



2021 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



"My mornings wouldn't be the same without VPM."

— VPM Instagram follower

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 families, 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 engagement.

VPM released local series and community-focused documentaries, developed podcasts, partnered on a community media center and hosted a virtual discussion series on systemic racism.

The VPM News team covered the Governor's coronavirus briefings, the Virginia legislature, the racial justice protests and the removal of Confederate statues.

VPM Music partnered with the Richmond Folk Festival on two TV specials and a "virtual" version of the annual event.

To support at-home learning after the onset of the pandemic, VPM and its partners created a plethora of original educational programs and resources.

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, VPM connected the region to essential information about the coronavirus pandemic through expanded news coverage and collaboration with state government.

VPM supported students, families and caregivers with at-home learning resources, including original educational programming and virtual convenings for early childhood educators.

Local, Community-Centered Content

Here is a sampling of the local, community-centered content that VPM produced:

All Together Now. When the coronavirus pandemic led the Richmond Folk Festival to go virtual, VPM worked with area musicians and festival organizers to create “All Together Now,” a two-part television program celebrating Virginia artists that featured both new recordings and favorites from past festivals.

Alzheimer’s: What You Can Do. The third film in VPM’s dementia documentary series, “Alzheimer’s: What You Can Do” explores the research showing how our behaviors and daily health habits can have dramatic effects on our cognitive abilities as we age. VPM partnered with the Greater Richmond and Central & Western Virginia Chapters of the Alzheimer’s Association on two related virtual events that educated audiences about the warning signs of Alzheimer’s and discussed preventive behaviors and habits.

Candidate Forums and Election Coverage. In fall 2020, VPM hosted and produced a mayoral forum in partnership with ChamberRVA as well as two “Virginia Decides” congressional district candidate forums. The VPM News team also provided robust election coverage.

Menuhin Competition Richmond 2021. After being delayed a year by the coronavirus pandemic, VPM’s production of the Menuhin Competition for young violinists reached a worldwide audience and garnered millions of views online. The Menuhin Competition Richmond 2021 – presented in virtual form for the very first time – represented the culmination of a multi-year effort by the City of Richmond, the Richmond Symphony, VPM and other local partners to bring people together through the power of music. VPM created, packaged and posted over 100 competition-related videos. In total, Menuhin Competition Richmond 2021 materials received over 6 million views worldwide.

"I especially would like to thank VPM for producing so many hours of quality content, concluding with the fine closing gala film that perfectly captured the joyous, uplifting spirit of the Menuhin Competition Richmond 2021."

– Lacey Huszcza, Executive Director of the Richmond Symphony in a guest column for the Richmond Times-Dispatch, May 31, 2021

Resettled. This VPM podcast series explores the refugee resettlement process in Virginia through the eyes of those directly experiencing it. Personal stories from refugees are woven together with information about the resettlement process. Hosted by Ahmed Badr, himself a refugee from Iraq, “Resettled” offers listeners a glimpse into cultures and experiences both familiar and foreign to their own and explores the universal themes of acceptance and connection. Listeners have downloaded episodes of “Resettled” approximately 75,000 times since the podcast’s launch in July 2020, and the podcast has received both a Regional Edward R. Murrow Award and recognition from the Public Media Journalists Association.

Local, Community-Centered Content *(continued)*

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. The team also developed an “Untamed” radio series that began airing on VPM News and online in late 2020.

Virginia Currents. VPM’s weekly magazine series, “Virginia Currents,” presented its final season. The program included in-depth stories and interviews featuring people and organizations from across the Commonwealth of Virginia and has helped pave the way for future Virginia-focused TV news programming from VPM.

Virginia General Assembly Coverage. VPM provided online and broadcast coverage during the 2021 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 Daily Newscast. VPM produced a short four-day-a-week daily podcast designed to provide listeners with all the Central Virginia news they need in just 5 to 10 minutes. Episodes are recorded the night before and are available on VPM.org and through a variety of podcast platforms.

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. VPM reporters provided extensive coverage of racial justice protests in the area and the subsequent removal of Confederate statues along Richmond’s Monument Avenue. The team saw its tireless reporting, including its efforts to translate some articles into Spanish, recognized with a 2021 Regional Edward R. Murrow Award for Excellence in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

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 radio broadcast celebrating music, culture and the traditional arts. VPM Music also produced and broadcast selections from select Richmond Symphony concerts.

“I listen to you guys every morning. As a local RVA musician, I find [local news] as well as public media to be key to a well-connected community and diverse art scene.” – VPM Instagram follower

Why This Moment. After protests erupted across the country following the death of George Floyd, local filmmakers Domico Phillips and Metta Bastet captured the outcry in Richmond as people expressed their frustrations over repeated acts of police violence. The VPM documentary “Why This Moment” details the emotions and events surrounding the protests from the perspective of the activists and helps provide context for conversations about this moment in the nation’s path toward racial justice.

Local, Community-Centered Initiatives

The Basics. In partnership with state and local stakeholders and the national Basics Learning Network, VPM developed engagement initiatives around “The Basics,” five simple yet powerful principles that families and caregivers can use to help young children thrive in the early years. To help raise awareness of “The Basics,” VPM and its partners across the region distributed complimentary “Basics Kits” and offered educational tutorials to families and caregivers, particularly those in asset-limited communities, and produced a series of animated digital shorts and television interstitials that show “The Basics” in action.

