

2021 Report on Local Content and Services

SAS Community Outreach for FY21
July 2020 - June 2021

88.5
wfdd



Goals and approach

The pandemic has continued to be an isolating force across our nation and the world, leaving people bereft, lonely, anxious, afraid, and disconnected. At WFDD, we have striven to keep people informed while also providing a lifeline and delivering a sense of community. This year saw immense upheaval and challenges, in issues ranging from racial justice and equity to education to voting to COVID-19...and WFDD was there to provide an accurate and faithful accounting of what transpired, and also to create opportunities for learning and connection, even in a virtual environment.

We consider ourselves to be much more than radio: we are a community partner, a public service, and a port in the storm. And as such, it is incumbent upon us to seek ways to connect deeply with and serve our community beyond broadcasting news and information programming. To that end, we have continued to seek fresh ways to engage with our listeners, like Virtual Community Conversations on a range of topics; we have continued our youth education program, Hive®, which not only teaches journalism and audio storytelling to young people, but also provides compelling content for our digital and broadcast audiences—giving others insight into the minds and lives of our youth; we have continued our listener-driven reporting module, Carolina Curious, which guides us in reporting on the topics that matter most to the communities we serve; we again held our annual December BackPack Campaign, a collaborative fund drive which aims to alleviate the significant issue of childhood hunger in our region; we created new ways to provide respite during a time when many people were expressing feeling overwhelmed, through an initiative we called Be Still; and we embarked on ways to expand our connection with our Hispanic and Latinx communities.

“No other area radio station serves its community like WFDD, whether it’s through thoughtful, balanced reporting, informative programming, or through serving those community members who need it most.”

Charles R.,
listener and supporter

Being truly committed to our community, knowing what’s important locally, understanding the challenges faced by all residents...this is all key to how we set our goals for our public service, and how we go about fulfilling our mission to inform, connect, educate, and inspire.



Key initiatives & partners

Over the course of FY21, our news team continued its robust reporting, despite remaining in a remote work environment. WFDD News has maintained a [COVID-19 blog](#), presented in both English and Spanish, as well as vital coverage of COVID-19. Included with important updates and live press conferences from the governor is reporting on [the impact of the pandemic on meatpacking industries](#), stories on [how to find vaccines](#), and up-to-date information on [how schools adapted and changed during this time](#).

Because COVID-19 proved so disruptive to education, WFDD partnered with other public radio stations across North Carolina on a special report entitled [Back To School in North Carolina: A Statewide Special](#). Together, we examined the return to class after months of remote learning due to the pandemic. WFDD reporter Keri Brown took a hard look at the impact COVID-19 had on school budgets and paired with other reporters to cover how teachers were coping and the role of school nurses in an even more crucial situation.

Beyond these reporting features, we knew that listeners had questions they needed answered, and we sought to broaden their knowledge on specific topics. With that in mind, we engaged our listeners with a series of [Virtual Community Conversations](#). We addressed topics of race, education, voting, and COVID-19 vaccines. Our first Virtual Community Conversation came on the heels of nationwide protests related to the murder of George Floyd. WFDD reporter David Ford spoke with dialogue facilitator and author David Campt on his R.A.C.E. and the White Ally Toolkit method, and guided attendees on how to have meaningful discussions with people who espouse problematic views on race. This event sparked robust conversation among viewers, as well as expressions of gratitude for providing a space for this type of learning and open dialogue. The success of this initiative led us to quickly plan our next virtual event, a timely discussion with education leaders from across the WFDD listening area about what back to school would look like during a pandemic. We continued to time these Virtual Community Conversations to coincide with significant happenings, holding the next one prior to the election: “Safeguarding Your Vote” panelists included the state Board of Elections director who could bring us up to speed on absentee ballots and the legal challenges ahead for this pivotal swing state. It was our goal to dispel the misconceptions about voting and equip our listeners with information on how to vote safely and securely.



And lastly, once the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines began, we hosted a vitally important Virtual Community Conversation focused on providing information about the vaccines. We brought together Dr. Mandy Cohen, Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services; Dr. Michelle Laws, NCDHHS Historically Marginalized Populations COVID Response Team Lead; Dr. Iulia Vann, Guilford County Public Health Director; and Dr. Christopher Ohl, Wake Forest Baptist Health Infectious Disease Expert, to cover everything from the safety of the vaccine, the timeline of the rollout and how vaccines were being distributed, and to answer attendee questions. Knowing that COVID-19 was having a disproportionate effect on our Hispanic and Latinx communities, we presented this live Virtual Community Conversation in both English and Spanish, and worked with the Hispanic League to help promote it to those communities.



