2.5 MILLION VIEWERS AND LISTENERS IN WEST AND SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN

“I cannot imagine life without WGVU NPR and PBS.”
- Barbara, Grand Rapids
MISSION
Connecting with communities using the strengths of public media to educate, inform, inspire and entertain.

VISION
Vision: WGVU’s vision is for an improved quality of life for all members of the community through access to high-quality cultural, educational and entertaining content built upon authentic relationships, recognizing our true strength lies in our ability to work together.

VALUES
• Excellence: We strive for excellence in everything we do. Excellence is not a destination, but a purposeful and continuous process.

• Integrity: As stewards of public trust, we are committed to being engaged, credible, independent, nonpartisan, balanced, authentic, and courageous.

• Inclusivity: We foster a welcoming environment allowing individuals the space to authentically be themselves. Representation matters, and we consistently work alongside our community to provide accessible and innovative content.

• Curiosity: Listening and learning drive creativity - we nurture life-long learning, growth, and innovation by being a window to the world’s possibilities.

• Respect: We are a catalyst for civil discourse, treating all people with respect, dignity and compassion to build a stronger society.
STATION STATEMENT

In 2022, WGVU Public Media will mark its 50th anniversary. While the world has changed and technology has moved beyond what we could have imagined in 1972, some things have not changed. Public Media exists to be a public good, and the mission of WGVU remains: connecting with communities using the strengths of public media to educate, inform, inspire and entertain. In today’s world, people do not simply watch or listen to the content we provide, they want to engage with us to impact their lives and the community at large. We connect people to ideas and experiences they may not have access to, both locally and globally. We must evolve to meet people where they are.

Building on trusted partnerships with our donors, organizations, and the communities that we serve, we will harness our strengths, creating and delivering multimedia content, bringing to light and addressing the needs of our community. Moving beyond screens and speakers and further into the community, we will achieve greater impact. Success can only be achieved when we all work together.

As we interact with each other, our partners and the community, our organizational values are at the core of our actions and decisions. These values help define us and provide direction for every member of the staff. They are woven together in such a manner that they work in concert with each other, none more significant than the other.

In order to deliver on our promise, that WGVU Public Media provides an essential service that is accessible for everyone and is meant to improve the communities we serve, we will focus on seven key results areas:
EDUCATE

The WGVU Education Team is committed to providing equitable, accessible opportunities and resources that support children across West and Southwest Michigan in meeting educational outcomes. Through trusted relationships within the ecosystem in which children learn, we actively work alongside our partners on local initiatives and curate educational content and experiences based on community needs. Our free tools and resources for students, educators, and families foster innovation and curiosity; nurture life-long learning; expand the scope of voices, and provide trusted windows to our diverse world of possibilities.

WGVU Cool Teach Program
WGVU Education continues to work to engage the PreK-12 community through our student-nominated teacher recognition contest, Cool Teacher. In 2021, 20 local teachers were nominated by their students to be recognized on WGVU television and radio for their outstanding commitment to excellence in teaching.

WGVU Innovation Challenge
Our Innovation Challenge asks students to submit an S.T.E.(A).M., Performing Arts, Writing, or Visual Arts project. These contests culminate with our Education Celebration Event where we honor our contest winners with their families, community partners, sponsors, and donors.

Michigan Learning Channel
The Michigan Learning Channel is a collaboration across several Michigan Public Television organizations to provide television and digital lesson plans for students Pre-K through 12th grade. Our Education team works closely with neighboring stations to create content that is accessible in and out of classroom learning.

Librarian Story time
During virtual classes last year we partnered with Allendale Librarians to provide a interactive storytelling time. We recorded the Librarians reading the stories and then we took the footage and added all the pages and illustrations in post production to help create a fulfilling piece of content for kids who adjusting a home education environment.

“Wow! What a wonderful event that WGVU hosted! We really enjoyed being part of the celebration! I can only imagine the hard work that goes into the contests and the celebration night! Thank you to all of the WGVU team that encourages children to tap into their creative minds and create something wonderful and inventive!”

