



WGVU

Public Media

CONTENT REPORT 2023-24

WGVU is a community source of thought-provoking, inclusive, and engaging media.

INTRODUCTION

WGVU strives to educate, inform, inspire, and entertain West Michigan through excellent programming, resources, and audience engagement. WGVU believes all community members deserve access to high-quality cultural, educational, and entertaining content built on authentic relationships – recognizing that true strength lies in working together.

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LOCAL VALUE

WGVU is a trusted provider of educational resources, eye-opening entertainment, local news, information services, and various ways to explore the vibrant diversity of the West Michigan Community. WGVU's commitment to its community is evident in its long-standing history of public service. Through community-based content and audience connections, WGVU is helping to ensure that the people of West Michigan have access to the information and resources they need to thrive.

LOCAL IMPACT

WGVU Public Media covers 22 counties and serves nearly two million people in the West Michigan area. WGVU is actively increasing its reach and accessibility by expanding its radio coverage further West in Kent County and its digital footprint through video streaming and new digital-first content, reaching almost 100,000 online monthly.

2023 KEY SERVICES

2023 marked a year of significant internal growth, with seven new positions created and even more filled by new additions to the WGVU team. As a result, WGVU invested in several programs featuring the people and places within West Michigan. Among the new public-oriented offerings from WGVU was an extended 13-episode season of *Mutually Inclusive*, a digital-first series profiling socio-economic issues within West Michigan and the community leaders facing these problems head-on. Similarly, a new season of *Kalamazoo Lively Arts* met local creatives in the place they call home, presenting stories of how intersectional identities produce avant-garde creations. This was made possible by re-examining audience needs by focusing on community relevance.

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PROGRAMMING

Excellence is at the heart of what WGVU does at all levels. At the national level, PBS helps improve the lives of West Michigan residents through educational and inspiring programs.

At the heart of WGVU NPR's lineup lies a commitment to delivering high-quality news coverage alongside a vibrant tapestry of Jazz and Blues music. With a dedicated team of journalists and reporters, WGVU NPR serves as West Michigan's premier destination for insightful and engaging news content. WGVU also maintained a weekly News Roundup Newsletter summarizing the biggest headlines for 18,000 subscribers and a jaw-dropping 70% open rate.

WGVU NPR's dedication to Jazz and Blues extends far beyond the airwaves, with 52 hours of Jazz and Blues programming broadcasted weekly. Our DJs aren't just spinning records—they're walking encyclopedias of musical knowledge, sharing trivia and insights that enrich the listening experience for our audience.





*"We know that WGVU seeks the truth
and reports the truth. Your newscasts
are tops!"*

BOYD
Grand Rapids

As a PBS member station, WGVU broadcasts diverse national programming that enriches and entertains audiences. From award-winning documentaries to acclaimed drama series and educational children's programs, PBS content reflects WGVU's commitment to providing high-quality, culturally enriching programming for the community.

WGVU takes pride in producing a diverse range of television programs that highlight the people, issues, and cultural richness of West Michigan. These locally produced projects showcase the talent and creativity of the region while addressing essential topics and stories that resonate with viewers.

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PROGRAMS BY WGVU

MUTUALLY INCLUSIVE

This program sheds light on the Adult Career Training Programs offered by the West Michigan Center for Arts and Technology (WMCAT). As the tech industry experiences a boom in Grand Rapids, WMCAT introduces a new pathway in cyber security, providing Kent County residents with valuable training opportunities. Viewers gain insight into the program's impact and significance through interviews with current and past participants.



MICHIGAN EXPERIENCE: OUR KITCHEN TABLE

"Michigan Experience" explores Our Kitchen Table, a food and social justice organization based in Grand Rapids. Viewers learn about the organization's mission and the benefits of growing a garden at home from one of its food coaches, highlighting the intersection of food, community, and social change.



PROGRAMS BY WGVU

KALAMAZOO LIVELY ARTS TV SERIES

This ongoing series celebrates the vibrant arts scene in Kalamazoo, showcasing local artists, performances, and cultural events. From music and dance to visual arts and theater, "Kalamazoo Lively Arts" offers viewers an inside look at the creativity and talent thriving in the community.



TALKING TOGETHER: A PEACE OF MYMIND

In this program, WGVU engages in a conversation with John Noltner, founder of "A Peace of My Mind," exploring his traveling podcast and photography projects. Through meaningful dialogue, viewers gain insight into Noltner's mission to foster understanding and empathy across diverse perspectives.

