

WGVU PUBLIC MEDIA CONTENT REPORT

LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT

FY2024

WGVU
Public Media

A SERVICE OF GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY



WGVU.ORG | WGVUNews.ORG

OUR MISSION

At WGVU Public Media, we aim to [inform](#), [educate](#), [inspire](#), and [engage](#) our community. We serve as West Michigan's trusted source for meaningful storytelling, in-depth journalism, and community-driven programming. WGVU is more than a TV and radio station—we are educators and community storytellers dedicated to fostering civil discourse and bringing public media to public spaces.

**INFORM, EDUCATE,
INSPIRE, ENGAGE**

2024 marked a particularly momentous year for WGVU as we celebrated our 50th anniversary, a milestone reflecting five decades of dedication to serving the West Michigan community. In honor of this achievement, WGVU hosted various special events, including community forums, live panel discussions, and a retrospective documentary highlighting our journey from a small public broadcasting station to a leader in local media.

Further solidifying our role on the national stage, WGVU was honored to host the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA) Conference, bringing together public media professionals from across the country to share insights, innovations, and strategies for advancing public broadcasting. We continued serving as a public discourse hub throughout the year, fostering discussions on issues affecting West Michigan and beyond.

TELEVISION



LOCAL PROGRAMMING & NATIONAL PUBLIC MEDIA CONTENT

WGVU continues to provide high-quality educational and informative television programming, blending national PBS content with locally produced shows. With a reach extending to over 780,000 households and 292,000 households tuning in weekly, WGVU remains a vital source of trusted information and entertainment.

WGVU expanded its focus on documentary storytelling, producing several impactful pieces exploring local history, social justice issues, and environmental concerns.

*"Your programming is my oasis in the desert of present-day television!!
Thank you!"*

BARBARA, JENISON



TELEVISION

This year, our television lineup featured PBS national favorites such as:

FRONTLINE

Investigative journalism covering critical global and national issues.

NOVA

Science programming bringing groundbreaking discoveries and research to viewers.

MASTERPIECE

Iconic British dramas and historical narratives.

ANTIQUES ROADSHOW

Showcasing history through valuable heirlooms and collectibles.

PBS NEWSHOUR

In-depth reporting and analysis of current events.

These were complemented by locally produced shows that ensured West Michigan stories were told with depth and authenticity. Programs such as Hope College Christmas Vespers provided seasonal and cultural content. Stinney: An American Execution, in partnership with the Grand Rapids Opera, sparked meaningful discussion on justice and history.

LOCAL TELEVISION PROGRAMS

WGVU produced a strong lineup of local television programming designed to highlight the diverse voices and stories of West Michigan, including:



LIVING WEST MICHIGAN

A lifestyle and culture show highlighting our region's beauty, innovation, and creativity.



MUTUALLY INCLUSIVE

An Emmy-winning series exploring equity, diversity, and inclusion through meaningful storytelling.



KALAMAZOO LIVELY ARTS

Showcasing the vibrant arts scene in Kalamazoo and surrounding areas, featuring artists, musicians, and performers.

LOCAL TELEVISION PROGRAMS

WGVU provides Michigan Learning Channel, Create TV, World Channel, and PBS Kids 24/7, ensuring that diverse educational and cultural programming is available to all community members.



POCKET SKETCHING

A nationally distributed series on creative expression, providing techniques for capturing moments artistically.



COLOR OUT HERE

A digital-first series that evolved into a standalone production celebrating diverse stories and perspectives from outdoor and travel experiences.

RADIO



NEWS, PUBLIC AFFAIRS, JAZZ & BLUES

WGVU Radio remains a cornerstone of public discourse in West Michigan. With over 32,000 weekly listeners, our radio division continues to inform and engage the community. Programs such as Morning Edition West Michigan, Here and Now West Michigan, and All Things Considered West Michigan bring NPR's rigorous journalism to local audiences, covering topics like legislative policies, education, healthcare, and economic development.

WGVU's radio division expanded its podcasting and digital audio storytelling, launching new investigative and long-form journalism projects. The WGVU Focus West Michigan Podcast Series features in-depth reporting on regional issues, amplifying local perspectives on national conversations.

"Thank you, WGVU Public Media, for providing our programming with an honest, fair voice. Thank you for sponsoring the uplifting shows on PBS. Thank you to NPR and all the WGVU staff for your dedication to the truth and a cause worth fighting for and supporting."