- Bridgette, parent
Virtual Professional Development Workshop

In response to COVID-19 and changing needs of educators, WGVU was able to offer virtual professional learning to pre-service and practicing educators in our community. WGVU has participated in national PBS Edcamps and PBS Virtual Professional Learning Series that bring together content experts and educators, while also providing support to local educators in using resources such as PBS LearningMedia in their classrooms. WGVU was also proud to be a contributor and pilot station in the development of an online self-paced learning platform for early childhood educators.

By Leaps and Bounds: A Closer Look at Early Childhood

The By Leaps & Bounds radio series explores topics of prevention and intervention in the systems of early childhood care in West and Southwest Michigan. The series focuses on how programs support children, families, and workforce development/economy, along with the gaps that still exist and what the community can do to close them. In 2021, with the help of parents, community “experts” and many local organizations, the series explored: the importance of businesses and policy investments in early childhood and childcare programs, the critical role of early childhood educators, high-quality childcare access and support, Michigan Kids Count Data, and disparities for children of color. The series also focused heavily on a parent community initiative called the Kent County Success Basics.

Gerald R Ford Learning Media Project

In 2020, WGVU worked with the Gerald R. Ford Foundation to expand these resources into a collection. Highlighting several permanent exhibits at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum and a new publication, Truth and Honor: The President Ford Story, a children’s book about President Gerald R. Ford's life, this collection provides high quality videos and supplemental activities for students in grades K-12.

Learning Newsletter

The Education newsletter is a weekly collection of trusted and vetted lesson plans and activities targeted at parents and teachers. WGVU continued to expand its newsletter list week after week seeing a 17% increase in size pushing it to just over 5,000 subscribers that are so engaged that they keep the open rate over 60%. The lessons included in this newsletter are aligned to seasons, holidays, cultural heritage, and social issues facing our society.

WGVU At-Home Learning Resources

WGVU At-Home Learning Resources began as a response to schools closing in March 2020 and has remained a hub for parents and educators in need of digital resources, activities, and tools for PreK to 12 students with the WGVU At-Home Learning web page. Through its World Channel programming and PBS KIDS broadcast programming, WGVU was able to connect learning with local families and educators struggling with Internet access.

PBS Kids National Educational Programming on WGVU

PBS KIDS is dedicated to offering free access to media content and community-based experiences that support learning for young children. PBS KIDS strives to reflect the diversity of its audience across television and digital platforms. All children across America between the ages of 2 and 8 should see themselves represented on PBS KIDS, through characters and stories that celebrate and give voice to a broad variety of lived experiences. Along with specials addressing current events, the Elinor Wonders Why, a program for 3-5-year-olds focused on science inquiry was released in September 2020; and Donkey Hodie, a program Inspired by Mr. Rogers Neighborhood for 3-5-year-olds, focuses on building social and emotional skills was released in May 2021.
Since the WGVU AM/FM first lit up in 1983, it has provided 1.5 million listeners across twenty-four counties with evocative storytelling and news. As West and Southwest Michigan’s NPR affiliate, we have provided our listening demographic with the most up-to-date news information available, the importance of which was monumental in a year of significant political and civil unrest. On a local level, our reporting team at WGVU worked tirelessly to inform listeners regarding confrontations between pro and anti-mask protesters, the conflict between parents, politicians, and public health officers over COVID-19 protocol, and school bus driver shortages that affected routine school operations. From the national level, these reporters kept the listening public in the know when it came to pro-democracy protests in Myanmar and a new, breakthrough cancer treatment developed in Grand Rapids. All this work coming from WGVU stems from the belief that a well-informed public possesses the greatest potential to make decisions that benefit all communities.

The WGVU Morning Show
WGVU’s Morning Show continues to be a popular staple of our FM programming. The show is hosted by Shelley Irwin, a five-time AWRT Gracie Allen Recipient for Outstanding Host. In 2021, Shelley celebrated 20 years of local journalism with The WGVU Morning Show. This daily program is a news magazine that focuses on topics and guest interviews surrounding our listening community and revolves around our mission of inspiring, informing, educating, and entertaining. Over the past two decades, The Morning Show has featured guests such as Mitch Albom, Neal Conan, and Jeff Daniels.
WGVU Community Connection

Community Connection offers an educational and informational spotlight on non-profit and other agencies in West Michigan with host Shelley Irwin. In 2021, Community Connection featured exclusive clips from the opera Penny and talked with those involved at Opera Grand Rapids, had great discussions on the topics of women’s health, men’s health, and trails in West Michigan. Episodes also included spotlights on Wildlife Conservation Month, Authors in West Michigan, and how different areas around our state are dealing with homelessness in their communities.