ONE SMALL STEP WITH DAVE ISAY

Addressing growing partisan hostility, this program features Dave Isay, creator of "One Small Step," an initiative aimed at bridging divides and recognizing the humanity in all individuals. Through personal stories and reflections, viewers are reminded of the power of dialogue and connection in building empathy and understanding.



MI RECIPE

"MI Recipe" celebrates West Michigan's diversity and culture by highlighting individuals and organizations combating food insecurity in the community. Through sharing health-conscious recipes and discussions on food equity, viewers gain a deeper understanding of the importance of accessibility and inclusivity in food systems.






EDUCATION

WGVU Education is committed to helping teachers find suitable media and resources for their classrooms and families in West Michigan.

The education team focuses on various delivery methods to reach students, families, and educators with program-related resources. From public television programs to libraries and resources for educators, WGVU education provides vetted choices that work.

Within West Michigan, WGVU Education partnered with numerous organizations to reach students and families from early childhood through high School. Area-wide alliances with schools, education non-profit organizations, and Grand Valley State University boosted awareness. They assisted the diverse educators working to inform children in West Michigan. WGVU participated in over twenty free educational events with more than one thousand reported students from pre-K through college.



Among the most notable outreach initiatives was WGVU Cool School, in partnership with Harrison Park Elementary in northwest Grand Rapids. Over the course of the 2022-2023 academic school year, WGVU helped facilitate the Harrison Park Media Club, Cool Teacher Escape Rooms, and Kindergarten Round-up Day. Cool School culminated in a year-end block party with over 800 students and 75 staff members, honoring 23 teachers who excelled in their service to families.

At the middle and high school levels, WGVU Education hosted *The Henry Petska Art & Poetry Contest* with The Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids. This endeavor honored the legacy of Henry Petska, a Holocaust survivor, to bring awareness and education to West Michigan students in grades 6-12 through an art and poetry contest. Contestants who had completed the Michigan state requirement on Holocaust education could reflect on what they had learned through writing or art. Seventy-five submissions from seven school districts were displayed at Frederick Meijer Gardens from May through June 2023. WGVU was thrilled by the overwhelmingly positive response to what promises to become a new tradition in Michigan Holocaust education.

The education team also has a dedicated following of 5.5 thousand subscribers to their newsletter, with a 62% open rate.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WGVU's impact reaches far and wide, thanks partly to our valued partnerships with local organizations and community events. From neighborhood gatherings to cultural celebrations, WGVU proudly sponsors and participates in events that celebrate diversity, foster inclusion, and unite people.

One such event is Linc Up's Rock the Block, held in a vibrant and diverse neighborhood. This family-friendly affair offers many activities, entertainment, and community resources, creating an inclusive space where neighbors can connect and celebrate.

Additionally, WGVU supports initiatives like the Promise Walk, organized by the Preeclampsia Foundation of West Michigan, and the Grand Haven Coast Guard Festival, honoring our nation's brave Coast Guard members. We also stand proudly as media sponsors for the Holland Museum, furthering our commitment to preserving and sharing the rich cultural heritage of our region.

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Programs such as the *KidsDay* series at the AirZoo in Portage and John Ball Zoo in Grand Rapids welcomed thousands of families to explore these facilities at significantly reduced ticket prices, meet their favorite PBS Kids characters, and receive educational activities.

WGVU NPR actively cultivates community engagement by sponsoring a Jazz and Blues-specific music stage at the Grand Rapids Arts Festival. This annual event, drawing over 300,000 visitors and boasting 20,000 volunteers, provides a prime opportunity to connect with our community and bring the soulful sounds of live Jazz and Blues to the forefront. WGVU NPR reinforces its commitment to fostering cultural enrichment and musical appreciation within West Michigan by participating in events like the Festival of the Arts.

But our engagement continues beyond there. WGVU believes in bringing the joy of learning and exploration directly to our community's youngest members. Events like Storytime at the Park, held in the Garfield Park area, allow children to enjoy enriching activities and treats free of charge.





