





Welcome to the  
BUELL PUBLIC MEDIA CENTER

Welcome to the  
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Welcome to the  
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# INSIDE OUT, OUTSIDE IN

**D**ear friends and supporters,

I'm sure you've heard the saying that the only constant in life is change; and here at Rocky Mountain Public Media, we couldn't agree more. While we've all been adjusting and readjusting to life as we know it, RMPM has strived to be as intentional as possible in bringing the community into our work now more than ever.

One way we do this is by checking in with you more frequently to share what we're learning and to bring more transparency to our relationship with you, our audience. We want to partner with you to hold ourselves accountable to expanding the public trust. Community Impact Reports like this one are just one way we want to check in more often than just once a year.

Together with our communities, we are setting a course to create a Colorado where everyone feels seen and heard. And we believe that first starts at home, doing the hard and necessary work from the inside out, as much as from the outside in.

Too often we see a lack of accountability within media organizations. We see it in the headlines and feel it in our communities. We know we can't earn your trust unless we are 'walking our talk' inside the organization through the values we demonstrate in the actions we take.

One example is RMPM's compensation strategy. We committed to conducting an organization-wide salary survey and the results identified significant inequities for some women and people of color. We also identified those same systemic inequities within the salary survey source data, so we didn't stop there. In partnership with outside experts and a compensation committee of the RMPM Board of Directors, we designed a more equitable compensation strategy which required us to increase our operating expenses by \$500,000 each year. Now, every member of the RMPM team is paid competitively and equitable in relation to their job duties. We also raised the minimum annual salary to \$45,000 so every member of our staff earns a living wage in line with the goals of the Colorado Inclusive Economy initiative, which aims to create a better state economy where everyone can thrive.

We also found that in some areas of our business, staff did not have realistic workloads. To remedy that we invested another \$500,000 annually to create and staff new positions. These two actions have been critical to support our expanded service to Coloradans and to maintain a voluntary staff turnover rate of just 3%.

This is just a taste of how we demonstrate our organizational values of building understanding through listening, actively engaging multiple perspectives, building cultural bridges, being a role model for co-responsibility and doing what we say we are going to do.

Today and in years ahead, we aim not only to earn, but to expand your trust in Rocky Mountain Public Media as we partner with you to create a Colorado where everyone feels seen and heard.

You are essential to this important work. Thank you for trusting us with your partnership.



Amanda Mountain  
President and CEO, Rocky Mountain Public Media



Colleen Abdoulah  
President, Board of Directors, Rocky Mountain Public Media



Buell Public Media Center - Rocky Mountain Public Media

# WHO WE ARE

Our staff is increasingly representative of Colorado. We use census data to determine the racial makeup of the communities we serve and to set diversity goals based on equitable representation. We are committed to reflecting and representing these demographics through our staff, leadership, and programming within three years.

RMPM Demographics today:

**61.6%**

WHITE

**18.7%**

LATINX

**12.4%**

BLACK

**6%**

ASIAN

**1.1%**

AMERICAN INDIAN

**18.6%**

TWO OR MORE RACES

**0.2%**

NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER



Colorado's Demographics (Census 2020):

**86.9%**

WHITE

**21.8%**

LATINX

**4.6%**

BLACK

**3.5%**

ASIAN

**1.6%**

AMERICAN INDIAN

**3.1%**

TWO OR MORE RACES

**0.2%**

NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER



## WE WANT TO

- ✓ Build understanding through listening
- ✓ Actively engage multiple perspectives
- ✓ Build cultural bridges
- ✓ Share our platform with community members to be a role model for co-responsibility
- ✓ Do what we say we are going to do so we can expand public trust

To do what we say we are going to do, we need to take care of our staff. Media organizations are notorious for burning out talent and COVID has added additional strains. To create a healthy organizational culture that meets the needs of our diverse workforce, RMPM has invested in:

- ✓ Building expertise internally, because we believe you can't outsource diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work. Our five-member DEI team is spread out across the state.
- ✓ Unlimited mental healthcare support to staff and extended family through our supplemental healthcare package at no additional cost to staff.
- ✓ Facilitating frequent conversations to listen to multiple perspectives and build understanding about the diverse communities we partner with and serve.
- ✓ Encourage and support our team in being active members of their communities. We believe that accountability, trust, and relevance come from having authentic connections and conversation with those we aim to serve.
- ✓ Create access to regular training and development to support individuals and teams in reaching their fullest potential and achieving their goals.

