to free new books for their home libraries. We currently supply high-quality books for infants through middle school at ten (10) locations throughout the Lehigh Valley including all five (5) Lehigh Valley Neighborhood Health Centers. We partner with health centers, schools, and community centers – locations that provide easy access for families in under resourced areas of our communities. The outcome is to provide underserved families with access to books they can choose to start or grow their home libraries. Home libraries have been proven to improve vocabulary and literacy skills, aid in cultural understanding, and promote an interest in learning. We are supporting successful outcomes for young learners.

- 5,300 Books Distributed
- 1,500 Families
- 10 Locations (and growing!)

Smart Sack Literacy Bag | This program offers quarterly “Smart Sack Literacy Bag” distributions to local families through our partnerships with libraries, community organizations, and schools. Each bag contains a children’s book as well as all the materials needed to enjoy hands-on, playful learning activities based on critical thinking skills that the whole family can enjoy at home. We include free PBS apps and resources.

- 8 Community Partners
- 820 Sacks Distributed

Arte y Español | Our monthly collaboration between PBS39, Allentown Art Museum, and the Spanish Immersion Learning Center, blends the mission of each organization to offer a Spanish-language story time that relates to a piece of art in the museum. After the story, each child creates a related craft to take home along with a free book. This free learning opportunity located in an underserved area targets families with children aged 2-8. Immersion and pride of culture observed by the children and their respective families provided key results for this year.

- 258 Children Participated
- 100% Positive Parental Feedback
- 141% Increase in Attendance

Crazy8’s Afterschool Math | This eight (8) week after-school math club offers hands-on, high energy math activities to support classroom concepts and curriculum. Crazy8’s is an experiential math learning process that stimulates problem solving, creativity, and critical thinking. The outcome? Students become engaged in the subject and its objectives inside and outside of the classroom.

- Grades K-3
- 228 Students Participated
- 14 After-school Programs

“I can’t find enough words to express how grateful I am for welcoming our summer camp students to tour your studio yesterday. **The opportunity to see what it’s like both on set and behind the scenes as a news reporter was an invaluable experience for the kids.** They were truly inspired and left with a newfound appreciation for the craft of storytelling and journalism ... **It’s experiences like this that leave a lasting impact** on young minds and ignite their passions for future careers in media and the arts.”

Jacinth Headlam | Founder, *InnaStar*

Raising Readers & Ready to Learn | Literacy based family engagements are designed to build computational thinking and early literacy skills for children ages 2-8 largely from underserved communities. Additional resources are based on popular PBS KIDS shows with specific educational literacy and critical thinking goals. These programs facilitate family and community bonding while providing multigenerational learning opportunities for families. Positive family involvement with learning provides young minds the support they need to thrive – not only in school and at home, but in the community. The overall outcome for the 2,400 participants in FY24 was increased opportunities and improved life skills.

Scholastic Scrimmage | Scholastic Scrimmage is the Lehigh Valley's most popular high school academic competition; students are quizzed about all scholastic disciplines. The top eight (8) teams automatically qualify for the National Academic Quiz Tournaments (NAQT) and the top two (2) teams are awarded funds for their school scholarship program (\$4,000 and \$2,000 respectively). Engaging area high schools, it highlights academic achievement and rewards the participating students and their schools by showcasing their scholastic talents on television. A sense of pride, accomplishment, and teamwork are the outcomes of this significant program.

- 184 Students (46 Teams)
- 30 Participating High Schools
- 32 Episodes Recorded

Summer Series | PBS39's 2023 Summer Series offered ten (10) free family events every Tuesday and Thursday from the last week in June through the end of July. In-person programs featured Music and Movement days with live concerts and mindfulness instructors, as well as STEAM days that use Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics as the foundation for an experiential learning process. This stimulates creativity, problem solving and critical thinking. The outcome is to increase the quality of life for local youth by infusing STEM, art education and appreciation through free community engagement during the slow summer slide. Increasing attendance and popularity prompted additional days of free summer engagement in June 2024 which doubled in size from 2023!

- 307 Attendees
- 8 Community Partners

Community Partners

Academy of Little Learners
Allentown Art Museum
Allentown Public Library
Bethlehem Area Library
Cops 'n' Kids
DaVinci Science Center
Intermediate Unit 20
Jackson Early Learning Center
Lehigh Valley Greenway
Lehigh Valley Zoo
Lower Macungie Community Library
National Museum of Industrial History
Parents as Teachers
Spanish Immersion Language Center
Whitehall Public Library
30+ Local Schools and Learning Centers

“... Our Nitschmann students learned so much, and they had a blast! The professionals leading the tour were absolutely wonderful. It was fantastic learning about the many facets of TV Production, and **the hands-on component really resonated with the students. It provided a real-world connection** to our TV Broadcasting unit. Thank you for a super experience!”

Jennifer Wescoe, M.Ed.
Gifted Seminar Teacher
Nitschmann Middle School



“When I see students in the hall, they approach me with positive memories of past sessions or tell me **how much they are looking forward to the next session.**”

Educator | Bethlehem Area S.D.



“Your programs were fabulous! **PBS is such an important piece in working with the community** — and we look forward to working with you more.”

Coordinator, *Cops 'n' Kids*



Lehigh Valley Public Media, home of PBS39, 91.3 WLVR, and LehighValleyNews.com, connects with the local community by addressing its needs and priorities through social-emotional educational media, strong local partnerships, relevant local news, engaging events, and accessible resources.