One of the highlights of our community engagement efforts is KidsDay at the Zoo. This beloved event, organized and hosted by WGVU, invites families from all walks of life to experience the wonder of Grand Rapids John Ball Zoo at a discounted rate. With the support of partnering organizations, KidsDay transforms the zoo into a bustling hub of education and entertainment, complete with interactive activities and appearances by beloved PBS Kids mascots. With an average attendance of 8,000 to 11,000 guests, KidsDay exemplifies WGVU's commitment to making meaningful experiences accessible to all.

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Through these partnerships and community events, WGVU continues to embody its mission of informing, inspiring, and empowering the diverse communities of West Michigan. Of equal importance were the local events raising awareness around social issues and more excellent representation of minority groups in West Michigan. WGVU was a media sponsor for initiatives such as Juneteenth Jam and the Grand Rapids Pride Festival. WGVU has further plans to help spread the mission of these critical organizations year-round as well.

Lastly, WGVU donors were treated to several VIP gatherings in 2023. Rick Steves, known for his relatable European travel programs on PBS, hosted an intimate presentation on his insights, having traveled the world professionally for decades. In spring and fall, WGVU hosted wine and jazz events that offered access to hundreds of gourmet food and beverage options at the Grand Rapids Public Museum.

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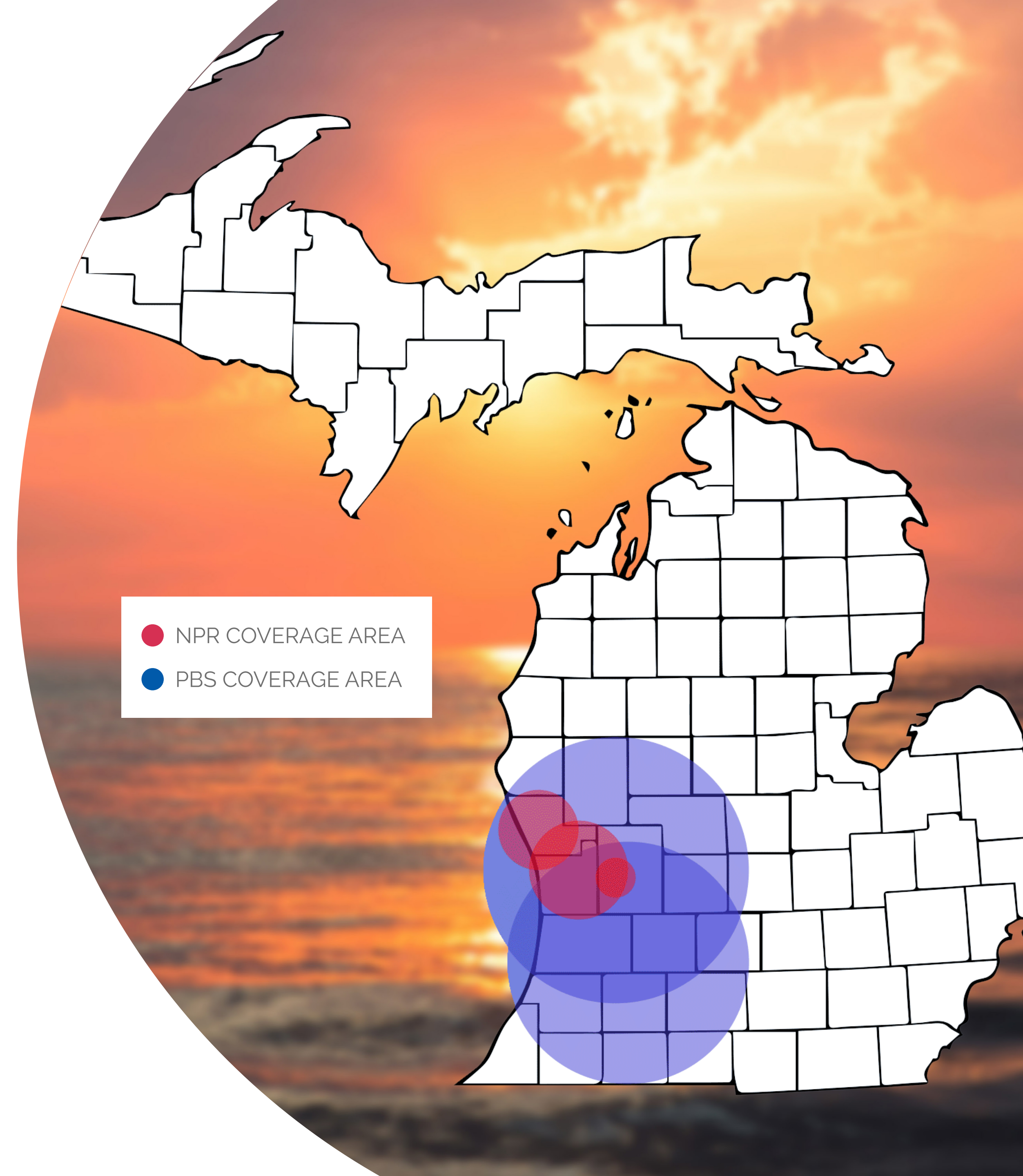


