Dear Friends,

The past couple of years have been extraordinary in many ways. And yet, despite the challenges, our viewers and supporters have again demonstrated how much they value WTCI and the unique role we play in the Tennessee Valley. Throughout the pandemic, WTCI had the unique ability to bring people together in new ways. We provided 24/7 learning content to preK - grade 12 students on our newest channel, WTCI Educate; brought classical music and dance into living rooms throughout our region by broadcasting String Theory at Home concerts and a digital version of Tchaikovsky’s Nutcracker, performed by the Chattanooga Ballet; and kept the community informed about important updates related to remote school options, closures, and COVID protocols.

As a PBS member station, WTCI serves everyone throughout the Greater Chattanooga area. Our broadcast signal can be received in 35 counties across four states. Like the view atop Lookout Mountain, our signal is impactful. WTCI provides our coverage area with free content and services that educate, inform, and inspire.

In this Annual Report, you will learn about many of WTCI's programs, productions, and activities that enhanced the quality of life for our community during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. All were made possible thanks to the generosity of many individuals, foundations, and businesses who believe in the value of public television.

Thank you for watching, thank you for your trust, and thank you for your continued support.

Bob Culkeen
President/CEO
Organizational Summary

WTCI began broadcasting on March 4, 1970. In 2020, we celebrated our 50th year of service to our community.

WTCI consistently provides the highest quality of educational, informative, and entertaining programs without regard for commercial concerns 24 hours each day. We believe in excellence and integrity in public broadcasting, built upon respect for diverse ideas and cultures, which is essential to building a well-informed society and strong community. The station thrives on the robust partnerships it has built with local and regional organizations, schools, businesses, and government offices.

Stories create community. They connect us, reflecting who we are and what's most important to us. For over 50 years, WTCI has been telling the stories of the Greater Chattanooga region and the Tennessee Valley. We are grateful to each and every one of you, our supporters, partners, and viewers, for helping us to live our mission every day.

OUR MISSION

WTCI enriches lives through quality programs and services that educate, engage, and inspire a lifetime of learning and exploration.

OUR IMPACT

WTCI, the community PBS station, serves Southeast Tennessee, Northeast Alabama, North Georgia, and the Western tip of North Carolina as a community licensed public television station, PBS affiliate.

WTCI transmits across a 60-mile broadcast radius, providing quality, trusted local and national programming to over 440,000 households and more than 1.1 million viewers.

Additionally, 35 cable systems in the four-state region carry the station's signal.

WTCI-PBS is an essential public institution that fuels positive change in the Tennessee Valley by telling the stories of our community.
FY 20-21 Board of Directors

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FY 20-21 Staff Members

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Scott Gemeinhardt, Mgr. of Broadcast Operations  
James Colvard, Broadcast Operations Specialist  
Sawyer Locke, Producer  
Katie DeRoche - Producer  
Jonah Egermeier - Producer  
Jeff Holland, Master Control

"Your programming has been influential to my life. From Reading Rainbow and New Yankee Workshop as a child to your local documentaries and Masterpiece Theater today. There is always something to pique my interest. Thank you WTCI-PBS!"

- Bonnie Boyson

FY 20-21 Community Advisory Board

Janice Cornett  
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Local Content

Knowing how critical it is to build the foundational skills that children need in order to be successful lifelong learners, WTCI-PBS is dedicated to offering free access to media content and community-based experiences that support learning for children. Our aim is to use the power of media to open worlds of possibilities for all, so that every child can reach their full potential in school — and in life.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for free educational resources for families and children to access while at-home, thus requiring innovative solutions to digital and educational inequities in our region. Acknowledging that many families lack access to digital technology, particularly in areas of concentrated poverty and rural communities, we created a new 24/7 standards-aligned learning channel, WTCI EDUCATE 45.4, to strengthen and enrich Pre-K through 12th-grade learning, while providing resources to families to help support parents to be the first educators of their children. WTCI EDUCATE went live on air in January, 2021.

