



FY2022

# Local Content & Service Report

To the community from WGCU

July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022

WGCU Public Media  
Updated 3-1-23

*“Thank you for informative, entertaining, educational, and accurate programming. You are an island in the stream of modern-day TV. You are what TV should be.”*

*– Del and Anita, Arcadia*

## Introduction

- I. Local Value, Key Services, and Local Impact
- II. In the Community
- III. Gulf Coast Life
- IV. Stories of Impact
- V. WGCU Podcasts

## I. Local Value, Key Services, and Local Impact

The Mission of WGPU Public Media is to inspire, inform, educate, engage and entertain through the power of public media.



### **WGPU Public Media is a vital part of Southwest Florida.**

As the region grows and newspapers decline, WGPU is growing its local news service. WGPU provides in-depth local and statewide reporting during Morning Edition, All Things Considered, and *Gulf Coast Life*. Primary topics were COVID-19 vaccinations, environment, elections, affordable housing, education and intolerance. Reporting for the disability community continues as part of WGPU's Move to Include initiative.

In FY2021, wgpu.org served over 469,198 users, averaging 37,720 users per month. The WGPU mobile app saw an increase in engagement, serving over 8,462 users.



### **In FY22, WGPU Public Media provided key local services.**

WGPU serves all or part of 12 counties with five digital TV channels, two FM radio channels, two HD radio channels, and one subcarrier for print-challenged listeners. WGPU delivered national and international programming on TV, radio and digital channels. Local newscasts on FM and daily TV news minutes provide timely, relevant regional news to the Southwest Florida community.

WGPU produces *Noticias de WGPU en Español*, a weekly news brief in Spanish that airs on Radio Conciencia in Immokalee, FL serving the local farmworker community.

WGPU's community-based engagement, and events were both in person and virtual which allowed for greater participation from not only SWFL residents but from all over the state and country.



### **WGPU Public Media local services had a deep impact in Southwest Florida.**

In FY22, WGPU worked with the following community partners: Artis Naples, Best Buddies, Florida Gulf Coast University, Guadalupe Center, Southwest Florida Reading Festival, Collier County Library System, Jewish Federation of Greater Naples, Immokalee Foundation, Lighthouse of Collier County, Lighthouse of SWFL, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Center, Naples Pride, Visuality SWFL, David Lawrence Center, Charlotte Behavioral Health, Park Royal Hospital, Children's Advocacy Center of Southwest Florida, Inc. Suncoast Children's Home Society of Florida, Valerie's House, Charlotte County Library System, Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Children's Services, Children's Network of SWFL, Grace Place for Children and Families, Collier Child Care Resources, Healthy Start SWFL, Collier Homeless Coalition, Family Initiative Inc, Girls Scouts of the Gulf Coast and Lee County Library System.

## II. In The Community

### WGCU Public Media Local Productions & Engagement Efforts

WGCU produced more than 210 hours of local content from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022 that aired on WGCU-TV, FM/HD radio, and multiple online platforms. Local television programs were re-distributed to county schools and aired on local government television channels. All news posts and programs are archived on [wgcu.org](http://wgcu.org) for access by teachers and students 24-hours a day. WGCU provided education workshops to train teachers and parents on how to find and use PBS LearningMedia resources at home and in the classroom. Highlights of our TV and radio productions, digital platforms, and community outreach efforts are featured in this report.

### WGCU's Notable Broadcast Reach

WGCU-TV was ranked in the top 10 most-watched public television stations in the country. WGCU consistently ranked as one of the highest-rated public television stations in the country on Thursdays from 8 pm - 9 pm with its vintage series, *Untold Stories*. (Source: Nielsen, TRAC Back Tracs 2021-22.) WGCU served more than 300,000 television viewers monthly.

WGCU FM has a monthly cumulative of more than 200,000 listeners. (Source: Radio Research Consortium, July 2022.) The news team aired 125 hours of local content, including news posts and *Gulf Coast Life*, and garnered 9 regional awards.