The Market at 25th. The VPM PBS KIDS® community engagement 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. Pre-pandemic, VPM provided fun and educational child and family engagement opportunities along with resources and activities anchored by the trusted PBS KIDS® brand. During the pandemic, staff has remained dedicated to the cause and has worked hard to find new ways to get educational resources into the hands of families and other caregivers who rely on the Market.

PBS KIDS® Edcamp. Together with our education partners in the region, VPM offered virtually-held 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 in a virtual setting.

StoryCorps’ One Small Step. With financial support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, VPM recruited community members to participate in StoryCorps’ “One Small Step” – one of six stations selected during the second year of the initiative. We had over 300 people contact us about participation, and we facilitated 25 conversations between pairs of individuals with differing views. VPM News broadcast several of these on radio, and we shared them online. The project provided a unique opportunity to bring people together, and many ended up finding common ground.

VPM + ICA Community Media Center. In August 2020, VPM, in partnership with the Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University (ICA at VCU), launched a new media center inside the ICA. The VPM+ICA Community Media Center has created opportunities for storytelling and sought to amplify voices often missing from traditional media. Virtual workshops, the majority of which are free and open to the public, began in fall 2020.

Virginia Governor's Briefings

Working with the Governor's Office, VPM continued to produce 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.



HEARD

HEARD. VPM's documentary "HEARD" captures the inspiring stories of people who grew up in public housing who are now giving back to their home communities. Police precincts have shared the film during officer training to help them better understand the communities they serve and build empathy.

"HEARD will provide a launching pad for constructive dialogue about current economic conditions and the best way to create pathways for economic upward mobility." – Reggie Gordon, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Richmond



Racism: Challenging Perceptions

In August 2020, VPM launched the virtual discussion series "Racism: Challenging Perceptions." Through conversations with local experts and leaders, we explored the social, cultural and economic impacts of racism on our community. Several local organizations have used this series as part of their DEI trainings for their employees and to help facilitate conversations about race and racism.

"I'm extremely grateful for the opportunity. Thanks for setting a strong example of the potential and power of local media to advance these critical conversations." – Trey Hartt, panelist, "Racism: Challenging Perceptions"



VPM Home Learning

As the coronavirus pandemic led to more and more school closures, VPM saw an opportunity to help support children and families engaged in at-home learning. While continuing to broadcast the statewide VA TV Classroom block of programs, VPM launched its own set of original programs aligned with Virginia Standards of Learning in July 2020. We also converted our VPM Plus television channel to “VPM Learning Plus,” offering an extended weekday lineup of educational programs for children and teens.

Reach in the Community:

Through its “Home Learning” offerings on television, VPM aimed to help bridge the digital divide in Virginia by providing instructional content for families without access to the internet. We also developed an extensive collection of online resources and easily-sharable videos for on-demand viewing.

Partnerships:

Individuals and community groups, ranging from scientist and Miss America 2020 Camille Schrier to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to Charlottesville-based music educators Mary and Mike Anderson (plus many more!) helped VPM produce original shows – all of which were shared with the Virginia Department of Education and posted on the Virginia educators’ digital resource hub #GoOpenVa. VPM also worked to upload many of these educational resources to PBS Learning Media. *(Images from three of VPM’s Home Learning shows are pictured on the right.)*

Impact and Community Feedback:

"I'm looking at your VPM Learning Plus schedule on your website and there is so much cool stuff on here! The programs and resources have great concrete skills that kids are going to need to review and know. If you're a parent that's working super hard to home school, sounds like it's a good time to let VPM help you." – Sarah FitzHenry and Kim Wilkens, St. Anne's-Belfield School, Charlottesville, Virginia



Cooking Up Science with Miss America



Fitness DAWGS



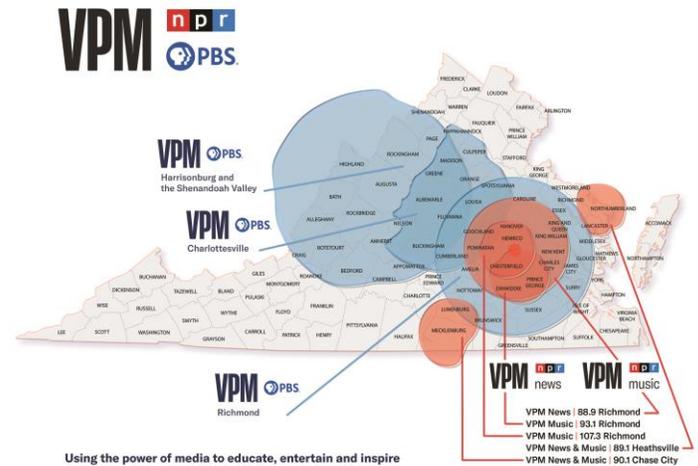
Circle Time at Home



As Virginia’s home for public media, we bring you relevant news and local storytelling to foster a greater understanding of our state, our neighbors and our world.

From the period July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, VPM:

- Increased brand awareness through our “Connected to What Matters” campaign
- Provided need-to-know information about the coronavirus pandemic and racial justice protests
- Produced virtual events and community discussions
- Developed at-home learning resources
- Served our communities throughout Virginia



At VPM, we strive to create programs that make an impact, promote understanding and serve our community. Through storytelling and educational initiatives, we aim to connect you to what matters.