# LET'S PARTNER TO SHARE MORE COLORADO VOICES

Newsrooms commonly determine what issues to cover and whose perspectives to feature based on what journalists think is right or best. We believe there is a better way to share more thoughtful stories about complex issues that earn your trust, which starts with acknowledging that we don't always know best. We need your partnership to build cultural bridges and engage multiple perspectives to find and share content that helps inform, connect and build empathy and understanding among all Coloradans.

RMPM is committed to providing community-responsive content across all our platforms and brands, including Rocky Mountain PBS, RMPBS Kids, KUVU JAZZ 89.3 and THE DROP 104.7.

Welcoming communities into our work and prioritizing listening and conversation with those we aim to serve is a way of building not just audience engagement, but shared ownership of public media. Taking in feedback from voices throughout Colorado provides insight about what is relevant, where there are information or trust gaps, and how our stories are being received and interpreted in relation to these needs.

One key takeaway that inevitably emerges from our conversations with community is that we have an opportunity to build bridges between people who experience the world in entirely different ways — and earn trust in the process.

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## At RMPM, community-responsive content means:

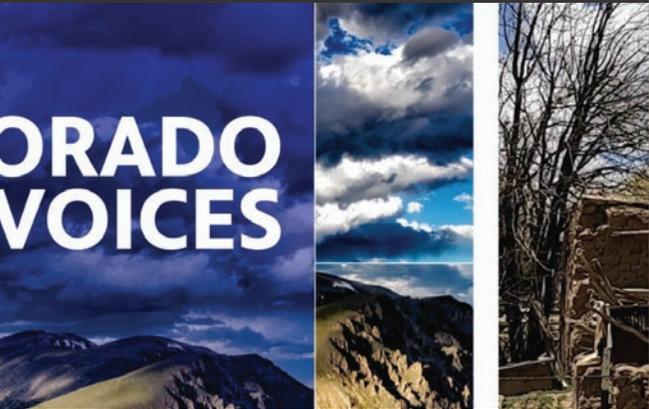
- ✓ Thinking differently about story selection, framing and distribution
- ✓ Shaping stories alongside community members in order to reflect the truth of specific lived experiences
- ✓ Challenging the traditional idea of “expert” to close the gap between communities and journalists who aim to tell their stories with context and nuance
- ✓ Using new methods of recording and delivering stories to expand access and share stories that would otherwise go untold
- ✓ Finding creative ways to use digital tools to engage and expand public media audiences



In all of our work, community feedback is more critical to trust-building than the number of clicks or views a story receives. Feedback allows us to think in new ways about the stories we select, how we shape and contextualize stories in partnership with community, and how we share stories across our platforms to expand audiences.

Community feedback drives RMPM priorities and actions. We are inviting community into our work in the following ways:

- ✓ We called over 1,000 members to check in and ask what they needed
- ✓ We are using our digital channels to engage with audiences and solicit feedback and input
- ✓ We are hosting events and classes in partnership with community organizations



# ORADO VOICES

“

*I love the diversity of the music and the programs. Being able to listen to classics as well as new artists is such a pleasure. You guys have been a bright spot in a really challenging year! Thanks, KUVO team!*

*— Audrey from Westminster, CO*

”

- ✓ We remain in regular contact with community organizations throughout the state to understand the challenges they are hearing amongst their constituents and how we can use our platform to amplify issues of concern
- ✓ We have over 100 volunteers across the state who are training to serve as cultural ambassadors, connecting and informing RMPM's work and supporting our relevancy in their communities

# LET'S PARTNER

## TO SHARE MORE COLORADO VOICES

RMPM is bringing community-responsive content to life in different ways — all to support our vision of a Colorado where everyone feels seen and heard.