88.5 WFDD Public Radio



**What You Need To Know
About COVID-19 Vaccines**



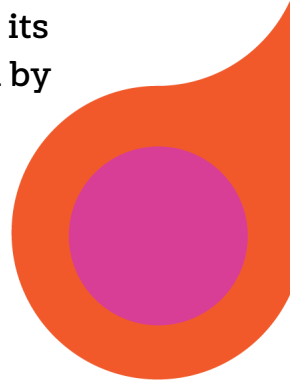
**Lo Que Necesitas Saber
Sobre Las Vacunas Contra...**

In FY21, we were excited to establish a partnership with the Journalism Department at Wake Forest University, allowing one of our reporters to teach a radio journalism class. WFDD reporter Paul Garber is now an adjunct professor at Wake Forest University, and teaches a fresh batch of students each semester, instructing them in journalism best practices and detailing what makes radio reporting different. In a time when many have a misconception that radio is a dying medium, this exposure to the value and importance of public broadcasting helps to illuminate a broader selection of future career paths for students interested in journalism. Students in the fall 2020 class worked diligently on reporting related to the election, producing 13 stories on key races in this important swing state.



To educate is part of our mission. Hive®, our education program, continues to prove that there's value in what young people have to say. The mission of this multi-tiered initiative is to give young people the skills, the tools, and the platform to share their unique perspective – to open a window into the world (and worldview) of the youth of our community. Through Hive® we're able to reach out to parents, teachers, and students across the community. FY21 marked the fourth year of our partnership with R. J. Reynolds high school to offer Radio 101 as a for-credit, honors class for their students. The majority of the students that attend R. J. Reynolds are members of minority groups. Paisley IB, a middle school with over 70% of minority students, also renewed its commitment to expose their students to the benefits of narrative journalism by incorporating a Radio 101 module taught by our Hive® manager into their English IV curriculum. We also created a special online curriculum for our summer Radio Camp in order to continue providing that service, and also provided virtual sessions for our Radio Camp for Grown-Ups.

Early in the pandemic, WFDD participated in a special survey conducted by Jacobs Media. The survey was designed to gauge how much the pandemic had disrupted listening and engagement for public radio stations, but also to assess how people were feeling. The survey results indicated what most of us know to be true, which was that people were feeling afraid, anxious, and unsure about the future. One question asked if listeners wanted to hear more or less of any particular content from their local station. The answers showed clearly that listeners wanted to hear more positive and upbeat content. One way we responded to this was to create our Be Still Campaign, a collection of 30-second spots featuring relaxing sounds with an opening message acknowledging how people were feeling and encouraging listeners to just take a moment to “be still” and find respite in a brief break. These were aired throughout dayparts, and also shared as audiograms on social media (wherever possible using a listener-submitted image to accompany the audio).



And further along the lines of answering listeners' needs for positivity, we continued our Dose of Good initiative, which was begun in response to the pandemic, but continued because listeners expressed how much it meant to them. Each week we share an uplifting image or anecdote submitted by a WFDD listener. The Dose of Good is distributed to an email list and shared on all our social media channels.



WFDD has long had a robust community engagement strategy, and the pandemic forced us to re-envision how we could connect with our listeners during longer-than-expected lockdowns. Regularly held events like our Book Club, our annual Look Up And Listen outdoor listening party, our summer bar meetups, and Photo of the Year exhibit and opening reception had to be shifted to virtual to comply with mandates and keep our community safe and healthy. Fortunately, we were able to maintain long-term partnerships and even explore new ones through these changes.

Virtual Book Club meetings proved successful, and we were even able to make use of breakout rooms to encourage deeper discussion. We were grateful to have author Wiley Cash join us for the meeting featuring his book *A Land More Kind Than Home*, something made easier by the virtual environment. And our partnerships with the Guilford College Bryan Series, Scuppernong Books, and Bookmarks continued.

We took our summer bar meetups virtual and partnered with a local bottle shop to help us provide participants with a personal “kit” for joining the bar meetup. These kits were hand-delivered by WFDD team members and included a WFDD “Radio For Thirsty Minds” pint glass and a micro-brew beer selected by the bottle shop. While it wasn’t quite the same as gathering in person, attendees were deeply engaged, leading these events to last much longer than originally planned.



