

**WQPT PBS**

**2023 LOCAL CONTENT AND  
COMMUNITY REPORT**

A public media service of Western Illinois University

**wq**



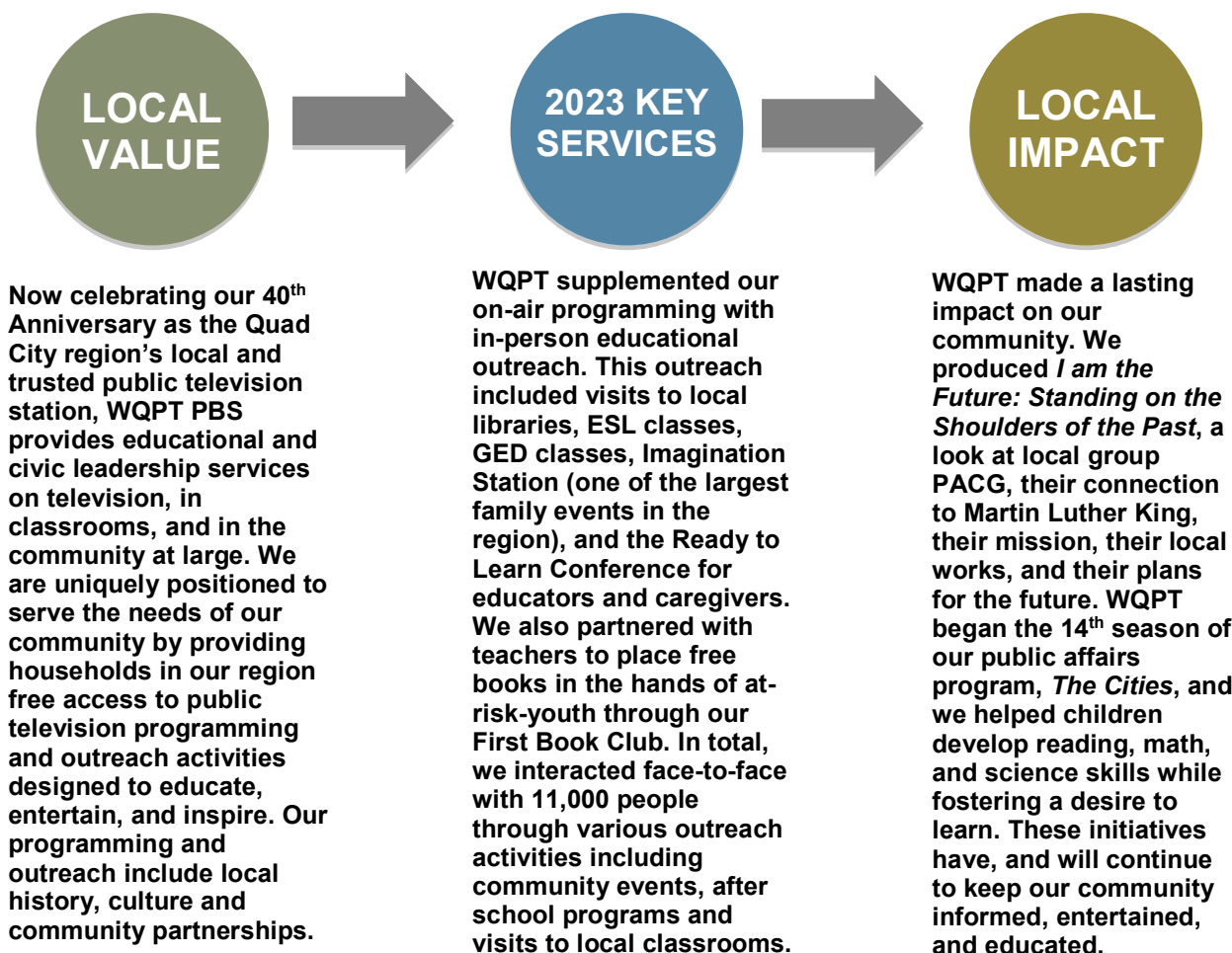
## 2023 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



In September, 2023, WQPT was honored with a prestigious Emmy Award for our locally written and produced historical documentary, *Your Dutch Friend*. This documentary tells the story of how two young sisters, Juanita and Betty Wagner of Danville, Iowa became pen pals with Anne Frank and her sister Margo, just as Amsterdam was occupied by Nazi Germany on May 10, 1940.