WGVU NewsMakers

WGVU NewsMakers explores the news that lies closest to home. From local stories of triumph and discovery to entertainment and competition in West Michigan, hosts from the WGVU News department present guests who have overcome odds and made a difference in the world around them. In 2021, NewsMakers featured “The Mind of Maurice Sendak”, focusing on his life and famous works, including the ever-popular book “Where the Wild Things Are. Also, there was a 3 part series featuring GVSU Presidents past and present, facilitating discussions with nationally-recognized guests, including Lisa Desjardins from PBS Newshour. Other episodes included topics on the American Midwest and Black History, COVID Vaccine-Hesitancy and Public Health Messaging, and an episode on H.W. Brands’ new book “Our First Civil War”.

“I will continue to support public broadcasting as my main source of unbiased news coverage, fascinating and very important talk radio programs as well as access to my kind of music. Thank you for continuing to provide your services in the face of this extremely deadly pandemic, especially as it is predictably surging now in Kent County, MI. All of you are among my list of heroes providing essential services. THANK YOU, again!”

- Linda, Wyoming

Region 6 Healthcare Coalition

The COVID virus continues its mutation. The highly contagious Omicron variant first detected in South Africa in early November is nowhere. What should West and Southwest Michigan hospitals already at a tipping point with Delta variant hospitalizations expect in the coming weeks? We talk with leaders from the Region 6 Healthcare Coalition on West Michigan Week.

“...we did not join until 1992 when our first grandson was born. We wanted him to see and learn through an educational point of view. We now watch for our enjoyment and knowledge. Thank you.”

- Charyl, Dorr

Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission

In November 2018, Michigan voters amended the Constitution with the “Voters Not Politicians” ballot proposal establishing a commission of citizens with exclusive authority to adopt district boundaries for the Michigan Senate, Michigan House of Representatives, and U.S. Congress, every 10 years. Thirteen registered voters were randomly selected forming the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. It’s now unveiling newly drafted legislative district maps. We discuss the map-making process with M-I-C-R-C members on West Michigan Week.
West Michigan Week
West Michigan Week is a monthly TV news program produced locally by WGVU Public Media. The program takes a deeper dive into issues directly affecting our local community. Hosted by Patrick Center viewers are engaged with community experts on topics ranging from the pandemic, housing crisis, politics, and finance.

Grand Valley Sports Report
A Michigan Broadcast Excellence winner, Grand Valley Sports Report is a weekly sports magazine featuring game highlights and interviews with Grand Valley State University coaches and players. The show focuses on Grand Valley State’s men’s and women’s varsity sports. Grand Valley has earned the Directors’ Cup for being the best NCAA Division II athletic program in the nation for 13 of the last 16 years.

Michigan Experience
Michigan Experience is a digital program highlighting the people and places of West Michigan. In 2021, Michigan Experience interviewed Tami Vandenberg, co-owner of the popular music venue, The Pyramid Scheme, to illuminate the ways a global pandemic has impacted performing artists and those who partner with them on a local level.

INSPIRE
“Love the baking shows on PBS on Saturday afternoons and wish you would have them EVERY WEEK. Thanks.”
- James, Fennville

WGVU is committed to strengthening our organization and community through open inquiry, valuing diverse identities, perspectives, and backgrounds. Building on trusted partnerships with our donors, organizations, and the communities that we serve, we harness our strengths to create and deliver multimedia content that brings to light and addresses the needs of our community. Moving beyond screens and speakers and further into the community, we achieve greater impact. We are a public media organization living in our communities, serving our communities. Success can only be achieved when we all work together. We emphasize expanding the voices and experiences that are seen and heard, ensuring a meaningful service for all.
Powerful Women: Let’s Talk

In 2021 we talked with some amazing women in our community for this weekly podcast. They include the President of Grand Valley State University, the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the Spectrum Health System as well as lawyers, doctors, moms, and businesswomen. All sharing their stories of struggle, triumph, sorrow, and joy. All meant to strengthen and empower other women.