BARBARA, GRAND RAPIDS

RADIO

THE SHELLEY IRWIN SHOW

Engaging interviews and insightful conversations with West Michigan's most influential voices.

FOCUS WEST MICHIGAN PODCAST

A daily podcast highlighting important news, features, and community events.

CRAIN'S GRAND RAPIDS BUSINESS BRIEF

A deep dive into the region's economic trends, entrepreneurship, and industry developments.

COMMON THREADS

A long-standing show dedicated to interfaith discussions and cross-cultural dialogue.

ONE SMALL STEP

A special series in partnership with StoryCorps, bringing together individuals with opposing political views for meaningful conversations.



JAZZ WITH SCOTT VANDER WERF

Exploring jazz's past, present, and future with in-depth analysis and interviews.

JAZZ SPOTLIGHT WITH HARVEY MCKNIGHT

A deep dive into jazz's legends and modern innovators.

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY NIGHT BLUES WITH GREG BLUEBEN

Keeping blues traditions alive with soulful classics and contemporary blues.

BASICALLY, BIG BANDS

A celebration of swing-era jazz and the powerful sounds of big band music.

WGVU's radio division expanded its podcasting and digital audio storytelling, launching new investigative and long-form journalism projects. The WGVU Focus West Michigan Podcast Series feature in-depth reporting on regional issues, amplifying local perspectives on national conversations.

EDUCATION

WGVU remains committed to lifelong learning and community education, offering a range of programming and outreach efforts designed to support educators, students, and families across West Michigan. Through the Michigan Learning Channel, we provide accessible educational content tailored to classroom instruction and at-home learning.

Our partnerships with Kent ISD, Muskegon ISD, and Grand Valley State University have expanded our reach, ensuring that students and teachers have the resources they need for success.

WGVU's educational initiatives continue to grow, with expanded partnerships providing free learning resources to thousands of students and teachers across West Michigan.

Our key educational initiatives include:

PBS KIDS 24/7

Round-the-clock educational programming for young learners.

STEM AND LITERACY OUTREACH

Hands-on experiences, workshops, and virtual learning sessions focused on science, technology, engineering, and math.

TEACHER RESOURCES & LESSON PLANS

Providing free digital teaching materials aligned with state curriculum standards.


EDUCATIONAL EVENTS & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Hosting learning-focused events that bring together families, educators, and students to explore hands-on activities and enriching discussions.



WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

WGVU has strengthened its digital presence through wgvu.org and wgvunews.org, offering on-demand access to local news, television schedules, and exclusive online content. Additionally, our social media platforms have seen a surge in engagement, particularly with the introduction of fun new digital content tailored to younger, mobile-first audiences. We continue to expand our content through behind-the-scenes stories, user-generated content, and short-form video storytelling to foster deeper audience engagement.



STREAMING AND VOD

WGVU has expanded its live and video-on-demand (VOD) streaming options, recognizing the shift in viewer habits.

- Live PBS programming is available through our website and mobile app.
- WGVU Passport features a vast library of exclusive PBS content available anytime.
- WGVU has embraced digital transformation, with a sharp increase in engagement across online platforms demonstrating a strong appetite for digital-first content. Streaming services like PBS Passport have allowed our members to access on-demand content, ensuring viewers can engage with their favorite shows on their schedule.

“Because it provides such quality programming, I don’t feel assaulted by it in language, subject matter, or visual presentation. You search out quality – people are hungry for it! Thank you for such fine programming!!! Also, thank you for the wonderful song about “Stories” – “the lines on my face” – it’s perfect!! Thank you to everyone who has this wonderful vision of better things and makes it happen!!!”

MARY ANN, NILES

NEWSLETTERS

Our digital connection with audiences is further strengthened through our three key newsletters:

NEWS ROUNDUP

18,000 subscribers with a 72% open rate, offering the latest headlines and insights.

EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

15,000 subscribers with a 64% open rate, delivering educational resources and opportunities.

HIGHLIGHTS NEWSLETTER

23,000 subscribers with a 30% open rate, featuring must-watch programming and upcoming events.

These newsletters connect WGVU and the community, ensuring audiences remain engaged with meaningful content.

“The Insider newsletter is always enjoyable and helpful for my enjoyment of so many programs you offer. I really enjoy the Nature programs. When my father was alive, we watched those programs all the time, and there was always plenty of conversation to be had over each one. Thank you for some good memories!!”

