

88.5 WFDD Community Outreach for FY18

July 2017 – June 2018

OVERALL GOALS AND APPROACH

In our vision, 88.5 WFDD is more than a radio station; it is an idea -- deeply committed to public service, community engagement, education, and creating content with substance, purpose, and a uniquely human voice. This belief is core to who we are and how we go about our work every single day.

Over the last couple of years, we have worked diligently to shift our strategy for local news coverage; we have made it our goal to move toward a community-driven reporting structure. It matters to us that we report the stories that affect to the entire community, not just those members who are devoted listeners to WFDD. Our Carolina Curious initiative is making great strides in this work. We know we still have work to do, and that's why we've also devised new ways to connect with those who may not know us yet to let them know we're listening. Through our partnerships with area library branches, for example, we've connected with a more diverse population and subsequently covered stories of importance.

We consider it vital and key to our mission to educate young people and thereby grow and diversify the future talent pool for public media and the field of journalism. Our multi-tiered education program, which encompasses Radio Camp, Radio 101, and our internship program, fulfills this mission, and is itself growing by leaps and bounds. Through this, we not only connect with young people, but also with their parents, school administrators, community members, and partners. As an added bonus, we provide a platform for presenting stories that matter to our youth, and give them a voice to share their experiences.

88.5 WFDD is a part of our local community, and it's important for us to deepen the engagement we have with the regions we serve. Already intensely connected here, we have striven to find new ways to grow that relationship, and the success of our efforts is evident to us in the interactions we experience when out in the community. We have intentionally moved away from simple sponsorships of other entities' events to programming our own events, which allows us to better get to know our listeners and understand their needs and interests. We are seeing increased awareness of and engagement with WFDD due to our offering of both free and ticketed events.

Through identifying key partners, strategic reporting and engagement initiatives, and our education program, WFDD has positioned itself as an essential part of the fabric of the 32 counties we serve, a trusted resource to which the community can turn for the information they need, a purveyor of meaningful events that provide stimulating conversations and deep connections, and even a friend and companion.

KEY INITIATIVES AND PARTNERS

88.5 WFDD has continued, and grown, several of our key initiatives, and even introduced some new ones.

Thanks to the support of a major donor and a grant from the Winston-Salem Foundation, we were able to hire a full-time Education Program Manager, allowing us to increase the offerings of our Education Program.

Radio 101, our program for high school students, offers instruction in journalism, audio storytelling, technology, audio editing, field recording, writing, and public speaking, and has grown to include a for-credit class embedded in R. J. Reynolds High School, a local arts magnet school with the most diverse student population in the school district. In addition to this class, Radio 101 is also offered as an after-school program at WFDD, open to students from the entire school district. The program now reaches far more students than in the past, and interest in the program is growing. We are grateful to Reynolds High School for its partnership with us, without which the for-credit class would not have become a reality.

Radio Camp has also grown, seeing its largest enrollment ever in summer 2018. Over the course of a week of Radio Camp, middle school students learn the basics of radio story production, from studio and field recording, to subject research, to interviewing techniques, and the other skills needed to write, record, edit, and create stories for radio broadcast. Each student concludes the week with a story of his or her own that is also broadcast on WFDD and shared on our website. Each Radio Camper interviews a community member for his or her story; local organizations and businesses, artists and entrepreneurs, and general people of note are all subjects for these interviews. In addition to partnerships with these community members and organizations, WFDD continues its partnership with Guilford College in order to hold a Radio Camp session in Greensboro, NC, a primary part of our service area, but one where we do not have a physical presence.

To further our community-driven reporting strategy, we've continued our *Carolina Curious* series, which is powered by Hearken and allows listeners to submit and vote on questions they'd like our reporting team to cover. Listeners whose question is chosen have the opportunity to participate in the newsgathering and reporting process, increasing the transparency of our journalism. Back end tracking within the Hearken module allows us to monitor which communities are underserved in our reporting, and further allows us ways to strategize how to reach these communities.