WGCU digital platforms and products include [wgcu.org](http://wgcu.org), YouTube, social media platforms and station newsletters have a total of more than 225,000 users monthly.

### Local Productions & Engagement Efforts

#### [Local Documentary Receives Suncoast Emmy Nomination](#)

***A Force for Freedom*** explores the life of Robert Hilliard who was a hero of World War II, an educator, author and a trailblazer in the world of broadcasting. An U.S. Army veteran, he was wounded twice before becoming an Army journalist whose reporting about the plight of concentration camp survivors in Germany drew the attention of hundreds of citizens and even President Harry Truman, who took action to lift them out of the severe hunger and lack of medical attention in which they were living. In 1967 Robert was in the White House when President Lyndon B. Johnson approved federal funding for public broadcasting. With Hilliard's poetry weaved throughout the program, the documentary features interviews with the Sanibel resident as he shares the insights shaped over his 96 years.



## WGCU Noticias en Español



WGCU Noticias en Español was produced by two FGCU student reporters Samantha Romero and Tiffany Pullido under the guidance of WGCU reporter Sandra Viktorova. Each week, video and audio news reports in Spanish were distributed weekly to keep the Latinx community informed about important issues including education, government, and agriculture. A separate report with critical health news including COVID-19 testing and vaccine information was produced for the rural farmworkers. WGCU is responsible for the editorial content of the briefs which were

shared on social media, wgcu.org and aired weekly on Radio Conciencia, a low-powered community-based station in Immokalee, Florida. Support for this reporting is provided by Gary and Christine La Croix, and the Scripps Howard Foundation

## WGCU's Spotlight on the Arts

WGCU produced short digital videos highlighting local arts and culture in Southwest Florida. The short features are also sprinkled throughout the broadcast schedule making WGCU-TV look and feel more local. One **Spotlight on the Arts** video was about the Ukraine Mural Project, which came to be after two murals, depicting Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelenskyy by local artists Erik Schlake and Roland Ruocco, were vandalized multiple times at the Alliance for the Arts in Fort Myers. In response, an accordion of twenty 4x8 foot murals painted by local artists line the Alliance's festival grounds. **Spotlight on the Arts** is funded in part by Naomi Bloom in memory of her husband Ron. [Read More>>](#)



## Key Initiatives & Community Outreach Efforts



### **Move to Include Virtual Harry Potter Book Club for Autistic Young Adults**

WGCU created its first **Move to Include Virtual Harry Potter Book Club** for young adults on the spectrum. In partnership with the Florida Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) and Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), autistic adults ages 18 - 35 and FGCU student peers participated in a 9-week book club featuring the book, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. Participants were provided a book on their platform of choice. WGCU also presented the replicable book club at the 2022 PBS Annual Meeting to inspire other public media stations to use the materials created in their own community.

## Community Engagement and Education Highlights

WGPU's community engagement and education programs include preschool and school-age PBS Kids programming, sharing PBS LearningMedia with educators and parents, community screenings, and events. WGPU engaged its audiences with both virtual and in person events and programs.

One of the highlights of FY22 was WGPU's work around the POV documentary Pier Kids. WGPU partnered with Naples Pride and Visuality SWFL to host screenings of the documentary.



In addition, WGPU partnered with the same organizations to host a workshop for SWFL LGBTQ+ youth, their families, educators and others who support them on the issues and challenges they face. The program provided a platform to share stories, ask questions and for experts to share resources and information.



WGPU also hosted British Historian and PBS host Lucy Worsley virtually from London for "Afternoon Tea," a high tea and discussion about the history of British tea beginning with Charles II through today's Buckingham Palace garden parties.

