2020 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Keren Carrión
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.

2020 KEY SERVICES

In 2020, KERA provided these key local services:

- Thousands of hours of educational programming, community initiatives and online resources for children and adults, including direct in-home learning to help children and families affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

- In-depth news coverage of education, poverty, health care, science, technology and political issues – and the effects of the coronavirus pandemic in all these areas.

- A unique multiplatform arts service with in-depth arts journalism, a robust culture calendar and information about public events. This service was also able to pivot amid the pandemic to provide information about how local arts and culture organizations were affected.

- A diverse music radio service with local artists, live performance videos and cultural content.

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 metropolitan area of Dallas/Fort Worth, the nation’s fifth-largest media market. KERA produces 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 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 with free educational programs that inspire and nurture curiosity and the love of learning.
AT-HOME LEARNING – SPRING 2020

Two weeks after school closures for coronavirus began in March 2020, KERA launched an At-Home Learning initiative that provided free resources on television and online to serve teachers and families who suddenly faced the challenges of educating students at home – and keeping younger children actively engaged while parents worked nearby.

Each weekday, KERA TV aired twelve hours of PBS shows selected for home learning for students in grades pre-K through 12, and we found PBS digital resources related to topics featured in those shows to deepen students’ learning. We also created an At-Home Learning toolkit, with academic resources for distance teaching, a weekly calendar with fun and engaging KERA Kids activities and resources on healthy habits and social/emotional health.

KERA also partnered with the Dallas Public Library to create monthly featured-book carousels of electronic content to support our social/emotional learning and Spanish resource pages.

SUMMER BRIDGE TO MATH SUCCESS

In the summer, as educators began calculating learning losses from the abrupt end of in-person instruction, the Dallas Independent School District approached KERA about providing math instruction on TV. As a result, we partnered with the district to televise lessons recorded by teachers working at home for students in kindergarten through grade 8, plus Algebra I. As in the spring, we created a special webpage with digital materials that would reinforce skills taught in the shows so children could practice what they were learning.
IN THE COMMUNITY

KERA SUMMER LEARNING CHALLENGE

To help children avoid summer learning loss and provide them with cultural and educational opportunities, KERA’s Community Engagement department continued its annual summer program. Currently in its fifth year, the SLC has expanded from its original web-based program to include targeted hands-on enrichment and events. Find more details here.

KERA’s Community Engagement staff worked closely with content partners to help us create virtual experiences and activities for our summer program participants. KERA was able to present seven virtual events and educational resources from The Dallas Zoo, The Perot Museum of Nature and Science and the public library. We also hosted yoga sessions for children and families as well as an African Drum program during our World Cultures exploration in July.

562 families and 969 children registered for the 2020 Summer Learning Challenge, representing 80 Texas cities and six additional states. The six states represented were: Arkansas, California, Indiana, Louisiana, Ohio and Oklahoma. One registration packet was mailed to Mexico. 165 SLC families also utilized our At-Home Learning Resources during the 2019-2020 academic school year.

TESTIMONIALS

“Thanks for the wonderful summer program. My 4- and 7-year-olds enjoyed lots of activities! Our favorites were the DIY bubbles, creating our own masterpieces, packing/drawing our suitcases, listening to Baba Kwasi, and (of course) watching some fun episodes. Our favorite books were Hair Love, The Librarian of Basra, and Library Lion. We learned a lot and were able to explore new ideas thanks to the SLC. I’m also thankful for the new resources that I found thanks to the program.” - The Lozado Family

“My daughters had so much fun doing a new activity every day. It has been helpful having this program during this time of pandemic … But what I liked the most was the motivational messages for the parents to stay strong during hard times.” - Vanessa Martinez

“Although this year has been something out of the ordinary, (we) have enjoyed this summer 2020 as never before with the activities and programs of KERA.” - Maria Solivan
IN THE COMMUNITY

AT-HOME LEARNING – FALL 2020

As the 2020-2021 school year began with thousands of North Texas students still learning at home and thousands more in classrooms, KERA created a new At-Home Learning toolkit that featured dozens of instructional resources from PBS and other sources. The toolkit featured a recorded webinar giving teachers and parents step-by-step guidance on using some of the resources to create lessons and assignments, and information on virtual events offered free to the public by KERA Community Engagement staff.