To that end, in FY18, we embarked on a series of community listening/connection events at area library branches, specifically seeking out branches in areas from which we weren't seeing a great deal of questions for *Carolina Curious*. We identified libraries as perfect partners for this endeavor, due to our closely aligned core values of lifelong learning and free and equal access to information. We held events at the Rockingham County Public Library-Eden Branch, the Greensboro Library-Glenwood Branch, and the Greensboro Library-Central Branch. These library branches serve disenfranchised populations and allowed us to connect with people who were not previously aware of WFDD and gave us the opportunity to talk with constituents about important things happening in their neighborhoods. These events resulted in some key stories, including a report on why so many rural hospitals are closing and what that means for the residents of those communities.

As another way to bring awareness to our journalism, and to further our efforts to broaden the future journalism and public media talent pool, we have developed a partnership with the journalism department at Wake Forest University, our licensee. This partnership consists of members of our news team giving presentations to journalism classes; providing shadowing opportunities for students so they can experience a real, working newsroom; the department head funneling exceptional students to us for internships and sharing final student projects with us for review and possibly featuring on WFDD in some way, either on air or online.

FY18 saw the continuation of our partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina during our annual December Backpack Campaign, but this year, we secured a new corporate partner, Kaplan Early Learning Company. The synergy between the Food Bank's Backpack Program, which provides children suffering from food insecurity food to take home over the weekends during the school year, and Kaplan, a company whose mission is to foster the mental, physical, and social health of children, is natural. During this annual campaign (the 9th such event), our corporate partner donates a backpack full of food to the Backpack Program for each gift to 88.5 WFDD. Thanks to Kaplan's partnership, we were able to increase our goal to 1,000 gifts of support for WFDD and 1,000 backpacks of food for the Food Bank's Backpack Program. The campaign raises essential support for 88.5 WFDD, and brings the community together to help alleviate the issue of childhood hunger in our region.

In FY18, we also continued our WFDD Book Club, a listener engagement initiative we began three years ago. The WFDD Book Club meets quarterly at two area independent bookshops, one in Winston-Salem and one in Greensboro. The bookshops partner with us to offer the selected read at a discounted price, and allow us to utilize their space for meetings. Occasionally, the bookshops will assist in leading the discussion or choosing the next read, particularly when choosing a book by a local author. We also partner with the Guilford College Bryan Series, a speaker series produced by Guilford College, to select a book by one of their speakers for one of our quarterly meetings. The Bryan Series donates tickets to the author's speaking engagement, attends the Book Club meeting, and has occasionally been able to facilitate an interview with the author before the meeting.

We're always seeking new ways to deepen our engagement with our community, and in January 2018, we launched our Photo of the Week initiative. We ask listeners to submit their original photos taken all around our listening area. We then select one each week to feature in our Weekly Roundup and on social media. This has a dual purpose of demonstrating the reach of our broadcast signal and letting listeners know that we want to know what matters to them and appreciate their talents.

We also continued producing a variety of events in FY18. From our Mug Stops and Bar Meet-Ups, which combine fundraising with community engagement; to ticketed events designed to bring awareness to programs we air; to listening parties that create space for new connections and conversations among community members, WFDD demonstrated a commitment to a forward-facing approach to community and listener engagement, reaching out and meeting our listeners where they are. We partnered with Stokes County Economic Development, Hanging Rock State Park, the Forsyth Astronomical Society, and Green Heron Ale House to create Look Up And Listen a special outdoor listening party around an episode of *The Dinner Party Download*, drawing attention to resources in our listening area that may have never experienced before. Listeners were able to gather in the state park after hours, view celestial objects through high-powered telescopes, and listen to the

radio program while gazing up at the night sky. We partnered with the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art and Bookmarks, a Winston-Salem literary nonprofit and bookshop, to present an event with the hosts of *The Dinner Party Download* for the launch of their book *Brunch Is Hell: A Dinner Party Primer*. And we partnered with Venture Café Winston-Salem, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to connect innovators and entrepreneurs and who hosts weekly gatherings to offer a listening party around an episode of *How I Built This*, along with a discussion on innovation.