Alix Two Elk, host of KUVU's InDigitNess Voices in the KUVU studio

KUVU JAZZ, now in its 36th year, and our newest station, THE DROP, The People's Station for Hip Hop and R&B, have launched a regular community call-in show called THE SHOP where listeners can share their own questions and experiences about different issues including race, COVID vaccinations and other topics. In 2022, both stations will launch their own morning shows, providing a regular outlet for community conversations and information-sharing.

“ I just wanna thank THE DROP for all the work that you do in our community as well as all the love and light you continue to shed on our culture. — University of Colorado Denver student ”

# OUR VALUE

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, our local RMPBS content was primarily long-format episodic television that took months, sometimes even years to produce; while we took pride in these quality programs, this approach suddenly felt irrelevant when our viewers and communities suddenly needed more content from us, more quickly.

In response, Rocky Mountain PBS launched Colorado Voices to share daily, first-person perspectives on our digital platforms to reach audiences immediately with trustworthy information and resources in ways that could evoke empathy, understanding and connection among viewers. In the time since we first launched, our journalism program has been redesigned around this strategy and shared over 1,000 local stories.

In addition to daily journalism online on RMPBS' digital and social channels, you will be able to tune in weekly for Colorado Voices on-air in 2022. We've been testing shows in 2021 highlighting farmworkers, artists, generations of families in the San Luis Valley, and more to great audience response. In fact, our program in August attracted nearly twice the number of viewers as our average national programming.



Kate Perdoni, Colorado Voices Journalist on location

“

*Being from a rural area like the San Luis Valley, our stories often get drowned out by more urban stories as they tend to be more proximate to audiences, geographically,” one Southern Colorado community member shared. “I am especially grateful and ecstatic about the pieces (Colorado Voices journalist) Kate Perdoni has been putting out. They are done so well and educate the viewer about the history and complexities that surround any given story, piece of culture and more.*

— Viewer, San Luis Valley

”

# 8-YEAR-OLD ANDREW THOMAS IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Originally published on January 23, 2021 on RMPBS.org

Andrew Thomas was exposed to racial prejudice at camp last summer. Then Black Lives Matter protests were all over the news. That's when the conversation arrived at the dining room table for eight-year-old Andrew and his mother Jana.

*"Why can't people just be nice to each other?"* Andrew asked his Mom — a question that remains difficult to answer for many people. But for Andrew, the solution to the bad news was found in a box of crayons, and as the nation faced great division, Andrew sought to unify his local community with a message of love and inclusion.



Earlier last summer, Andrew shared his frustration with not being able to find his skin color in a box of Crayola crayons. *"Everyone belongs in the crayon box,"* says Andrew. Instead of asking his mother for the crayons from the store, he wanted to provide the crayons to every elementary school kid in Mesa County. He felt that his frustration was shared throughout the Grand Valley. *"I think they felt sad and kind of gloomy not being able to color themselves just the way they are,"* said Andrew.

In a short time, his fundraiser, named *Love One Another*, was born. Andrew's goal was to raise \$25,000, enough to supply every school in Mesa County with multicultural crayons and markers.

With help from his mother, Andrew began writing letters to school principals, informing them of his efforts and asking for their support.

But the letters weren't enough for Andrew, he needed something tangible to share with people. So he reached out to Michael Wells at Locker Room, a screenprinting and embroidery shop in Fruita, with the idea to sell stickers and T-shirts. *"It was a shock to me because I didn't even think about all the colors not being in the crayon box,"* said Wells, the shop's owner. Andrew's new ally was now on board, donating ink, material, and time to help Andrew reach his goal.

Andrew's merchandise needed a graphic, and his family wanted to help. MiKealy Thomas, Andrew's sister and a graphic design student, stepped up to the plate. With her help, Andrew's hand-written *Love One Another* graphic was now a reality, and he could begin the shirt-making process.



MiKealy shared Andrew’s passion as well and knew that without marketing, his efforts would be doomed. She took to social media and began posting photos of Andrew and their merchandise, which was now available for sale through Locker Room’s website. *Love One Another* was official, and now Andrew had the tangible goods and social media presence he needed.