### Our Mission:

As a public media service of Western Illinois University, WQPT PBS actively serves a diverse audience throughout West Central Illinois and the Eastern Iowa region. WQPT PBS and our supporters are committed to providing free access to lifelong learning and entertainment, fostering educational success and cultural competency within our communities.





## 2023 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

Now celebrating our 40th Anniversary, the creation of WQPT resulted from the community's need for a public television station that would serve eastern Iowa and western Illinois. At that time, the Quad Cities region was one of two metropolitan areas in the country not served by a local public television station. Today, WQPT continues to serve the region as a respected and innovative public broadcasting provider. While our license is held by Western Illinois University, WQPT is self-sustaining and receives no direct cash support from the University.

We are committed to supporting education—on-air, online, at home and in the classroom. We personally interact with our community to form meaningful partnerships and provide educational, entertaining on-air programming and in-person outreach that inspire lifelong learning in the Quad Cities region.

As a public broadcaster, our mission is to provide educational resources to the Quad Cities region. As the Quad Cities' only locally owned PBS station, WQPT transcends television. To supplement the educational outreach of our 2,271 hours of on-air PBS KIDS programming, we provided a number of local initiatives this past year, including Summer of Adventure outreach visits to 45 locations, including 23 libraries throughout our region. We continued partnering with teachers to place free books in the hands of at-risk-youth through our First Book Club. This year, we distributed 3,708 books to children in need. In addition, in the past 12 months we were able to interact with more than 11,000 people through various local events and in local classrooms. On Saturday, April 29, 2023, WQPT reintroduced The Ready to Learn Early Childhood Conference, to provide training for educators in our region, along with an opportunity to earn continuing education credits. The presenters at the conference shared relevant information on a variety of topics related to early childhood education, including equity and access. WQPT also shares the availability of educational tools with parents, educators, and children through emails, Facebook, YouTube, our website, and other social media avenues.

WQPT emphasizes an integrated educational model, which includes in-person educational outreach, to complement the educational children's programming we broadcast over-the-air. This approach effectively reaches children in the variety of ways in which they learn. As a result of the success of our integrated strategic direction, WQPT continues to dedicate resources, including a full-time education director, to in-person educational outreach.



## 2023 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

As a public media provider, WQPT is a member of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). In 2008, we converted our PBS membership status to become one of only 17 stations in the country serving their community through PBS' Program Differentiated Plan (PDP). Our PDP status allows us to access PBS' National Program Service (NPS) programs, and it provides us with additional local programming opportunities to better serve our community. We air a reduced number of PBS' NPS programs (25% or less), with the remainder of our schedule comprised of other public media content that would otherwise be unavailable to our viewers.

WQPT's desire is to create a pathway for education, which in turn will create an opportunity for our region to enjoy a higher quality of life through lifelong learning opportunities. WQPT broadcasts two channels, 24 hours a day, delivering enriching programming to a potential viewing audience of approximately 335,000 households representing a population of 824,000. In addition to programs that originate from national sources, we also generate local content. We are now in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of our local public affairs program *The Cities*. Our short form documentary series "Snapshots" produced new programs including: *Your Dutch Friend*, the story of how two young sisters, Juanita and Betty Wagner of Danville, Iowa became pen pals with Anne Frank and her sister Margo, just as Amsterdam was occupied by Nazi Germany on May 10, 1940. The letters that united these four young girls are now owned and displayed by the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, CA. The Danville, Iowa Station Museum is the only remote location where the Wiesenthal Center allows copies of the letters to be displayed. In September, 2023, WQPT was honored to receive a prestigious Emmy Award for this production. We also produced a new local series, *Chords and Coffee*, featuring local singer-songwriters who share their original compositions and talk about their creative process, inspiration, and love of music... all over a cup of coffee. Other local productions included *Covered Bridges of WQPT*, a cinematic journey through the historical and local covered bridges of northwestern Illinois. Shortly after filming, the Red Covered Bridge in Princeton, Illinois was severely damaged when hit by a semi-trailer truck, *Pisāhkiw: A Medicine Fish Healing*, tracing the buffalo's evolution in our region, its significance to the indigenous people, and the efforts to bring the magnificent mammals back from the brink of extinction, and *Auction is at Your House* an evening of interactive television. Locally produced *Arsenal History Minutes* have been highlighting our military history on WQPT since 2014 in partnership with the Rock Island Arsenal.