IMPACT

Our Hearken-powered series *Carolina Curious* has proven to bring listeners into the editorial process. In FY18, *Carolina Curious* stories received significantly higher page views on average, compared to the average for all stories. We received a regional and a national Edward R. Murrow Award for “Excellence in Innovation” for our Community Conversation (held in May 2017), where the topic was chosen by listeners and our coverage informed by their conversations on the subject of mental health. We have stepped up our promotion of *Carolina Curious* and are seeing submissions from a broader area in our community, which is also the result of our library partnerships. Connecting in person with people in the areas we serve is giving us a better idea of the stories that matter and these library events have resulted in important stories we wouldn’t necessarily have known about otherwise.

Our continued commitment to our annual December Backpack Campaign leads to increased awareness of the large numbers of people in our region suffering from food insecurity. In addition, it allows us, through partnerships with Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina and a corporate partner, to put much-needed food directly into the hands of children in our area at risk of going hungry. Thanks to the increased support of our new corporate partner, Kaplan Early Learning Company, we were able to increase our goal of backpacks to 1,000. All told, over the 9 years of this partnership, 6,500 backpacks of food have been provided to children all around our area by Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina, whose service area closely matches ours. For FY18, specifically, the 1,000 backpacks filled provided 50 children with food for the weekend for 20 weeks, nearly half the school year. Eric Aft, CEO of Second Harvest Food Bank, and Jenny Moore, Sr. Communications and PR Manager of Second Harvest Food Bank, shared this statement:

“Every child should have enough to eat — every meal, every day. WFDD’s annual Backpack Drive supports the work of Second Harvest Food Bank and means that more children in our community are assured consistent access to the good nutrition they need to stay healthy, be focused in school, and to succeed in learning and life.

When more than 50 percent of children who attend public schools qualify for free or reduced priced meals at school, it’s a call to action in our communities to come together to help families who, for many different reasons, may be struggling with food insecurity. For ten years, WFDD has helped Second Harvest to amplify the realities of childhood hunger and given its listeners the opportunity to be part of a community of care that protects our children from the consequences of inadequate nutrition.

All of us at Second Harvest are grateful for the Annual Backpack Campaign, as are the families whose children are receiving backpacks full of nutritious food each weekend through this school year thanks to WFDD, listeners, and our friends and partners at Kaplan Early Learning Company.”

Through our efforts to program our own events, we’ve learned just how hungry our listeners are for these types of engagement events. We constantly hear, “please do more of these!” at every one. They thrive on the opportunity to explore new spaces in our region and to connect with other listeners. Many attendees at our Look Up And Listen outdoor listening party informed us that they had never visited Hanging Rock State Park before, a resource conveniently located near the center of our coverage area. The partnership with Stokes County Economic Development and the State Park has served to draw increased awareness to the arts and outdoor activities available so close to home for many people. Bonus: as a ticketed event, it brought in new revenue for WFDD. Stokes County Economic Development Tourism & Marketing Coordinator Tory Mabe shared this statement:

“Stokes County Economic Development and Tourism is proud to partner with WFDD Public Radio, not only as an underwriter, but on special events including the annual ‘Look Up & Listen,’ an event hosted for going-on three years at Hanging Rock State Park. Our office is tasked daily to promote the many things there are to do, places to dine, attractions, events, and where to go in Stokes in order to attract visitors and a larger economic impact for local businesses. Molly Davis, Jennifer Barrett, and team reached out to us in 2017, searching for a low-light outdoors spot, with a clear view of the night sky, in the Triad to host an outdoor listening party for an episode of *The Dinner Party Download*. This opportunity was one we couldn’t pass up, as it would be marketed to loyal fans of the program, supporters of public radio, and meant an increase in park visitation and something for those camping to enjoy during the evening without leaving the park. ‘Look Up & Listen’ was scheduled, tickets were sold, and crowds of nearly 200 attendees came to enjoy an evening under the stars on their picnic blanket with fellowship, s’mores, views of faraway planets via telescope, and a cold drink down by the Dan River afterward. The impact was instantly realized when speaking with attendees, who live less than an hour away, and had never visited the state park in their own back yard. ‘Look Up & Listen’ allows attendees to arrive at the park early for a Saturday of adventure at the lake, on the mountain, or down by the waterfall, before sticking around for an evening under the stars, listening to a public radio program in a completely different setting for radio. Some assumed the park was only for tent camping, hiking, or other strenuous outdoor activity, not realizing the park has furnished cabins, hosts special events throughout the year, and has every amenity available to any state park. The opportunity for me to speak with attendees to give in-person, firsthand accounts of ways to spend a day or weekend in Stokes County is one best accomplished by having them in the destination for a special event hosted by a media outlet they support. Impact of this event also brings awareness to another of the large tourism attractions of our county, The Dan River, as it concludes at the local ale house with entertainment and drinks. The 2019 event will go from the parking lot to the beach at Hanging Rock Lake, introducing visitors to an opportunity to be on the beach after dark. During year two, I spoke with return attendees who were thankful that WFDD had turned them ON to a nearby location to frequent throughout the year. Those return, loyal visitors provide meaning to our marketing efforts.”

