Kansas City PBS

COMMUNITY Impact Report

FISCAL YEAR 2020
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020
From the CEO:
Since becoming president and CEO of Kansas City PBS more than a decade ago, my greatest source of pride has been the depth and breadth of the stories we have shared and the thoughtful conversations we have had with people throughout Kansas City. During that time we have also added three TV channels, a music discovery radio station and an online news source to our list of services.

This annual report showcases programming and initiatives that represent our commitment to journalism, documentary filmmaking and building our community. The projects highlighted in the following pages help us understand our world — and contemplate the past, present and future. While we provide our audiences with national and international programming, our true impact is in the coverage and dialogue focused on the challenges and triumphs of the Kansas City region.

Across all of our services — four channels of public television (19.1, 19.2, Create and Kansas City PBS KIDS), public radio (90.9 The Bridge) and local journalism (flatlandkc.org) — we are dedicated to educating, entertaining and inspiring all of those in our service area.

Our services remain free for all to enjoy, and they are available online, on the air and on your phone, thanks to the wonderful community of supporters that believe in the importance of trusted public service media. When you support Kansas City PBS, 90.9 The Bridge and Flatland, you are investing in exploration, entertainment and storytelling that makes our lives and our community a better place to live and work.

Thank you.

Kliff Kuehl
President & CEO, Kansas City PBS
NATIONAL CONVERSATIONS with Local Connections

Kansas City PBS weaves the narrative between national issues and their local Kansas City connections. From the coronavirus pandemic to the continued discussion of racial justice, audiences turn to us for thorough reporting and meaningful dialogue.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

As the COVID-19 pandemic took hold of our lives, Kansas City PBS was your source for in-depth journalism with reports from around the world and right here at home. PBS NewsHour’s special “Confronting Coronavirus” shared important health precautions and investigated the economic impact felt across the country. Science-focused Nova brought audiences “Decoding COVID-19,” highlighting the race to understand and contain the virus along with initial attempts for a cure. Frontline showed audiences the human toll of COVID-19 through the eyes of a besieged Italian doctor in “Inside Italy’s COVID War” and a new mother in “Love, Life & the Virus.”

In an effort to keep you informed about the ever-changing city, county and state response to COVID-19, our local public affairs program, Week in Review, altered its format to include interviews with community health leaders, government officials and local educators. Our digital news source, Flatland, shared stories of the economic and mental trauma resulting from isolation, along with stories of the communities rising to meet the needs of those less fortunate. The digital series Artists in Residence highlighted the lives and work of local artists challenged with isolation and loss of income.

35,000 Kansas City PBS provides 35,000 hours of programming on four broadcast channels (KCPBS, KCPBS2, Create and KCPBS KIDS).
HEALTH AND SCIENCE

Kansas City PBS has always been a source for compelling stories about science, health and medicine. *Blood Sugar Rising* explored our country’s diabetes epidemic through the stories of Americans living with the deadly illness. “Diabetes in KC,” a *Week in Review* special, brought together leading health care providers, advocates and patients to highlight the efforts of local agencies to educate and provide resources to our Kansas City community.

The Gene: An Intimate History, from Ken Burns, gave background to the discovery and development of gene-splicing science, along with the ethical challenges these advancements pose. Locally, *The Gene: The KC Connection* showcased Kansas City’s leading genetic research ranging from gene therapy for restoring hearing loss to flatworm experiments that could lead to tissue regeneration and regrowth of organs.

RACIAL JUSTICE

As protests gripped the nation following the death of George Floyd, Kansas City PBS brought the national conversation to you through *PBS NewsHour* with special reports, including “America in Black and Blue 2020” and “Race Matters: America in Crisis.” *Week in Review* provided in-depth analysis through conversations with local officials responding to our community in turmoil. Flatland shared updates from the front line of Kansas City’s racial unrest with personal accounts of the protests from reporters, as well as stories of the faith community lining Troost Avenue in prayer, the life and death of community activist Marvin Francois, and the realities of defunding the police.

*TOP: Protestors and Police in Kansas City, MO*
This past year Kansas City PBS placed emphasis on the celebration of communities and the social, spiritual, economic and artistic influence they have on our lives. Ken Burns’ *Country Music* provided a powerful guide of the people, places and events of a truly American artform, while unique connections to Kansas City were made through Flatland’s reporting on the story of the last picture of Patsy Cline and Thomas Hart Benton’s final painting, “The Sources of Country Music.”

