2019 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY
LOCAL VALUE

KERA’s family of broadcast and online services reaches the fifth-largest media market in the country via television, radio and online media.

Since 1960, KERA has worked to forge relationships with individuals and families in our community through programs, news reports and local events that educate, engage, inspire, inform and entertain.

Our organization is now reaching new audiences by making our content available, both live and on demand, through multiple digital platforms.

2019 KEY SERVICES

In 2019, KERA provided these key local services:

- Thousands of hours of educational programming, community initiatives and online resources for children and adults.
- In-depth news coverage of education, poverty, health care, science and technology issues.
- A unique multiplatform arts service with in-depth arts journalism, a robust culture calendar and information about public events.
- A diverse music radio service with local artists, in-studio performances and live concert series.

LOCAL IMPACT

Each week, more than two million people across North Texas and the globe watch, listen to or read content on KERA TV, KERA FM, KXT 91.7 and our network of digital resources - websites, streaming audio and video, mobile apps and social media.

Our organization also goes beyond our broadcast and online services by working directly with the community through specific learning opportunities and other events that touch lives.
IN THE COMMUNITY

KERA is a not-for-profit community television and radio licensee located in the greater metropolitan area of Dallas/Fort Worth, the nation’s fifth-largest media market. KERA produces original multimedia content, carries the best in national and international public television and radio programs, and provides online resources at kera.org.

KERA TV broadcasts on digital channel 13.1, KERA Kids 24/7 on channel 13.2 and KERA CREATE on channel 13.3. KERA FM broadcasts on 90.1 in Dallas/Fort Worth/Denton, 88.3 in Wichita Falls, 100.1 in Tyler and 99.3 in Sherman. The organization’s music station, KXT 91.7, broadcasts to greater Dallas, Fort Worth and Denton (and to the world at kxt.org). In addition, KERA offers extensive arts coverage at artandseek.org, comprehensive local, national and world news coverage at keranews.org, and a variety of learning and curriculum resources at learn.kera.org.

Through content that informs and motivates, KERA touches more lives each week than any other regional educational or cultural organization. With KERA, children experience the joy of learning, and adults benefit from continuing opportunities for lifelong learning. Our public media service rests on the core beliefs that knowledge enriches life experience, and a better-informed citizenry is able to make smarter choices.

KERA attracts a significant audience for children’s educational television programming, making it among the largest preschool learning environments in the region and ranking it in the top five compared with other U.S. public broadcasting stations. Research-based children’s programs are available around the clock on KERA Kids 24/7 – a dedicated children’s programming channel – and 12 hours each weekday on KERA’s primary broadcast television channel. Each week, KERA reaches a combined audience of more than 600,000 North Texas children on these channels with free educational programs that inspire and nurture curiosity and the love of learning.
IN THE COMMUNITY

START SMART TEXAS

The Start Smart Texas early childhood project blossomed during 2019, its second year in existence. In addition to adding 2,500 subscribers to now reach nearly 6,000 families and caregivers, Start Smart provided a great vehicle for KERA to expand education outreach in several ways to deepen our impact on young lives.

Start Smart’s core piece is a texting service that sends tips on child development and early learning – in English or Spanish – to parents and caregivers of young children. The tips are practical, from turning a trip to the grocery into a math and vocabulary lesson to learning to help children manage difficult feelings like fear of separation. The service also sends notifications about upcoming events across North Texas to connect families to their communities.

In June, KERA held the Start Smart Summer Reading Kickoff at the Duncanville Library, featuring storytime, visits with Nature Cat and Super Why!, free food, music, games and more activities for the nearly 700 children and parents who attended. KERA co-produced the event with the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas and the Duncanville Public Library.

TRAININGS AND PROGRAMS THAT SERVE THE COMMUNITY

Throughout the year, KERA’s education staff trained 250 daycare providers, teachers, librarians and parents on educational resources that PBS LearningMedia provides online for all grade levels, from prekindergarten onward, and in all learning areas, from math to social-emotional development. Sessions for parents and caregivers also showed how the PBS materials could deepen learning tips provided through the Start Smart Texas texting service.

KERA education staff provided hundreds of dollars in free books in English and Spanish to community partners Bachman Lake Together, AVANCE and Child Care Group, which distributed them to low-income families. The books were made available by a grant from United Ways of Texas and the FirstBook Marketplace.
IN THE COMMUNITY

MENTAL HEALTH LISTENING SESSIONS

KERA has launched a new mental health initiative, On Our Minds – a multi-faceted, cross-departmental approach to covering the critical topic of mental health. KERA hosted three community stakeholder meetings across our area, which included medical practitioners, civic and community leaders and nonprofit professionals. The sessions were facilitated by Dr. Rita Kirk, the Director of the Maguire Center for Ethics & Public Responsibility at Southern Methodist University.