## 2023 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

WQPT believes it is important to provide our community with opportunities and to hear the important message of justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Because of our PDP status, during the past year WQPT was able to present 638 hours of JDEI programming, on-air and livestreamed online.

During National Suicide Prevention Week, WQPT aired several mental health awareness documentaries, including *My Ascension*. This documentary tells the story of a suicide attempt that left 16-year-old varsity cheerleader, Emma Benoit, paralyzed, but propelled her on a mission to use her painful experience to help other young people find hope and stay alive. As Emma navigates the challenges of her physical and mental health recovery, she works to shine more light on the fact that 20 young people die every day by suicide in the in the United States.

On Thursday, September 21, 2023, in advance of airing *My Ascension*, WQPT hosted a screening and panel discussion led by local mental health professionals.

The community's recognition and response to our award-winning documentaries and educational outreach serve to encourage us as we expand our on-air programming and complement it with virtual and in-person outreach activities. Because education is at the forefront of our mission, we emphasize PBS KIDS and educational outreach programs focusing on children, parents, and educators. For example, PBS KIDS' ScratchJr is a program teaching children computer programming while they create interactive stories and games using their favorite PBS characters. ScratchJr helps children develop literacy and computer skills, and it encourages lifelong learning in both children and parents by making education entertaining.

First Book Club is an outreach program that provides five free books to at-risk children by partnering with Title 1 classrooms. To further increase our reach, we utilize literacy liaisons—community volunteers—to read to children and offer related activities in schools and youth programs. These volunteers have helped us grow First Book Club into a program vital to supporting education and diversity in the Quad Cities region. Through the years, we have had the honor of delivering upwards of 400,000 free books to children from low-literate, low-income, English-as-second-language, rural, and special needs families.

As we move forward, WQPT will continue to employ its proven integrated educational model, which includes in-person outreach complementing our over-the-air programming. This approach effectively reaches children, parents, and educators in a variety of different ways to ensure we are delivering quality educational opportunities.

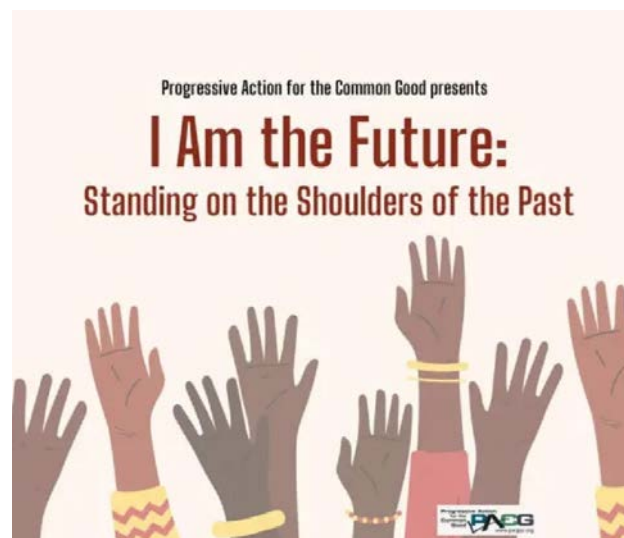




## 2023 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT STORIES OF IMPACT

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programming (DEI)

WQPT believes it is our responsibility to employ the reach of our television signal and digital platforms to deepen the understanding of systemic issues of oppression, diversity, equity and inclusion facing our communities. WQPT's desire is to create a pathway for education which, in turn, will create an opportunity for local understanding. During the past year WQPT was able to present 638 hours of DEI programming, including locally produced *I Am the Future: Standing on the Shoulders of the Past*, a look at local group Progressive Action for the Common Good, their mission, their local works and their plans for the future.



### First Book

First Book Club is an outreach program that provides five free books to at-risk children by partnering with Title 1 classrooms. To further increase our reach, we utilize literacy liaisons—community volunteers—to read to children and offer related activities in schools and youth programs. These volunteers have helped us grow First Book Club into a program vital to supporting education and diversity in the Quad Cities region. Through the years, we have had the honor of delivering more than 400,000 free books to children from low-literate, low-income, English-as-second-language, rural, and special needs families. In 2023 alone, we placed 3,708 books into the hands of children.



