



# 2020 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



*"I cannot tell you how much I rely on VPM news every morning and evening. It is not an exaggeration to say that I could not survive without you. That is true every day, but especially now. Thank you for all that you do. It truly matters."*

— Sandra Treadway, Librarian of Virginia, Library of Virginia

**Mission:** To use the power of media to educate, entertain and inspire.

**Vision:** More connected, informed and empathetic Virginians.



As Virginia's home for public media, VPM produces compelling original content across platforms for local audiences and national distribution.

VPM News delivers award-winning coverage of statewide politics, local government, education and legal issues, as well as the news of the day from NPR. VPM Music is home to a 24/7 blend of classical, jazz and world music serving the Richmond region.

A critical partner for parents, caregivers and teachers of the Commonwealth's children, VPM offers free access to PBS KIDS content, bespoke educational content through the Science Matters initiative, plus local events and outreach.

In 2020, VPM turned the television camera squarely on Virginia with its local series "The Art Scene," "Virginia Currents," "Untamed" and "Charlottesville Inside-Out."

The VPM News team reported on various state and local issues and provided in-depth coverage of the Virginia legislature during its 2020 session.

VPM Music partnered with the Richmond Folk Festival to broadcast its annual multicultural celebration.

Then, in spring 2020, VPM pivoted to provide pandemic-related news coverage, virtual events, resources for at-home learning and more.

As Virginia's home for public media, VPM connected nearly 2 million people across Central Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley to insightful programming in arts and culture, history, science, news and education.

In addition to its usual offerings, in 2020, VPM connected the region to essential information about the coronavirus pandemic through expanded news coverage and collaboration with state government.

VPM empowered students, parents and caregivers with at-home learning resources, including the statewide "VA TV Classroom" initiative.



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### Local, Community-Centered Content

Here is a sampling of the local, community-centered content that VPM produced in 2020.

**Aged Out: Finding Home.** The VPM documentary “Aged Out: Finding Home,” a co-production with community-based 19RED, examined the lives of four individuals being supported by The Possibilities Project, a privately funded collaboration between The Better Housing Coalition and Children’s Home Society of Virginia. These two nonprofits banded together to form a safety net for youth between the ages of 18-25 who no longer qualify for the traditional foster care system in Virginia. The documentary also profiled advocacy teams and families working to change Virginia’s statewide foster care system.

**The Art Scene.** A new series, “The Art Scene,” offered an inside look at some of the region’s most interesting theatres, galleries, studios, concert halls and arts education groups. A co-production with Richmond-based producer 19RED, the program talked with local artists, watched them in action and learned how they and their organizations were impacting the local community.

**Charlottesville Inside-Out.** On “Charlottesville Inside-Out,” host and local performing artist Terri Allard introduced viewers to the people and places that define the Charlottesville area. In May 2020, as the coronavirus pandemic raged, Allard worked with Charlottesville’s Paramount Theater to present a special virtual community celebration: “Dinner and a Show with Terri.” The virtually presented performance showcase featured Allard along with former guests of the show and other community members performing and sharing messages from their homes.

*“Congrats Terri and team for a job well done. What a night to celebrate the arts in our community — brought together by Charlottesville Inside-Out! Honestly, I am at a loss for words — such an inspiring night. Congrats...thank you for allowing us to be a part of this incredible production.”*

— Maran Garland, Director of Marketing, The Paramount Theater of Charlottesville

**Untamed.** Hosted by Ed Clark, President and Co-Founder of the Wildlife Center of Virginia in Waynesboro, “Untamed” took viewers behind the scenes where diagnosing and treating the injuries of its patients is just the beginning of the Center’s investigative and conservation work. The series also focused on what people can do to help preserve the natural environments around them and minimize manmade risks to area wildlife.

**Virginia Currents.** VPM’s weekly magazine series, “Virginia Currents,” continued as the longest running television program produced in Virginia. Hosted by journalist Amy Lacey, the program included in-depth stories and interviews featuring people and organizations from across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

*“Our ‘Virginia Currents’ story shed light on an increasing public health issue, and raised awareness for the type of research we are conducting to help mitigate the epidemic of concussions with our female athletes and keep them safer.”*

— Emily Kieffer, lead researcher, women and concussion, Virginia Tech Helmet Lab study



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### Local, Community-Centered Content *(continued)*

**Virginia General Assembly Coverage.** VPM provided online and broadcast coverage during the 2020 General Assembly season with a dedicated landing page and daily wrap-ups of the day's legislative proceedings in the House of Delegates and Virginia Senate. The VPM News team provided features reporting on notable bills with VPM reporters and editors broadening the reach of VPM's coverage by sharing articles and posts on social media.

**VPM News.** On radio and on VPM's digital platforms, the VPM News team covered state and local politics, the courts, city government, issues related to mental health, education and more. In early 2020, VPM education reporter Megan Pauly began her look into the Richmond Public Schools' new curriculum for math education thanks to her receipt of a competitive grant from the Education Writers Association. In late May 2020 and into the summer, VPM reporters provided extensive coverage of the local response to the police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, closely following the racial justice protests in the area and the subsequent removal of Confederate statues along Richmond's Monument Avenue.

**VPM Music.** On VPM's music-only radio station, local hosts showcased the best in classical music, jazz, blues and world music. In the fall, VPM continued its long-running partnership with the Richmond Folk Festival, providing a live radio broadcast of this annual event celebrating music, culture and the traditional arts.