KERA SUMMER LEARNING CHALLENGE

KERA’s Summer Learning Challenge just completed its fifth year, with record-breaking numbers. Through this summer initiative, KERA provided enrichment materials to 500 children from across 49 Texas cities and five other states including Florida, Colorado, Arizona, Arkansas and Illinois. The Dallas Public Library created a special summer reading list for the Summer Learning Challenge program, and over 4,000 books were checked out through KERA book carousels.

SESAME STREET ANNIVERSARY TOUR

As part of the Sesame Street: 50 Years and Counting celebration, KERA’s Community Engagement team curated a series of digital resources and activities for the Sesame Street anniversary web page. The anniversary included Sesame Street’s Road Trip event in North Texas on July 6, 2019. The event included live stage shows with Sesame characters, a mobile learning adventure activity and other show-themed stations. Families who participated in KERA’s Summer Learning Challenge were invited to a special Sesame Street Meet and Greet event prior to the public start of the event.
IN THE COMMUNITY

BE MY NEIGHBOR DAY

KERA hosted the third annual *Daniel Tiger Be My Neighbor Day* event in October 2019 at Lone Star Park in Grand Prairie, Texas. Nearly **2,500 attendees** participated in a variety of service projects to benefit local nonprofits. Through community donations and completed service projects, KERA was able to distribute:

- **1,440 donations** collected for Santa Fe Youth Services, including 700 canned food items and 740 clothes/coats.
- **545 items** collected for Trinity River Mission, including make-up bags, dress ties and shoes
- **102 “Thank You For Your Service” cards** for the local VFW – District 3 post.
- **627 items** donated to Cook Children’s Medical Center, including 304 “thinking of you” cards, 274 toiletry kits and 49 clothing items.

Attendees were also able to enjoy craft activities and face painting, meet costumed characters and participate in a special storytime with Daniel Tiger.

KXT 91.7 CELEBRATES TEN YEARS

KXT celebrated a decade on the air in November 2019 with a concert at The Rustic in Dallas, featuring live performances by singer/songwriter Grace Potter and Nashville rising star Devon Gilfillian. Before the show, KXT hosted a video competition, modeled after NPR’s Tiny Desk Contest, for musicians throughout North Texas to choose an opener for the birthday concert. The winner was Texicana, a Dallas-based Americana band. Over 1,500 people attended the celebratory show, which marked exactly 10 years since KXT went on the air November 9, 2009.
IN THE COMMUNITY

STORYCORPS COLLECTS STORIES FROM NORTH TEXAS

The StoryCorps MobileBooth arrived in Dallas in October 2019 to gather compelling stories from our region. KERA worked closely with StoryCorps to coordinate this special stop on their tour, arranging a month-long stay at the North Oak Cliff Branch of the Dallas Public Library. KERA helped to fill slots for interviews in the StoryCorps mobile studio, and encouraged other listeners to record their own interviews using the StoryCorps app.

The StoryCorps MobileBooth gave KERA listeners the opportunity to record once-in-a-lifetime conversations that will be archived at the Library of Congress. One of the sessions recorded during the Dallas stop aired nationally on Morning Edition in November.

KERA EXTENDS LIBRARY PARTNERSHIPS

Eric Carle’s The Very Hungry Caterpillar was released 50 years ago. In November 2019, KERA partnered with the South Irving Library to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of this iconic book. Children and families participated in a variety of art activities featuring colorful caterpillars. KERA also provided copies of The Very Hungry Caterpillar in English and Spanish to 130 families.

Additionally, KERA and the Dallas Public Library created thematic book carousels as part of a shared commitment to promoting reading and lifelong learning. Children and parents are able to browse a curated selection of books from local librarians.
STORIES OF IMPACT

COMING TO GRIPS WITH A TRAGEDY

When a gunman from North Texas drove to El Paso and killed 22 people in August 2019, KERA and its statewide partners leapt into action. KERA’s newest reporter, Mallory Falk, is based in the West Texas border city. She, KERA reporter Stella M. Chávez and other journalists from The Texas Newsroom stations, under the direction of Statewide Senior Editor Rachel Osier Lindley, provided in-depth coverage for weeks.

In all, reporters from The Texas Newsroom produced at least 47 newscast spots, 29 digital stories and 15 features, with 28 spots airing on NPR newscasts, 4 radio features and 5 reporter interviews airing on national programs and podcasts. Also, KERA’s Think team produced a national call-in special that aired in 57 markets, including Boston, San Francisco, Seattle and St. Louis.

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT ‘THE CAREGIVERS’

As part of KERA’s new mental health project “On Our Minds,” reporter Syeda Hasan led a multimedia team that explored the lives of mental health caregivers. In the series, called “On Our Minds: The Caregivers,” she and videographer Thorne Anderson profiled a married couple who transformed their lives when one of their mothers developed dementia. They also told the stories of a mother dealing with her schizophrenic adult son and a school counselor who created a special mailbox for students in crisis.