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COVERAGE AND ACCESSIBILITY

WGVU TV is a beacon of educational and entertaining content, offering viewers a diverse array of programming across five broadcast channels: PBS, WGVU Life, The World Channel, PBS Kids 24/7, and the Michigan Learning Channel. Whether it's enriching documentaries, captivating dramas, or educational children's programming, WGVU TV delivers content that resonates with audiences of all ages and interests.

But accessibility doesn't end with the television screen. WGVU TV extends its reach beyond traditional broadcasting platforms with live streaming on the WGVU.ORG website and through YouTube TV. This commitment to digital accessibility ensures that viewers can enjoy WGVU's content anytime, anywhere, reaching over 1.6 million people in the West Michigan area and attracting 60,000 online visitors monthly.




Meanwhile, WGVU radio broadcasts over the airwaves on 88.5 and 95.3 FM in Grand Rapids and Muskegon, fostering a loyal listenership of 50,000 dedicated listeners. For those tuning in digitally, WGVU 88.5 / 95.3 FM is also available for streaming via the WGVU app and on both WGVU.ORG and WGVUNews.ORG, reaching an additional 20,000 listeners each month.

By leveraging traditional and digital platforms, WGVU ensures its enriching content remains accessible to audiences across West Michigan and beyond, fulfilling its mission to inform, educate, and inspire communities far and wide.

WGVU ensures inclusivity by simulcasting TV programming in both English and Spanish, catering to the diverse linguistic needs of the community.

"My love of the blues makes me a huge fan. WGVU has the best and most powerful blues footprint in this great country of ours, in my opinion. I am grateful to be a contributing member. More importantly, I believe we owe a large debt of gratitude to Greg Bluben. With his decades of experience and perfect attendance. We, the public, have grown to expect a stellar performance every weekend from him and we are never disappointed!"

TIM
Coopersville



SUPPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY

WGVU encouraged donations by offering a unique opportunity: for every \$5 donation, a child would receive a book. This initiative encouraged philanthropy and directly contributed to promoting literacy among children in our community. By providing access to books, WGVU empowered children to explore new worlds, expand their imaginations, and cultivate a love for reading. Over 1,500 children received books in our last giveaway.

Through the Book Giveaway program, WGVU not only fostered a culture of giving within the community but also made a tangible and meaningful impact on the lives of children. This initiative represents our ongoing dedication to supporting and uplifting our community members, one book at a time.

Member organizations and individuals' community support and commitment testify to our role in education, inspiration, and creating a better world. When people are involved, change happens. Our listeners have demonstrated their commitment to public media with financial support, volunteerism, and continued loyalty.



COMMUNITY VOICES

"I keep my car radio tuned to NPR. I love its informative and interesting programing."

PAUL, KENT CITY

"Thank you to NPR and to all the staff there at WGVU for your dedication to the truth and a cause worth fighting for and supporting."

BARBARA, GRAND RAPIDS

"One time donation to say thank you for Traveling Blues. Best radio program... hands down!"

DIANE, COOPERSVILLE

"Love Morning Edition, BBC News Hour, 1A, Fresh Air, All Things Considered, and Hearts of Space."

GARY, ROCKFORD

"Thank you, guys, for staying true. I've been a listener from the early 2000s."

ERIC, LUDINGTON

"I'm a sustainer of MI radio but love Putumayo radio hour, plus Sunday jazz and the daily NY radio."

DIANE, MUSKEGON

"I really enjoy your jazz programs! The People's Pharmacy on Sunday morning. I'm sorry you removed Beale Street Caravan from Saturday evening at 6:00pm. Also, I like The Daily. Thanks again."

LAURA, GRAND RAPIDS

"Many thanks from a fan of Harvey McKnight's Jazz Spotlight!"

JAMES, SAN JOSE