According to national data, PBS reaches 89% of non-internet homes, 82% of lower-income homes, and 78% of rural homes, providing informational opportunities for households that, otherwise, may not have access. This, along with WTCI’s unique ability to reach a wide audience across TN that is not replicated by other service providers, enables WTCI to meet the challenges of serving families learning from home. WTCI EDUCATE 45.4 is designed to support education equity efforts by amplifying and widely sharing learning programming via our unique broadcast platform.

Community involvement is essential to this programming model. While WTCI is an education partner, WTCI EDUCATE is not a prescriptive programming model. We fully rely on expert educators, students, and community members to inform and craft the lessons for the channel, then support them in the creation of this learning content. Lessons featured on WTCI EDUCATE are based on best practice educational resources and pull from curricula and standards-aligned content that educators use in their classrooms. The goal is to provide curriculum reinforcement and enrichment lessons following clear academic benchmarks and models.

To date, WTCI has filmed over 100 hours of locally created educational content in partnership with more than 100 educators and collaborators including the TN DOE, Hamilton County Schools, UTC School of Education, Tyner Academy Institute, Lee University, Cempa Community Cares, SPLASH Youth Arts, EPB, the Digital Equity Alliance, Studio Everything, Ballet Esprit, the POPUP Project, Playful Evolving Monsters, Miss Ladybug LLC, Rivercity ACT Workshops, Signal Centers, and the Chattanooga Public Library.
The A List with Alison Lebovitz is an engaging one-on-one weekly interview series that highlights a diverse array of local and national personalities. Season 12 aired from May 7, 2021 to June 24, 2021, and was comprised of eight original episodes.

Greater Chattanooga is WTCI's series of short digital-first documentaries. We released seven original stories online during FY 20-21. The following subjects were covered: The story of Louis Kayo Erwin, a survivor of the USS Indianapolis, which was sunk in July of 1945 / A profile of Hollie Berry, a local artist who uses fire as her medium / Quilts of Valor, a volunteer organization that says thank you to local veterans by making and giving away quilts / Legacy of Love, a look back at twenty years of teaching tolerance in a small town through curriculum about the Holocaust and the creation of the Children's Holocaust Memorial in Whitwell, Tennessee / The story of Rick Rushing, a blues musician who shares his passion through education and performance / Wings of Change: The story of the changes to the annual Sandhill Crane Festival in Birchwood, TN due to the pandemic / Family Flavor: With the support of his family, Larry Torrence created Uncle Larry's, a local family-owned and operated restaurant.

"From Newshour to Masterpiece and so much in between, WTCI is our most watched station. We are so grateful for your programming."
-Mr. and Mrs. Jorge Vilanova
Explore Health is an independent, locally-focused health program that presents comprehensive, up-to-date information and engaging conversation about a variety of health topics, with informative guests who are experts in the subject matter. The host is native Tennessean, Ron Harr.

Broadcasts for our third season of Explore Health season were delayed due to COVID restrictions. After production resumed safely in late summer of 2020 with modified production protocols, we were able to broadcast a full season of the series, which included perspectives about the pandemic from three different physicians. Among the topics discussed in the season: disparities in health outcomes between Black patients and their white counterparts, stress, sleep, and dental health. We also featured a program in December, 2020 that answered viewer questions about COVID-19.

Chattanooga City Council

WTCI encourages and supports open government and citizen participation by recording, producing and broadcasting highlights of weekly Chattanooga City Council meetings.

String Theory @ Home


Statewide Collaborations:

WTCI, in partnership with the Tennessee Public Television Council, broadcasts State legislative coverage throughout the Tennessee Valley. In addition to legislative coverage, WTCI airs The Tennessee Channel, a collaborative effort to share programs produced by Tennessee PBS stations on a weekly basis. Staff members of WTCI have been integral in statewide initiatives such as Capitol Hill Day, coverage of the Tennessee Gubernatorial Inauguration, and airing of The State of the State across all Tennessee PBS stations.
A vital part of the holiday celebration in the Cleveland area for over 25 years, “Classic Christmas”, produced by Lee University was broadcast by WTCI-PBS on December 20, 2020. The special featured performances by Lee University Chorale, Choral Union, The Lee Trio, Jazz Ensemble, Voices of Lee, and more!