On KERA radio’s signature conversation show, Think, host Krys Boyd talked about grieving for a loved one who has dementia with Pauline Boss, author of the book Ambiguous Loss: Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief. KERA’s engagement team also created a toolkit for family caregivers.
STORIES OF IMPACT

THE TEXAS NEWSROOM MAKES ITS DEBUT

KERA listeners, and listeners across Texas, are now hearing six live statewide newscasts during our radio programming every weekday – two in Morning Edition, one in Texas Standard, one in Think and two in All Things Considered.

These newscasts are the first stage in a landmark effort that KERA is leading with NPR and the state’s leading public radio stations called The Texas Newsroom. Staffed by journalists across the state from big cities and so-called “news deserts,” it’s the prototype for a series of regional journalism “hubs” designed to transform and strengthen the public radio system as a primary news source.

(Photo: Kim Ritzenthaler)

KERÄ’S ART AND SEEK CONNECTS NORTH TEXANS TO THE ARTS

Events and profiles from over 4,000 arts groups and venues are represented on the Art&Seek calendar at artandseek.org. The calendar also offers calendar information to other organizations, including the Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs, Dallas Arts District, and the Greater Denton Arts Council. Highlights from the calendar are heard daily on KERA FM and KXT 91.7.

The weekly Art&Seek Spotlight focuses on compelling stories from the North Texas arts community. The reporting airs Thursdays during All Things Considered on KERA FM, and expanded versions of our radio pieces can be found online at ArtandSeek.org. The Spotlight highlights the breadth and diversity of our artistic community. Standout pieces in 2019 included:

- A look at the history of one of the last standing halls built by the Ku Klux Klan in Fort Worth, and the arts group that wants to turn it into a community center.

- An interview with Frida Espinosa-Müller, who developed a solo show for Cara Mia Theater called “Ursula.” It’s about a seven-year-old girl who flees Honduras with her mother but ends up in a U.S. detention center.

- A multimedia feature on the 50th anniversary of the Texas International Pop Festival, a cultural moment that drew major artists like Led Zeppelin and nearly 100,000 concertgoers to Denton County in September 1969.

Frida Espinosa-Müller in Cara Mia Theater’s “Ursula”.
( Photo: Morgana Willborn)
ART AND SEEK’S ‘STATE OF THE ARTS’ CONVERSATION SERIES

Art&Seek’s popular State of the Arts conversation series featured local arts community leaders and provided opportunities to learn about new arts spaces in the city, connect with new faces and explore emerging trends. KERA’s Jerome Weeks hosts two conversations a year with each of our partners, the Greater Denton Arts Council, The Kimbell Museum in Fort Worth and the Dallas Museum of Art. Topics in 2019 included:

- Making a Public Spectacle: Fort Worth’s Reenergized Public Art Program. With panelists Doo Eun Choi, Independent curator and consultant; Benito Huerta, Artist and Professor at UTA; Melissa Konur, Planning Director, Downtown Fort Worth, Inc.; Karen Wiley, President/CEO, Arts Council of Fort Worth

- Painting the Town: Dallas Muralists. With artists Frank Campagna, Janeil Engelstad and Jeremy Biggers.

- An evening with Annette Lawrence. An intimate interview with the University of North Texas professor and visual artist.

SWEET TORNADO: MARGO JONES AND THE AMERICAN THEATER

Though few know her name today, theater producer-director Margo Jones left a rich cultural legacy. During the 1940s and ’50s, Jones – nicknamed the “Texas Tornado” for her larger-than-life personality – pioneered the regional theater movement, championed the work of new playwrights, including Tennessee Williams, and crusaded against the commercial domination of New York theater. Despite her idealism, energy, warmth and salesmanship, Jones struggled with loneliness, frustration and doubt. Her untimely death at age 43 came just six months following her triumphant world premiere of the play Inherit the Wind.

In fall 2019, KERA made Sweet Tornado: Margo Jones and the American Theater – originally produced in 2006 – available online at artandseek.org as a community historical resource. The film captures the remarkable life and times of this American visionary by weaving together theatrical representations and excerpts from three plays with interviews, archival photographs and rarely seen film footage. The performance documentary, narrated by Academy Award winner Marcia Gay Harden, stars Judith Ivey as Jones and Richard Thomas as Williams.
SUMMARY OF IMPACT

- KERA reaches over two million people each week with rich, informational, insightful content via our broadcast and digital platforms.

- KERA events have allowed thousands of community members in North Texas to interact directly with station staff, learn more about important topics that our reporters cover, and explore educational activities tied to PBS Kids programs and other resources.

- KERA connects daily with our audience via social media, with more than 155,000 followers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. KERA offers free mobile apps for iOS and Android, including KERA Radio/TV and KXT 91.7 streaming and on-demand apps, with over 150,000 downloads.

- KERA’s *Think* podcast is among the most popular local podcasts in public radio, averaging around 275,000 monthly downloads. And, KERA content is reaching thousands of new listeners through the NPR One app.

KERA will continue to serve our audience through program growth, including expansion of our trusted local news reporting and our service to children and families, and providing continued opportunities to engage more people in the rich civic, cultural and educational life of North Texas.

*(Photo: Destinie Berry)*