Because we were able to hire a full-time Education Program Manager, our education initiatives Radio Camp and Radio 101 have grown significantly, serving more students than ever before. As previously mentioned, Radio Camp in summer 2018 saw its highest-ever enrollment, with the largest waiting list since the program began in 2010. Radio 101 was expanded to include an after-school offering open to students from all over the school district (or neighboring districts), in addition to the for-credit course offered at Reynolds High School (the most culturally diverse high school in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County school district). Radio 101 students are now more challenged to create highly-crafted, in-depth content which has led to stories on immigration, drug abuse, living with a chronic illness, and more. It is our hope and goal that these programs will grow and diversify the future talent pool for careers in journalism and public media, and anecdotally, we are seeing the students who participate in Radio Camp and/or Radio 101 develop a greater passion for and interest in public radio and journalism. Beyond that, the programs teach better writing and communication to participating students, skills they can use throughout their lifetimes.

Ava Shick, who participated in Radio Camp twice and our Radio 101 after-school program, sent in this statement:

“Radio Camp is a fun, week-long activity in the summer where students can learn how to make their very own radio stories. It's a great way to begin for students that are interested and leaves them with a sense of pride and accomplishment about what they create. I personally loved it and had a great time with the counselors and other campers. I liked that it was already planned out and the story structure was somewhat simple. This made it easier, quicker, and more fun. Although, when a student outgrows the Radio Camp program, like I did, he or she can join Radio 101, which is a slightly more advanced program that allows more freedom with the story telling. I liked having that freedom to write about anything I wanted, but it was a bit stressful at first with the responsibility of scheduling interviews and creating a story structure. Being involved in radio in any form is a great experience for everyone. I loved it because it was a great way for me to be creative and artistic. I learned communication/interviewing skills and how radio stories play a role in the community. It gave me a new perspective and appreciation for radio and what goes into a story.”

Past Radio Camper Sophia Lyons shared this statement:

“Like many other kids in Winston-Salem, I grew up listening to WFDD. I remember the Radio Camp program being introduced when I was in middle school, and signing up for my first session when I was about 12. Immediately, I fell in love with radio in a whole new way: the behind-the-scenes look I was afforded gave me a whole new respect for public radio. I attended my second radio camp the summer before starting high school, about the time I started thinking about college. It is now five years later, and I am a journalism major at Appalachian State University. I credit Radio Camp for introducing me to the power of radio. “

Our Photo of the Week initiative has led to increased engagement with our listeners, in addition to more interaction with our social media posts. Photo of the Week posts are often our most popular, with increased likes and shares. Holding true the research that says people respond enthusiastically when an company or organization they support likes something they do, one of our Photo of the Week listeners, Shreya Jain, posted this on her social media (shared with permission):

“NPR’s 88.5 WFDD PICKED MY PHOTO!!!!!! *Happy Dance* I feel like I won a lottery. They are absolutely my most favorite radio station. Have been listening to them religiously, every single day for the past two years. It’s an addiction I cannot do without. The fact that they chose a raw, unedited picture of a pure moment reaffirms my love for them! Watch out for this on their weekly roundup email, Instagram, Twitter, and wherever else they post stuff! What a great way to start the weekend, basking in my ‘day of fame’. Cheers!”