KERA also built extensive online resources to help with needs arising from the unique hardships of 2020. These resources were designed to assist families with mental and emotional health, financial relief and conversations on racial justice and racism with children. KERA also provided hundreds of free and low-cost children’s books to community partners through a grant provided by United Ways of Texas to help children continue reading during disruptions in schooling.

RACIAL EQUALITY AND JUSTICE

KERA’s Community Engagement team hosted two screenings for KERA staff and Community Advisory Board members, in response to local and national incidents and discussion of racial injustice in 2020.

The screenings included America In Black And Blue 2020: PBS NewsHour Special, which provided context and insight into the widespread protests taking place in various cities across the country in response to police brutality against Black citizens. The second film, Always In Season, explored the lingering impact of more than a century of lynching in America, tracking mob violence from its origins to the death of a teenager in 2014.
IN THE COMMUNITY

THE LATINO VOTE: DISPATCHES FROM THE BATTLEGROUND

On September 30, 2020, KERA hosted a community screening of the documentary *The Latino Vote: Dispatches From The Battleground*. It included a panel discussion with KERA reporters where they discussed their local reporting around the Latino vote through a national collaboration with The World/PRX.org called *Every 30 Seconds*. The project’s title refers to the fact that every 30 seconds, a young Latino turns 18 and is eligible to vote in the United States.

The program was part of a larger slate of national, regional and locally-produced programs that were aired on KERA as part of a celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month in October 2020.

PBS KIDS TALK ABOUT RACE AND RACISM

KERA hosted a special virtual screening of *PBS Kids Talk About Race and Racism* on October 20, 2020, followed by a moderated conversation of local panelists in partnership with Alliance Child and Family Solutions.

The half-hour program, hosted by Amanda Gorman, featured authentic conversations between real children and their parents and included content from PBS KIDS series *Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood*, *Arthur*, and *Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum*.

The show features families talking about race and racial justice-related topics in an age-appropriate way, such as noticing differences in race, understanding what racism can look like and embracing the role we all have to play in standing up for ourselves and each other. These examples offer viewers ideas to build on as they continue these important conversations at home. The video was featured in KERA’s Racial Justice collection.
IN THE COMMUNITY

KERA BE MY NEIGHBOR DAY 2020

Due to COVID-19, KERA’s annual celebration of caring for community was a virtual celebration this year. The October 25 event included a Daniel Tiger marathon and interstitials on KERA TV. Families from across North Texas were represented through artwork and video testimonials about what it means to be a caring neighbor.
STORIES OF IMPACT

A TITANIC ELECTION

KERA News chronicled the 2020 campaign from Joe Biden’s primary-night rally in Dallas to Mike Pence’s August visit to First Baptist Dallas to Kamala Harris’ stop in Fort Worth two days before the November election. Reporters Stella M. Chávez and Alejandra Martinez helped power a national project about first-time Latino voters called “Every 30 Seconds,” inspired by the fact that a Latino teen turns 18 – and becomes eligible to vote – every 30 seconds. As the lead station of The Texas Newsroom, a statewide public radio collaboration, KERA worked with its partners to shine a light on a crucial voting bloc in the series and radio special called “Unlocking the Latino Vote.”

Additionally, KERA’s education staff created a set of lesson plans and curated resources for students, teachers and voters to explain key topics like the primary system, the Electoral College and political parties.