## Outreach by the Numbers:

- 32 workshops with 651 educators, caregivers, and parents were taught how to use PBS Kids and PBS content to educate children in grades Pre-K through 12th grade. WGPU provided 668 free digital educational resources in English and Spanish through workshops and online.
- 7 screenings of PBS programs/specials and local programs, Deaf, Blind and Thriving, Downing of a Flag, Pier Kids, Flood in the Desert and Becoming Helen Keller.
- 14 tours of the WGPU-Myra Janco Daniels Public Media Center.

### III. Gulf Coast Life

[Gulf Coast Life](#) is WGCU's locally produced talk show, giving Southwest Florida listeners a chance to share their thoughts and connect with their community. Airing four days a week at 1 p.m. and 8 p.m., *Gulf Coast Life* covers a variety of topics including the environment, government and politics, healthcare, education, science, history, arts, and community features. Examples of the radio program follow.

#### [Project SEARCH helps students with intellectual and developmental disabilities transition from school to work](#)

Project SEARCH program helps students with intellectual and developmental disabilities transition from school to work. Here in Southwest Florida, participating students work at Lee Health's HealthPark Medical Center, and Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida, all with support from the School District of Lee County. [Read More>>](#)



#### [Worried about vaccine side effects? Find out how the CDC's Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System works](#)

Since the first COVID vaccines began being administered, the number of reports made to the VAERS system has spiked. This episode explained how reporting to VAERS works, what happens when serious adverse events are reported, and the rates at which serious adverse events are happening following COVID vaccinations. [Read More>>](#)



#### [A Glimpse into the Life of Roberto Clemente and his time in Fort Myers](#)

Legendary Puerto Rican baseball hall of fame outfielder Roberto Clemente joined the Major Leagues in 1955. That was eight years after Jackie Robinson became the first Black player in the history of the league, and nine years before the Civil Rights Act of 1964 became law. For the first thirteen years of his career the Pirates spring trained at Terry Park in Fort Myers — this was during the time of Jim Crow. [Read More>>](#)



## IV. Stories of Impact

### WGCU Partners with FGCU Journalism for Democracy Watch

As Florida Gulf Coast University's academic year comes to a close, we reflect back on the first year of the university journalism program's "[Democracy Watch](#)" initiative. It's a collaboration between FGCU's Journalism BA program and the WGCU news team designed to give exceptional upper-level students real-world experience reporting in the field while also enhancing and expanding WGCU's coverage of important local government actions that often go overlooked and unreported. [Learn More>>](#)



### New Environment Reporter Tom Bayles Breaks Story

[Masks used to protect people from Covid-19 are becoming a worldwide threat to wildlife](#)

Cigarette butts, empty cans and bottles have fouled Southwest Florida's beaches, preserves and parking lots for a long time, and now a new scourge is being thrown into the mix: face masks once used to protect the wearer from Covid-19. [Read More>>](#)



### Southwest Florida Remembers September 11th

[September 11: Twenty Years Later SWFL Looks Back](#)

For many, it took a few minutes for the unfathomable to sink in as something that had actually happened. The WGCU News team took a look back twenty years after September 11, 2001, talking with people who were forever changed by this terrible day. WGCU produced an award-winning radio documentary featuring a former WGCU reporter who was covering the President in Sarasota when he received word of the attacks on the World Trade Center. [Read More>>](#)





## V. WGCU Podcasts



### Three Song Stories

The [Three Song Stories](#) podcast marked its fourth year of production in fiscal year 2022 and continues to offer listeners extraordinary biographies through music.

Winner of a Public Media Journalists Association award, 3SS features everyday people and even some known names from around the country. The podcast continues to gain audience, and recognition from the local community, as well as fans from all across the nation and world.

Notable 3SS year four guests include [Doug Berman](#) (pictured above), the Executive Producer of [Car Talk](#) and Creator and Benevolent Overlord of [Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me!](#) Other guests include former FGCU president [Wilson Bradshaw](#) (pictured to the right), Emmy Award-winning composer Kat Epple, Florida Weekly News Editor Jeff Cull, Retired Target lawyer Jim Hale, and many others.



**52 podcasts produced**  
**27.7K downloads (+5%)**