### Summer of Adventure

During the summer of 2023, WQPT PBS made guest appearances at 45 locations, including 23 libraries throughout our region. We provided 5,328 people the opportunity to watch a PBS KIDS program, listen to a story, and do a fun craft learning activity. Each child received a PBS KIDS Summer Activity booklet and learned how to access to free online resources on PBS KIDS that provide additional learning opportunities at home.





## 2023 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT STORIES OF IMPACT

### *Imagination Station*

Imagination Station, WQPT's children's educational event was held on Saturday, October 14, 2023. The event built on the learning successes of our PBS KIDS on-air programming and our in-person educational outreach in local classrooms. The event, supported by more than 100 community volunteers, welcomed 3,000 children & parents. Educational activities focused on literacy, science, technology, engineering, math & the arts. Special guests included 12 PBS KIDS characters with their unique learning stations featuring games, stories, make-and-take crafts & give-a-ways that reinforced learning concepts relevant to the PBS character's show.



WQPT's 2023 Imagination Station featured 22 unique learning stations, with STEAM based activities.

### *My Ascension – Suicide Prevention:*

WQPT hosted a special screening of excerpts from *My Ascension* on Thursday, Sept. 21, with a panel discussion about suicide prevention and mental wellness. Emma Benoit seemingly had it all – strikingly beautiful, a popular high school cheerleader, and a modeling job after finishing her junior year. But the 16-year-old in Ascension Parish, La. (south of Baton Rouge) was roiling with depression inside, about which she had never told a soul. In June 2017, Emma took her father's gun from her parents' bedroom and attempted suicide by shooting herself in the chest. Luckily, she survived, but a spinal cord injury left her paralyzed. Benoit – who just turned 23 on Aug. 29 — hasn't stopped moving since that fateful day, as her life-changing experience helped her find faith and purpose; and propelled her on a mission to use her painful experience and miraculous recovery to help others.

### *Partnerships:*

The screening and panel discussion for *My Ascension* was moderated by Dr. Carrie Alexander-Albritton, Professor, Department of Counselor Education and College Student Personnel at Western Illinois University — along with panel members William Ivarone, Director of Counseling Services at Augustana College, and Jamie Haney of Vera French Community Health Center.

**By hosting Imagination Station at Western Illinois University's Quad City Campus, we were able to ensure all activities had full ADA accessibility.**

**We also provided a sensory friendly room that catered to children who might otherwise have been overstimulated by all the fun and excitement that surrounded the event.**

**Comments from our follow-up survey:**

- The generosity of the whole event just blew my mind.***
- This event was absolutely amazing and we had a magical and educational experience. Thank you for bringing this to our community.***



## 2023 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT SUMMARY



### Samples of unique locally produced programs we aired this past year include:

We are in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of our local public affairs program *The Cities*. Our short form documentary series “Snapshots” produced *Your Dutch Friend*, the story of how two young sisters, Juanita and Betty Wagner of Danville, Iowa became pen pals with Anne Frank and her sister Margo (WQPT received an Emmy Award for this production). We also produced a new local series, *Chords and Coffee*, featuring local singer-songwriters who share their original compositions, *Covered Bridges of WQPT*, *Pisähkiw: A Medicine Fish Healing*, tracing the buffalo’s evolution in our region, its significance to the indigenous people, and the efforts to bring the magnificent mammals back from the brink of extinction, *I am the Future: Standing on the Shoulders of the Past*, a look at local group PACG and their connection to Martin Luther King, and *Auction is at Your House* an evening of interactive television. Locally produced *Arsenal History Minutes* have been highlighting our military history on WQPT since 2014 in partnership with the Rock Island Arsenal.

### WQPT Presents

*The Covered Bridges of WQPT*, a cinematic journey through the historical, local covered bridges of northwestern Illinois. Covered bridges, designed to protect the wooden structural elements from harsh weather conditions, are now considered charming architectural masterpieces. Shortly after filming, the Red Covered Bridge in Princeton, Illinois was severely damaged when hit by a semi-trailer.



WQPT believes it is important to provide our community with lifelong learning opportunities. The programming flexibility of our PDP status allows us the opportunity to share the creative efforts of local and regional producers with our viewers.



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[wqpt.org](http://wqpt.org)

A public media service of Western Illinois University

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