Typically held in October at Hanging Rock State Park, our annual outdoor listening party, Look Up And Listen, had to be reimagined due to remaining uncertainty about safety and comfort levels, so we created our Virtual Monster Mash. We reached out to a local mixologist and a local chef and asked them to create special menu items for the evening. On a Zoom to YouTube Live, they took viewers through creating a signature cocktail (which could also be a mocktail) and a signature dessert. The Forsyth Astronomical Society, which typically brings telescopes and amateur astronomers to our live event, created a video to guide people through the night sky, highlighting objects viewable with the naked eye or a pair of binoculars. We also connected with our community, asking for storyteller submissions. From the submissions, we selected five community members, some professional storytellers and some just regular people with a spooky or fun story to tell, and had them join in. The result was a virtual event that had a true community feel to it, thanks to these partnerships.

Similarly, we had to find a way to take our Photo of the Year event (a culmination of our Photo of the Week initiative) to the virtual space. The Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA) continued to serve as a partner, providing suggestions for ways to display 52 photos online and handle online voting. The benefit to conducting community voting online is greater access for people living across our entire 32-county service area. While we love seeing the photos displayed in an art gallery, and providing that experience for community photographers, many listeners aren't able to travel long distances to see the exhibit, and even some of the photographers are unable to make the trip. We placed all 52 photos on our website for viewing, and then convened a small group of community judges to include members of our Community Advisory Board and staff members at SECCA. From those votes, we selected the top 5 photos and placed them on a new page on our website, which was open for community voting. We then held a virtual event in which we revealed the winner. We structured this similarly to our Virtual Monster Mash, inviting a local mixologist and local chef to guide participants through creating a signature drink and appetizer, and provided time for each of the top photographers to talk about their photo. At the end, we revealed our runners-up and winner, and followed up by personally delivering trophies to those winners. This allowed for some special engagement with our community members. We were also grateful to have a local business, Vivid Metal Prints, come on board as a sponsor of our Photo of the Week initiative about halfway through FY21.

In December 2020, we held our 12th annual December BackPack Campaign, a collaborative fundraiser we do in partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina and Kaplan Early Learning Company.



We hold this fund drive every year because childhood food insecurity continues to be a significant issue in our region. The synergy between the Food Bank's BackPack Program, which provides weekend meals to children facing food insecurity, and Kaplan, a company whose mission is to foster the mental, physical, and social health of children, is natural. During this annual campaign, our corporate partner donates a backpack full of food to the Backpack Program for each gift to 88.5 WFDD. Our goal for the December 2020 campaign was 1,300 gifts of support for WFDD and 1,300 backpacks of food for the Food Bank's BackPack Program. Not only does the campaign raise awareness of the fact that our area has one of the highest instances of childhood food insecurity in the nation, but it also raises essential support for 88.5 WFDD, and brings the community together to help alleviate childhood hunger in our region.

Community impact

It isn't always immediately evident if on-air spots are having an impact, but one situation in which the opposite is true is with our Be Still Campaign. Almost immediately upon sharing the spots, which feature relaxing sounds and encouragement for listeners to take a moment of respite, we began to hear appreciation and gratitude from listeners:

Carolyn P.

"Thank you for broadcasting the brief segments of sounds from nature. They always capture my attention and provide a pause which settles me in the moment. I hope you will continue offering them in the new year. I appreciate the ways you find to support your listening community. You and NPR are important in my daily life. Happy New Year!"

"Thank you for those brief breaks for relaxing sounds. I always stop whatever I am doing and chill. I visualize the campfire in the clearing with the tall trees in which that owl perches, the brook, the ocean. Thank you so, so much!"

Katherine M.



Feedback
from social media:



"Love these - we need
one with crickets :)"

"How soothing. Just
made me smile all over.
Thanks for your
thoughtfulness."

- Barbara

"I wish I could listen to
it all day."

- Sam

"Seriously, these moments
of zen you've started
adding to the
programming now and
then - they are the BEST. I
hope you keep them long
past the mess of 2020."

- Krystal,

"@wfdd - thank you for
the summer rain tonight
at 6:35pm"

Judy R.,
via voicemail

"I just wanted to let you know...I live off-grid...and the last 9 months under Covid, I have become really reliant on WFDD for company...and for sources of news...and for inspiration. I don't have a computer either, so you're my sole source. And I just wanted to let you know how very, very inspirational and timely and wonderful your 'take a minute' relaxation moments that you have started putting on the air...this is such a psychological, emotional benefit, I think to everyone. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for thinking of this...and as often as you want to run those, I would be open to it! Thank you so much. Have a wonderful day!"



Throughout FY21, we continued to expand our news coverage across the region, seeking to cover topics of relevance to all members of our community. We've utilized Hearken to collect listener questions and story suggestions to great effect. Beyond using Hearken for our Carolina Curious module, we also used the widget to seek questions for each of our Virtual Community Conversations. It is this that we believe is related to the growth in the number of zip codes from which we received Hearken submissions. In FY21, our Hearken modules logged questions from listeners in over 70 different zip codes across our 32-county listening area.