Mutually Inclusive

In 2021 WGVU continues to advance IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility) within our organization and through our community engagement efforts under our Mutually Inclusive and Shaping Narratives brands. First, as part of Mutually Inclusive, we hired an inclusion reporter, Kylie Ambu, who covers issues impacting underrepresented and marginalized individuals. Then, under our Shaping Narratives brand, we are building community capacity by providing training and media platforms for leaders of color who have produced programs with and for their communities that we are now taking back into public spaces to encourage changed based conversations.

Shaping Narratives

Shaping Narratives is an initiative to build capacity in communities of color by providing leaders with training in decolonizing narratives, media, and production skills and community organizing as a distribution strategy. Each participant developed a show, a local affinity group, and a social media following to address issues they are passionate about. Content is being used to spark change-based conversations. The shows include Ngiiwe, Color Out Here, Meeting God, The Black Honest Truth, and Cultural Ingredients.

Kalamazoo Lively Arts

WGVU's Kalamazoo Lively Arts series connects artists with the community through the creation and sharing of stories about the many artists and art forms helping to define Kalamazoo. The stories of more than 50 artists and groups have been told, representing a wide variety of visual art, performance, and many other forms of expression. This series is designed to give the public a deeper look, striking a balance between entertainment and educational value. Throughout the 2021 season, we interviewed a number of people and dove into our vault to understand the nuances of creativity and how it's woven into the way people live, work, and play in Kalamazoo and beyond. 2021's episodes featured a big spotlight on the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, the life and career of the Motown group The Velvelettes, and capturing artists creating and sharing their work all throughout a global pandemic.

Inspiring National Programming on WGVU Public Media

WGVU has provided the local community with awe-inspiring programming from PBS and NPR. WGVU is proud to bring quality content that not only informs but inspires our whole community to reach for the stars. Series such as “In Their Own Words” and “Inspiring Woman” Explore the lives and impact of the most transformative figures in modern history. Programming like “The Joy of Painting”, “This Old House”, “Rick Steve’s Europe” and “A Chef’s Life” ignites creativity and passion for new hobbies and activities. WGVU provides thought-inspiring programming and podcast from NPR like “All Things Considered”, “Here and Now, and “Fresh Air” which are engineered to make the listeners reflect on the current topics facing us personally, nationally, and locally to inspire personal growth and understanding.
ENTERTAIN

WGVU has a legacy of providing communities with high-quality entertainment featuring unique topics that have broad appeal. As West and Southwest Michigan’s PBS affiliate, we distribute innovative content not seen on other networks. Viewers are drawn weekly to marvels of scientific discoveries on Nova and the evocative period dramas produced by Masterpiece. Within the public, WGVU collaborates with local partners to host events like Kids Day at the Zoo, which annually draws in thousands of kids and adults with reduced admission and specialized activities. On the air and in person, WGVU strives to present memorable opportunities with easy accessibility.

KidsDay at the Zoo
KidsDay at the Zoo draws thousands of families from all over the state of Michigan to enjoy a day of educational and entertaining activities while exploring John Ball Zoo & Park. Community support and partnerships are the core of making this event a success, as underwriting assists with offsetting the cost of admission, making the zoo more accessible to families who otherwise could not afford to attend. WGVU is grateful to sponsors and local community organizations for their faithfulness and diligence to serve the community every August at KidsDay at the Zoo.

Education Celebration
The culminating event of our education program’s year, the WGVU Education Celebration was held in 2021 at LMCU Ballpark. We were able to bring families and educators together in this outdoor venue to recognize and celebrate our Cool Teachers, Nominating Students, and Innovation Challenge participants. A great time was had by all as they enjoyed socially-distanced picnics on the field and then watched a PBS KIDS double feature movie.

Book Giveaways
In 2020, WGVU continued a program of giving two books (one in English, one in Spanish) per Giving Tuesday donation to local schools. With the support of local sponsors, WGVU helps enrich the education of hundreds of students in our local community.

The concert by Renee Flemming (opera singer) last night was the best musical program I’ve seen on PBS in years! I was also mesmerized by the Andrea Bocelli program on March 14. Your continuation of classical music programs will certainly get my support! Thank you.