On January 28, 2021, Chattanooga Mayor Andy Berke gave his last State of the City Address. WTCI-PBS produced a broadcast of the speech for local viewers.

On December 19th, 2020, WTCI PBS broadcast “The Nutcracker”, produced in digital format by the Chattanooga Ballet and filmed on location at well-known landmarks across Chattanooga.

On April 21, 2021, at a time when it was unsafe for the public to gather, WTCI PBS produced a broadcast of the inauguration of newly-elected Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly.

WTCI-PBS produced 3 hour-long forums for candidates for City Mayor of Chattanooga in February, 2021. WTCI PBS also produced a runoff debate between the final two candidates on March 6, 2021.

WTCI-PBS collaborated with Hamilton County Schools to produce special information broadcasts for Hamilton County School families on July 20th, 2020, August 3rd, 2020, November 18th, 2020, and April 15th, 2021.

After the murder of George Floyd and amidst the national protests for racial justice in the summer of 2020, WTCI packaged a special series of local and national programming in primetime called "Let’s Talk About Race" on July 23rd, July 31, August 6, and August 13, 2020 that focused on racial justice and the Black experience.

On February 26, 2021, Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly gave his first State of the City Address. WTCI-PBS produced a broadcast of the speech for local viewers.
"Whether a concert, a series, or documentary, WTCI is our favorite place to go for relaxation and together time. Thank you for being there."

-Mr. and Mrs. Larry R. Worley
On Sunday, May 16, 2021, WTCI hosted its first fully virtual special event, our Masterpiece Tea. Nearly 75 guests joined us and our gracious co-host, Rashelle Stafford, owner of Polly Claire's Tea Room, for an hour of virtual Masterpiece-inspired tea-filled fun via Zoom, as we explored afternoon tea in all its glory. Our online Masterpiece Tea event celebrated the 50th anniversary of both PBS Masterpiece and WTCI.

Corporate Support and Community Partnerships

WTCI is grateful to work with many dynamic businesses and organizations throughout Greater Chattanooga and beyond. Those partners include:

Art 120
Ballet Esprit
BASF
Bernina Sew n' Quilt
Bess T. Shepherd Elementary School
Case Antiques
Cempa
Chattanooga 2.0
Chattanooga Allergy Clinic
Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce
Chattanooga Ballet
Chattanooga Football Club
Chattanooga Funeral Home
Chattanooga Lookouts
Chattanooga Public Library
Chattanooga Theatre Centre
Creative Discovery Museum
Digital Equity Alliance
EPB
Erlanger Health Systems
Erwin Marine Sales
First Horizon Foundation
Grandview Foundation
Habitat for Humanity
Hamilton County Schools
Houston Museum
Hunter Museum
Intersign
Keeody Gallery
Lee University
Miss Ladybug LLC
Oxifresh of Chattanooga
Playful Evolving Monsters
POP-UP Project
POV
Read 20
Ready Set Sew
River Valley Blinds
Rivercity ACT Workshops
Signal Centers
Songbirds Foundation
Splash Youth Arts
Stove Works
Studio Everything
Tennessee Aquarium
Tivoli Theatre Foundation
TN Department of Education
Tyner Academy
Urban League of Greater Chattanooga
UTC School of Education
Vital Buffalo Farms
WCTE
West TN PBS
A Snapshot of Our Year

WTIC! EDUCATE

ACTIVITIES WITH ALEA:
Learn How to Make Dragon Wings and a Marionette!
Join us LIVE July 2nd on the WTCI Facebook Page at 6:30 EDT!

PBS VOTE 2020

You're Invited! Portraits and Dreams WTCI Virtual Movie Night

NO MATTER WHAT
TONIGHT AT 8

WTCI