As referenced previously, in the area served by WFDD, the Hispanic and Latinx communities have been disproportionately affected by coronavirus, so getting key information to that community was vitally important. Thus, we continued our COVID-19 blog in both English and Spanish. For the duration of FY21, the English language version of the blog is our third most visited page, with 111,708 pageviews; the Spanish language version of the page is our fifth most visited page, with 37,413 pageviews. The majority of visitors to the Spanish language version of the page came from Charlotte, followed by Atlanta, Raleigh, Winston-Salem, Doraville, Oxford, Greensboro, Durham, Miami, New York, San Juan, Bogota, Clayton, Concord, Mexico City, Asheboro, Garner, High Point, and others. This vital information reached citizens all across our listening area and well beyond. Information provided on that page included a daily count of cases statewide and countywide; the governor's press briefings in Spanish; testing sites and hours; updates on hospital services; updates on available resources; vaccination sites and hours. We also translated pertinent news stories into Spanish, to further our efforts of getting necessary information out to our Spanish-speaking community members.

Our Virtual Community Conversation with David Campt, R.A.C.E. and The White Ally Toolkit, saw robust community participation and discussion. Presented via Zoom to YouTube Live, the conversation has received over 1,800 views. In it, WFDD's David Ford talks with David Campt about how to hold meaningful discussions with people who hold problematic views on race. David Campt and his dialogue method have been featured on The Daily Show, among other places; Campt is an internationally recognized dialogue facilitator. Kim W, a participant in the Virtual Community Conversation, shared this:



“David Campt's community conversation on Race and the White Ally Toolkit was a master class in communication. I learned more practical advice regarding white allyship from David Campt than I have from any other source. His interview empowered me to use specific communication skills in difficult conversations on race with other white women, having porch conversations with women on the other side of the political aisle and facilitating an online book club. Thank you, WFDD, for providing our community with access to David's extraordinary wisdom.”




Our annual Backpack Campaign continues to have a positive impact on our community, a region that ranks among the worst in the nation for childhood food insecurity. With a goal of 1,300 gifts for WFDD, which meant 1,300 backpacks of food donated to Second Harvest Food Bank's Backpack Program, our community worked together not only to provide essential funding for WFDD, but also to provide the equivalent of 9,100 meals for children in our region at risk of hunger. Since its inception 12 years ago, this collaborative fundraising campaign has resulted in the donation of 11,600 backpacks – over 81,000 meals for children at risk of going hungry.

Even with continued uncertainty, we have made education a priority, finding ways to connect virtually and bring added value to programs conducted solely over Zoom. In FY21, our Hive® education program served over 170 students ranging in age from 11 to 65+. Participants in the various Hive® programs represent a broad spectrum of races, ethnicities, religions, and abilities. When selecting interview subjects for our Radio Campers, we proceed mindfully, always with a goal of honoring the diversity present in our communities. Beyond teaching the basic tenets of journalism, this initiative showcases the skill and finesse that goes into audio storytelling, and hones writing and communication competence—knowledge that provides lifetime benefits. Two participants in Radio Camp for Grown-Ups shared the following:

"There truly is no other platform quite like NPR. I am very interested in the stories of others and love listening to programs that are intimate and engaging such as Fresh Air and, when it was on, The Diane Rehm Show. When my local NPR station WFDD advertised that they were doing a Radio Camp for Grown-Ups, I stopped what I was doing and immediately signed up. Radio Camp gave me an inside look into how stories are told on air. I had the opportunity to meet some amazing people like Karen Duffen from Planet Money and John Fecile from Snap Judgement. I learned that there is so much more to telling a story on the radio than I ever imagined. My experience with WFDD's Radio Camp is one that I will cherish forever. I am so proud of the story I was able to tell on air through Radio Camp and I have a greater appreciation for all the people who work so hard to bring stories to life through radio."

Margaret S.





“Since I moved to Winston-Salem, WFDD has been among my main sources of information about what is happening around us and in the rest of the world. I love to listen to the many programs that provide background information, and my WFDD parking lot moments are quite frequent. When on my way to class, I often end up sharing some of the latest insights and news pieces with the students. As a teacher, my work involves writing and speaking to audiences outside the University. When I learned about the Radio Camp for Grown-Ups, I knew this would be a unique opportunity to get a sense of how these informative and well-constructed radio pieces are put together.