- Carol, Douglas
Be My Neighbor Day

In 2021 WGVU set out to continue its partnership with the Fred Rogers Company and PNC bank for Daniel Tigers Neighborhood “Be My Neighbor day”. With the past year having uncertainty about what kinds of in-person interaction the station could have we altered our normal plans of holding an event for thousands of kids, and hit the road instead. WGVU took Daniel Tiger on a trolley ride to three different schools and two different YMCA locations where he was socially distanced, but still able to bring a day of fun and education to the children in our community. This year’s “Be My Neighbor Day” not only was there an opportunity to have their picture taken with Daniel but also received an education swag bag filled with different educational activities. To enhance the experience even more Children engaged with a virtual event which included storytelling online games and a form that allowed children to send kind emails to friends, neighbors, and family. The event directly interacted with over 600 students.

Jazz on WGVU-FM

The radio isn’t just for the news! Every week, listeners of WGVU-FM can hear 48 hours of jazz and blues curated by insightful hosts during shows like the nationally acclaimed Beale Street Caravan and WGVU’s Travelin’ Blues with Scott Vander Werf.

Pocket Sketching

Discover the joy of sketching anywhere in 25 minutes or less! This program is designed so a raw beginner can follow along and enjoy the fun of success, while the advanced artist finds a fast, totally portable, compact technique that goes everywhere. Each episode demonstrates a new skill with an easy-to-do lesson.

Entertaining National Programming on WGVU Public Media

To entertain is a pillar of what’s at the heart of Public Media. Engaging programming that entertains and broadens cultural enrichment. “Austin City Limits”, “Live at Lincoln Center”, “Great Performances”, and “American Masters” have been bringing the nation’s largest stage to the West and Southwest community for 49 years. The informative and hilarious programming of “Wait, Wait! Don’t Tell Me!” and “Bullseye with Jesse Thorn” not only inform listeners about current topics and social commentary but also provides moments of levity in our stressful and chaotic world.

“I’m a composer and pianist in the San Francisco Bay Area. Thanks to Mr. Harvey McKnight and the staff at WGVU for your consistent support of independent music.”

- James, San Jose, CA
Pop-Up Concerts

WGVU loves to highlight the local community, and give the local artists a stage. This is epitomized by WGVU’s “Pop-Up Series”. Where local musicians, writers, and poets have the opportunity to perform in front of an engaged audience. All though different WGVU was dedicated to making these pop-ups continue all be it on a virtual stage. In 2021 the station provided a series of local musicians with ties to the local Black religious community that highlighted the connection between religion and the role it plays in soul and gospel music. The series was directly inspired by PBS’s national series “The Black Church”.

Real Oldies 1480 AM

For the last 11 years, WGVU Public Media has been proud to provide our listening community with the hits and hidden gems from the ‘50s, ‘60s, and ‘70s on Real Oldies 1480 and 850 AM. Real Oldies was created to fill a void as the last “Oldies” station left the market in early 2009. Real Oldies is a community darling playing not only the hits of the past but gives you the opportunity to local hear artists from the past and hidden gems from your favorite artist from the ‘50s, ‘60s, and ‘70s. Real Oldies 1480 is listened to by tens of thousands of people, locally, nationally, and internationally with the station regularly receiving thanks from other states and countries. Although WGVU was not able to engage in person with the audience the station did create a virtual discussion board for fans to directly engage with DJs and other listeners.

“Enjoy your Oldies programming immensely. Reminds me of my summers spent on McLaren Lake in Hesperia, Michigan. Bob Becker’s stories on Saturday’s and Sunday’s always put a smile on my face. Keep up the good work and thank you all of you.”
- Michael, Mooresville, NC

“Thanks for everything, this has been a fun and encouraging experience. I’m glad WGVU has this option for students to nominate staff this way, and I feel it has been noting but positive and helpful in building relationships and bringing our class closer together.”
- Adam, Cool Teacher

“We enjoy documentaries, biographies, country music and contemporary music, travel programs and nature programs. Anything Ken Burns is great. Thank you!”
- Gary, Middleville

“I love PBS & NPR and thank you for all the wonderful programming!”
- Kate, Grand Rapids

“If we could only pick one channel for TV viewing, it would be PBS!”
- Joanne, Newaygo