### Local, Community-Centered Initiatives

**PBS KIDS® Edcamp.** Together with our education partners in the region, including Smart Beginnings, VPM offered both in-person and, once the pandemic began, virtual PBS KIDS® Edcamp opportunities to local teachers. These professional development convenings provided an opportunity for early childhood educators to share their experiences, discuss new ideas and explore PBS KIDS® educational resources together.

**The Market at 25th.** The VPM PBS KIDS® outreach initiative is a permanent fixture at the Market at 25th, a local independent grocery store in a former food desert located within Richmond's Church Hill neighborhood. There, VPM provides fun and educational child and family engagement opportunities along with resources and activities anchored by the trusted PBS KIDS® brand.

**VA TV Classroom.** In partnership with the Virginia Department of Education and other Virginia PBS stations, including Blue Ridge PBS, WETA and WHRO Public Media, VPM aired "VA TV Classroom," beginning in April 2020. The new programming block included teacher-led classroom instruction aligned with Virginia's Standards of Learning for students in grades K-10 as well as AP review and was designed to deliver educational content to students throughout the Commonwealth, regardless of their access to high speed internet.

## VPM Broadcast Governor’s Briefings

Working with the Governor’s Office, VPM produced the pool feed for Va. Governor Ralph Northam’s coronavirus briefings. These regular briefings are streamed online on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube and are broadcast live in Spanish on the Virginia Department of Emergency Management Facebook page. Media outlets throughout the Commonwealth broadcast the VPM feed, and VPM rebroadcasts the briefings each evening on its VPM PBS station.



## VPM Partnered with First Lady of Va.

VPM partnered with the First Lady of Virginia Pamela Northam to produce, broadcast and stream throughout Virginia a series of videos aimed at helping children and families stay healthy and connected as the coronavirus pandemic continued to impact communities in Virginia and around the world.



*“Thank you, Pamela Northam for that supportive message. During this time, it’s the children who have the hardest time understanding. Your message was heartfelt and appreciated.”*  
 — Cherokee Vaccarino, on Facebook

## VPM Produced Virtual Statewide Graduation Special

VPM partnered with the Office of the Governor and the Virginia Department of Education to produce and distribute “Virginia Graduates Together,” a statewide celebration. The virtual event included an address from Gov. Ralph Northam and First Lady Pamela Northam, plus musical performances, a keynote speaker and well-wishes for the graduates from notable Virginians. The program was broadcast and streamed by VPM and other public television stations around the state. The dedicated website has surpassed 18,500 page views.



## Essential Supplies Pickup Event

In May 2020, VPM hosted one of two essential supplies' pickup events for essential childcare providers. Over 200 area childcare providers participated in the drive-thru, socially-distanced event held in the parking lot of VPM's Richmond headquarters.

### Reach in the Community:

The event was free and open to all Richmond-area essential childcare providers serving the area's children on a first-come, first-served basis.

### Partnerships:

For the event, VPM partnered with ChildSavers, the Community Foundation for a greater Richmond, Child Care Aware® of Virginia, Ledbury, Smart Beginnings Greater Richmond, Ukrop's Homestyle Foods LLC, Richmond Flying Squirrels and the Virginia Department of Social Services.

### Impact and Community Feedback:

In total, VPM and its partner organizations gave out 2500 masks, 220 gallons of hand sanitizer and lots of Ukrop's White House Rolls. In addition, VPM donated 400 children's books and other VPM goodies.



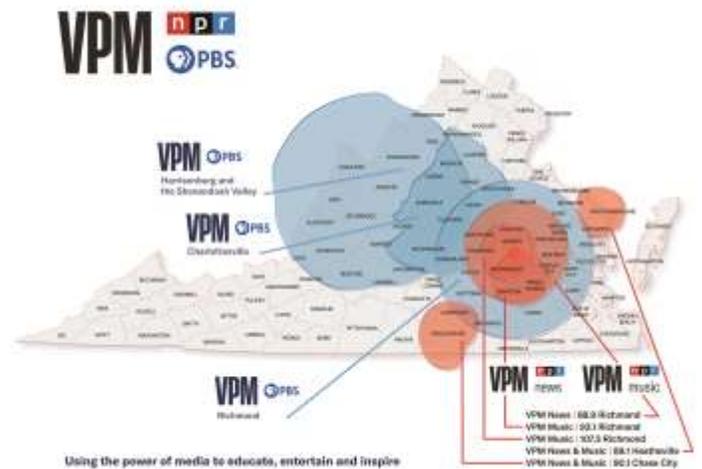


*“As an Emergency Physician on the front lines of this fight here in Richmond, VA, I want to thank you and the VPM staff for your direct, fact-based and questioning reporting. You are realistic about the challenges faced while creating a necessary sense of urgency without excess hyperbole or sensationalism. Public media, and all media really, will be a vital part of this fight. Please know we appreciate your efforts to help us improve public health and safety.”*

— Stephanie K. Louka MD, in a message to VPM’s Jayme Swain

From the period July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, VPM:

- Grew its audience across all platforms with the addition of a new subchannel and a significant rise in website traffic
- On digital, saw a 60.9% increase in website page views over the previous fiscal year
- Increased brand awareness
- Served communities throughout Virginia



**“Through our role as storytellers and conveners, VPM can be the beacon of hope our community needs right now.”**

— Jayme Swain, VPM President, in a letter to the VPM community, June 5, 2020