It was an incredible experience and my already considerable respect for the work of journalists has only grown. Gabriel Maisonnave guided us in every step of the way and spent hours helping us craft a three-minute piece. Some of the best WFDD journalists shared secrets of the trade with us, and we witnessed firsthand how much work goes into creating features as short as three minutes. The Camp was a wonderful experience, not only did I learn from the WFDD staff, but also from the amazing experiences and life lessons the other students brought to the table. And I continue to benefit from the camp professionally in my own work as a teacher, scholar, and speaker.”

Nelly V.



Diversifying our outreach

Serving our entire community, including underserved and underrepresented populations is key to our mission and vision.

WFDD reporters have kept a sharp eye on the news that deserves a spotlight. We have continued our coverage on race –



bringing stories on how the city of Greensboro is grappling with the case of Marcus Smith, a Black man who died in police custody, and how firefighters in Winston-Salem are saying racial discrimination is forcing either silence or change. We also took an in-depth look a year after the death of George Floyd to assess how local police have adapted since then and what has remained the same. Race and social justice continues to be a beat of high importance for our team. We feel that reporting on how systemic racism affects our lives in this community is a daily, ongoing commitment for our team and we will continue that dedication in the weeks, months, and years ahead.

As reported in previous sections, we maintained our COVID-19 blog presented in both English and Spanish, and translated pertinent news stories into Spanish, to further our efforts of getting necessary information out to our Spanish-speaking community members. And as the COVID-19 vaccine rollout began, we hosted a Virtual Community Conversation featuring Dr. Mandy Cohen, Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services; Dr. Michelle Laws, NCDHHS Historically Marginalized Populations COVID Response Team Lead; Dr. Iulia Vann, Guilford County Public Health Director; and Dr. Christopher Ohl, Wake Forest Baptist Health Infectious Disease Expert, to cover everything from the safety of the vaccine, how it's being distributed and the timeline of the rollout, and to answer attendee questions. Knowing that COVID-19 was having a disproportionate effect on our Hispanic and Latinx communities, we presented this live Virtual Community Conversation in both English and Spanish and worked with the Hispanic League to help promote it to those communities.

At the very end of FY21 we hired a new bilingual reporter, Eileen Rodriguez, who will focus on COVID-19 and its disproportionate effect on our Hispanic and Latinx communities, as well as what recovery from the pandemic looks like in those communities. This position is made possible by a North Carolina Local News Lab grant and a grant from Report For America and the Ground Truth Project, and works in partnership with La Noticia, the largest Spanish language publication in our region. Rodriguez will work with editors at both media outlets, and her stories will be published by both entities, providing even broader reach for this important reporting, and introducing WFDD to new populations.

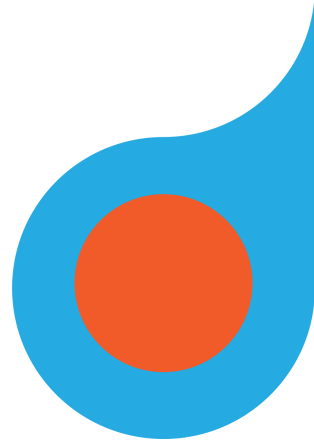


Our Hive® Education Program continues to present opportunities to connect with a diverse group of people. We are fortunate to have a class embedded at R. J. Reynolds High School in Winston-Salem, an arts magnet school with students from 38 countries, speaking 26 languages, making it the most diverse high school in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County school system. Our after-school option is open to students from the entire school district (and neighboring districts). And as reported in the previous section, a wide array of races, ethnicities, religions, and abilities are represented among participants across all our Hive® initiatives. The pandemic and its uncertainties have created challenges with extending our Hive® program in some of the ways we've dreamed, but we continue to seek opportunities to reach more underserved populations with this program. We are also always cognizant of providing content of importance to diverse groups. In FY22, our Radio 101 class will report on the youth mental health crisis, including a look at racial disparities in access to mental health services and what it's like to navigate the school system as a transgender student.



Impact of CPB funding

At WFDD, we see this funding as a chance to go beyond simply providing news and information programming and really be there for our community in unique and innovative ways. This grant allows us to see opportunities to extend our service and reach citizens who may not have previously been aware of our offerings. Because of this funding, we are able to make youth education a top priority and provide free programs that both benefit young people and illuminate the challenges teens today face for our mostly older audience. It allows us to foster a culture of having the freedom to fail, so that we are constantly dreaming and planning new initiatives...because if we never try new things then innovation doesn't exist. The generous funding from CPB once again allowed us to break the mold of a standard public radio station, to think outside the box, and to lead the charge in creative community engagement...to set the tone that our community is better because we are in it.





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