DIVERSITY OUTREACH

As previously reported, our Education Program has grown, thanks to a grant from the Winston-Salem Foundation and the support of a major donor. This expanded program is now embedded as a course for credit 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. We also added an after-school option open to student from the entire school district (and neighboring districts). We’ve promoted these opportunities through the local Spanish-language newspaper, *Que Pasa*; the local African-American newspaper, *The Winston-Salem Chronicle*; and through the school system’s communication platform, Peachjar. It is our goal to make all students from every part of our community aware of these opportunities. All Radio 101 offerings are free. Stories produced by Radio 101 students are aired on WFDD and posted to the station’s website.

In FY18, we again presented several weeks of Radio Camp, during which the participants and their interview subjects represented a diverse population. Middle-school-aged girls and boys from a variety of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds interviewed community members of various ages, talents, and ethnic backgrounds. It is always our goal to accurately represent our community as a whole when seeking interview subjects for our Radio Campers. Subjects covered include visual art, theatre, music, community organization, criminal justice, sexual and reproductive health, social change, early childhood education, archaeology, farming, and even North Carolina’s Red Wolf conflict. Every Radio Camp story is aired on WFDD and appears on our website.

We also engaged in outreach to the community through our partnerships with regional library branches. This outreach served multiple purposes; our primary goals were to connect with people in our listening area who may not yet be aware of WFDD and tell them more about what we do and to learn from them what the key issues in their communities are. One such event was

held during the Greensboro Library's Family Village Resource Fair, an event attended largely by people from Hispanic communities. We staffed that event with two Spanish-speaking team members. Our library partnerships aim to connect us with underserved populations in our service area, helping us to better understand those communities so that we report on the stories and topics that matter to them.

Our quarterly Book Club meetings routinely see people from disparate backgrounds engaged in meaningful conversation and sharing insights from their personal experiences. We purposely select books from different genres and with different subject matters, to appeal to as broad a section of our listeners as possible. Book Club is about our listeners getting to know one another as much as it is about us getting to know them. We have regular attendees, but each meeting sees new participants as well.

We continued our outreach through various sponsorships of events presented by organizations like the Hispanic League, the India Association of the Triad, the Indo US Cultural Association, plus several other arts and community organizations. We continued offering tours and giving presentations to Cub Scout groups, the Great American Writers Camp, the Forsyth Technical Community College Journalism Club; and participating in career exploration fairs at schools and colleges around our listening area.

Serving our entire community, including underserved and underrepresented populations is key to our mission and vision. To further these efforts, in the coming fiscal year, we intend to launch a scholarship program for Radio Camp and expand that program to Boone, NC, to make it more accessible for residents of the more rural High Country areas we serve. It is also our hope to secure trademark and licensing for our education programs, after which we hope to promote them to other stations across the public media industry, extending the outreach of these initiatives beyond our broadcast area.

In FY19, we'll increase our news reporting on issues affecting immigrant and minority communities. Our news team is already working on an investigative series on unfair mortgage lending practices that disproportionately affect minorities, and is producing a series and documentary on the challenges facing new immigrants assimilating into our communities, including the lack of safe and affordable housing. We are planning a series entitled Democracy 101, a civics series geared toward answering questions many people have about how our elections system works. And we plan to expand our journalism student partnerships, involving them in election night coverage.

We have further honed our vision for a media literacy/community-driven reporting project, and will continue to seek grants to help fund this initiative, the aim of which is to take us out into the community to meet people where they are, find out what stories matter to them, be sure we are reporting on the issues that are important to underrepresented populations, and improve people's understanding of the role of media in our communities and country.

IMPACT OF CPB FUNDING

In short, none of these expanded initiatives would be possible without the generous funding WFDD receives from the CPB. Though our fundraising has grown, the grant from the CPB provides the additional financial kick to support a full-time Education Program Manager, and overall allows us, a mid-size station, to think bigger and swing above our weight class. Without the support of CPB funding, many of our community service initiatives, like our Education Program, *Carolina Curious*, and various events and outreach activities, would possibly need to be reduced or eliminated. We feel these programs are vital to the service we provide and who we are. More than just a radio station . . . we are a public service, a community asset, a convener, a trusted resource.