Complex economic policy passed by Congress in 2017 and Kansas City’s economic future were the topics of the multiplatform series *Opportunity Zones*. Reporting, shared through *Week in Review* specials, “In the Zone” and “O-Zones,” and with video shorts on Flatland, featured the realities of the policy and true economic revitalization. Local and national property developers, investors and policy experts provided the fair and balanced perspective you expect in every Kansas City PBS reporting project.

Historical perspective on racially restrictive property ownership covenants was provided by *Land of Opportunity*. Set in Kansas City’s Santa Fe Place neighborhood, the documentary painted a vivid picture of people who were affected by the practice of redlining. *Finding Refuge in KC* took audiences into the homes and the lives of immigrants as they recounted their journey to make a new life in America’s heartland.

*TOP:* Country Music: *The Sons and Daughters of America*
Whether live at Lincoln Center or on the stages and in the galleries right here at home, Kansas City PBS is your home for the celebration of artistic endeavors.

*Great Performances* brought us the larger-than-life Texas governor in *Ann*, along with *The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess*, while *American Masters* shone a spotlight on the written word with specials on the lives of Toni Morrison and N. Scott Momaday.

*Bleed Through* brought audiences to Lansing Correctional Facility where empathy and compassion are taught to the inmates through theater. *Art in the Air* chronicled the installation and exhibition of Patrick Shearn’s “Reflecting Motion” as it took flight at Union Station and captured the imagination of all who visited.

Kansas City PBS and 90.9 The Bridge dazzled audiences with a rich tapestry of musical performances. Fans were immersed in music with the Moody Theatre, *Austin City Limits* and Kansas City's own Calvin Arsenia performing in our Midtown studio as part of *Live on the Bridge*.

The multiplatform series *The Block* brought together the artistry of food and the culture that defines our Kansas City communities. From the River Market to the Crossroads to 39th Street, this series explored the soul of Kansas City — one block at a time.

**FROM TOP:** *Art in the Air; Bleed Through; Calvin Arsenia Performing In-Studio*

**30,000+**

More than 30,000 members support Kansas City PBS and 90.9 The Bridge annually.
Kansas City PBS was founded on principles of education and exploration. Through media and interaction, we create opportunities to understand and engage with our changing world. We are proud to be the home of television that educates, but we offer so much more to the Kansas City community.

The “Kansas City PBS In Your Neighborhood” program supported parents and grandparents caring for young children with monthly workshops in the 64128 ZIP code. The caregivers were able to access PBS resources and build lasting relationships.

Early childhood providers took center stage during the Sesame Street in Communities workshop focused on improving strategies to aid Kansas City’s youngest learners. The 15th Annual Tech Conference brought elementary and high school educators from around the region together for a day of learning with the theme “Empowering Teachers Today and Tomorrow.”

Exploration of our community through Kansas City PBS takes us in a number of directions each year. We ventured down I-70 to partner with the Leopold Gallery and the Chiefs for “Art at Arrowhead,” featuring a guided tour of the regional art collection by Sharon Hunt and several of the artists. Anglophiles gathered for our annual celebration of all things British. The 1900 Restaurant was the site for the Great British Brunch. Proper table manners and authentic English fare were enjoyed by all, but as always, the trivia was the highlight.

KCPBS worked with nearly 150 community partners to serve 9,000+ people with events, screenings, panel discussions and workshops.

FROM TOP: Kansas City PBS In Your Neighborhood; Art at Arrowhead; 15th Annual Tech Conference
YOUR SUPPORT MAKES IT POSSIBLE

Kansas City PBS relies on the support of individuals, foundations and corporations for more than 75% of funding.

KANSAS CITY PBS AWARDS

Emmys
11 Regional Emmy nominations and 3 wins

Edward R. Murrow Awards
1 Regional Edward R. Murrow Award

Historic Kansas City Historic Preservation Awards
1 HKC Historic Preservation Award

NETA Awards
Excellence in Marketing and Communications

Social Media Club of Kansas City #AMPSKC Awards
2 #AMPSKC Awards