THINK’S FOOTPRINT EXPANDS EVEN FARTHER

Krys Boyd’s in-depth conversations on Think are now heard on 142 public radio stations across the country, from Igiugig, Alaska, to Jacksonville, Florida. Her guests in 2020 ranged from ex-CIA director John Brennan to former White House communications director Jennifer Palmieri to novelist Charles Yu, who won a National Book Award a week after appearing on the program.

EXPLORING THE PANDEMIC

The coronavirus changed the world, and KERA reporters dug into the many ways it challenged North Texas, from emergency room innovations at Parkland Hospital, to an investigative project that reporter Bret Jaspers co-produced with NPR about racial disparities in COVID testing, to a continuing series “Coronavirus And Life On The Financial Edge,” part of the station’s award-winning One Crisis Away project. KERA also launched a daily COVID-19 news blog and weekday newsletter that drew large traffic numbers to keranews.org beginning in late March.
The year 2018 was the deadliest in American history for school shootings. It was also the year a tiny theater company of teen actors in Dallas set out to create an original stage play about our deep divisions over Second Amendment rights, mass shootings, background checks and automatic weapons.

KERA’s Hady Mawajdeh and Jerome Weeks created the five-episode podcast and radio series *Gun Play*, which debuted in October 2020 and followed these members of Cry Havoc Theater Company across the country to talk to folks on all sides of the debate. They meet a mom still wrestling with her daughter’s suicide, a father still grieving his son who was gunned down at school and the owner of a gun range where the teens shoot AR-15s. The journey takes them from the snows of Sandy Hook, Connecticut, to the steps of the U.S. Capitol and to the floor of the national NRA convention. The young actors, some from neighborhoods plagued by violence, provide a window into an issue that continues to tear at the nation.

**STUCK ACROSS THE BORDER**

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 arts reporters Jerome Weeks and Miguel Perez each hosted a virtual conversation in Fall 2020 with our partners The Kimbell Museum in Fort Worth and the Dallas Museum of Art. Topics:

- **Taking It to the Street: The Mural Movement of Fort Worth:** In partnership with the Kimbell Art Museum, State of the Arts examined how artists in Fort Worth and around the world are responding to a year of massive upheaval with mural-making. From downtown Fort Worth and the Near Southside to the Stockyards and beyond, murals have become medium and megaphone for critical conversations, community activism and public art – all amid social distancing. Panelists included artists Leticia Huckaby and Juan Velazquez and TCU graphic design instructor Jan Ballard.

- **Being A Black Visual Artist in 2020:** With the Dallas Museum of Art, State of the Arts invited three Black Dallas artists to discuss how their work and lives have been affected by the pandemic, police violence and the subsequent waves of protests. Vivian Crockett, the DMA’s Nancy and Tim Hanley Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art, led the discussion with artists David-Jeremiah, Desiree Vaniecia and Ciara Bryant. KERA arts reporter Miguel Perez moderated an audience question-and-answer session and produced a companion series of artists profiles for KERA FM.
MEYERSON GOES INTERACTIVE

Art&Seek provided our own virtual experience to audiences, with a 360-degree interactive tour of the Meyerson Symphony Center. Morton H. Meyerson, the building’s namesake, serves as the guide, providing insights about the building’s creation. Meyerson leads viewers through areas rarely seen by the public, including the stage, choral terrace, box seats, organ console, backstage, rehearsal rooms and more.

The tour features more than 40 stories and points of interest. We partnered with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, which has helped us share the tour with classical music fans across the country.

KXT 91.7 PROVIDES VITAL LINK TO MUSIC

KXT continued to shine a spotlight on local and national artists through video content this year, despite not being able to bring bands into the studio for in-person live sessions. The station’s On The Couch series (a new take on its On The Road series) saw artists performing in their homes for listeners, while At Home sessions served as mini-concerts through Facebook Live. KXT also introduced audiences to local and emerging artists through its growing presence on NPRMusic.org.
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 over 175,000 combined 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 350,000 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. It will continue to provide opportunities to engage more people in the rich civic, cultural and educational life of North Texas.

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