RITA, GRAND RAPIDS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

WGVU thrives on collaboration, and our community partnerships are essential to fulfilling our mission. By working alongside educational institutions, non-profits, cultural organizations, and local businesses, we ensure that public media continues to catalyze meaningful change in West Michigan.

WGVU collaborates with John Ball Park Zoo, the Grand Rapids Children's Museum, the Grand Rapids Public Museum, and the Grand Rapids Opera. These partnerships allow us to feature West Michigan's vibrant communities through programming such as Kalamazoo Lively Arts and Living West Michigan and special documentary projects like *Stinney: An American Execution*. By amplifying these artistic voices, we contribute to the cultural enrichment of our community.

WGVU partners with organizations such as The Wege Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce to foster civic engagement and social impact. Our collaboration with LINC UP strengthens our commitment to equity and community-led initiatives.



A background image showing a group of children at an outdoor event. In the foreground, a young girl with blonde hair, wearing a bright green t-shirt with 'GIRL' and 'RIDER' printed on it, is laughing joyfully. To her left, another girl in a maroon t-shirt is looking down. In the background, a woman in a blue t-shirt with 'GREAT BIG' and 'CAREER' visible is smiling. The scene is outdoors on a grassy area with trees and a red structure in the distance.

EVENTS

WGVU thrives on community engagement, offering programs and events that connect audiences with meaningful content and discussions including:

RICK STEVES: A NIGHT OF TRAVEL AND LEARNING

A live event featuring the renowned travel expert discussing global education and cultural awareness.

AN EVENING WITH IRA GLASS

The host of This American Life shared insights into storytelling and journalism.

PBS NEWSHOUR PRESENTS: A CONVERSATION WITH GEOFF BENNETT

The PBS NewsHour anchor discussed the state of journalism and public trust in the media.

KIDS DAY AT THE ZOO

An interactive, family-friendly event featuring PBS Kids characters and learning activities.

EVENTS

WGVU PUBLIC MEDIA 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

A gala event reflecting WGVU's five decades of service to West Michigan.

EDUCATIONAL SUMMITS WITH KENT ISD AND MUSKEGON ISD

Discussions with teachers and administrators on media's role in education.

PBS KIDS IN THE PARK

A fun-filled day featuring beloved PBS Kids characters, hands-on activities, and educational programming.

FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS PARTNERSHIP

Supporting the annual celebration of West Michigan's diverse artistic talent.

WGVU SCREENINGS

Free film screenings with discussions on social and cultural topics.



DEVELOPMENT

WGVU experienced steady growth in FY2024, with a slight increase in overall membership and a more significant rise in individual gift amounts. This financial support has allowed us to sustain ongoing programming, expand community engagement, and meaningfully give back to the community.

Through the generosity of our supporters and the commitment of our community partners, we were able to make a tangible difference beyond broadcasting. One of our most impactful initiatives was our early childhood literacy outreach. WGVU distributed over 1,500 books to students who may not have books at home, addressing a critical issue in early childhood education.

Additionally, WGVU facilitated educational field trips for students from the Grand Rapids area, providing them with enriching learning experiences at institutions like the Grand Rapids Children's Museum. These efforts reflect WGVU's mission to inform, entertain, and directly support our community's educational and cultural growth.



50 YEARS OF WGVU

One of the year's highlights was the 50th Jubilee Fundraiser, a milestone event that brought together donors, community partners, and supporters to celebrate WGVU's impact over the past five decades. This event and successful fundraising campaigns like Giving Tuesday played a crucial role in strengthening our financial foundation and increasing community involvement.

50 WGVU
Public Media

GOLDEN JUBILEE
A 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

THANK YOU
FOR CELEBRATING WITH US

CONCLUSION

FY2024 was a year of remarkable growth for WGUV Public Media. Our deepened commitment to storytelling, education, community engagement, digital expansion, and streaming services has positioned us as a leader in West Michigan's media landscape.

As we look ahead, we focus on delivering programming that enriches lives, fosters connections, and amplifies diverse voices. With continued support from our community, we are confident that the best is yet to come.

"Thank you for all the wonderful programming and ways you serve our community."

NANCY, HUDSONVILLE

"Just sending mega-kudos to your excellent use of Brandi Carlile's 'The Story' to highlight your storytelling commercial. Invokes a gut emotional reaction. Keep up the good work; it is much appreciated."

GORDON, HASTINGS

"I'm 79 and stay busy, but then you soothe me in the evenings with intelligent and wonderful programming."

MARTHA, KALAMAZOO