The digital storefront went live on Aug. 14, 2020 and gained traction quickly. Within two weeks Andrew’s non-profit had raised \$6,000. *“Andrew was there with me on a lot of Wednesday and Sunday nights — stuffing T-shirts in bags and putting postage on envelopes,”* said Wells.

His family was shipping shirts and stickers all over the nation, including to an Art teacher in Canada that also wanted to support the cause. Eight weeks after the site went live, Andrew met his goal of \$25,000 raised.

But Andrew wasn’t to the finish line yet. Due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, the multicultural crayons and markers were on backorder, with the Crayola factories shut down.

*Continued on page 14*

Refusing to quit, Andrew wrote a letter to Becker's School Supplies in New Jersey, asking for help. Using their good relations with Crayola, Becker's was able to make the eight-year-old's dream a reality.

Soon, pallets containing 9,000 boxes of crayons and over 400 boxes of markers arrived at the Thomas residence. It was now time for the fun work of delivering the supplies to the elementary schools. With so many schools to visit, Andrew couldn't possibly do it in a reasonable amount of time. Holy Family Catholic School, Andrew's school, allowed him time away from class to complete the enormous task.

Children all over the county began sharing their joy for Andrew's gift. "It was amazing to watch — for a moment they were all on the same playing field," said Andrew's second grade teacher Ericka Clark. The children would call out in excitement as they discovered their matching skin color, setting them aside and treating them special compared to the other crayons. Andrew's crayons and markers had now reached every elementary school in Mesa County's School District 51, including Holy Family Catholic School and Caprock Academy.

Andrew had changed the news and was now in it as well. Local media began sharing Andrew's story, which caught the attention of Black Citizens and Friends, the Grand Junction based organization that hosts the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration. "The reason projects like his are so important for the community is that they prove that things like this can be done by anyone," said Chairman David Combs.

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2021, Andrew received the Making a Difference Award from Black Citizens and Friends, along with a Harry Butler Scholarship Award for his noble efforts through *Love One Another*. As of Jan. 18, 2021, *Love One Another* has raised \$27,450. Though he met his goal, Andrew's shirts and stickers remain available for sale on the Locker Room website. And his mother Jana says that this story isn't over. They're in early talks of a children's story book, rightfully named *Love One Another*.



Andrew makes a delivery to Jake Aubert, Principal at Holy Family Catholic School.



Andrew sits atop pallets of crayons and markers.

# PASSION FOR PEONIES

## GENERATIONS RALLY FOR LA RESOLANA FARM

Originally published on July 4, 2021 on RMPBS.org

When Judy and Juan Trujillo purchased a small farm in the floodplains of the Arkansas River in the 1960s, the previous owners didn't bother to tell them about the peonies. Now, decades later, the family is trying to keep the farm flourishing.



*"They didn't even know that the peonies were here," said Gabriella Trujillo, granddaughter of the farm's owners and among family who caretakes the land. "Then spring came, and the peonies came up. And I guess it just blew their minds," she laughed.*

*"You'd think you'd mention an acre of peonies," she said of the land's previous stewards.*

The peonies are 100 years old, thought to have been planted to provide bouquets for nearby cemeteries. The field hosts multiple varieties, as well as iris, wild garlic, and more.

*"It is such an interesting place," Trujillo said.*

The perennial flowers are now a hallmark of the land, attracting hundreds of visitors each year over Memorial Day weekend. The Trujillo family has shared their one-acre peony farm with the public for what would have been 50 years in 2020 — had the farm not closed during the pandemic. Her grandparents, who both grew up gardening, bought the property out of college. *"I think they were pulled to grow things, and to have land and space," said Trujillo.*

They named the farm La Resolana, a term for the south-facing side of a building or a place in the sun where people gather.

*"It has served for these 50 years as a gathering place," said Trujillo. "It has always been that."*

Each year, Trujillo family members come from near and far to help cut and bundle flowers over the course of the weekend. Many community members have been coming to the farm over Memorial Day for decades. The original settler's cabin, dubbed Homestead House, turns into a place for processing thousands of peonies that are sold for a small donation to help cover the costs of water. *"Typically in a weekend we'd have 400 to 500 people come," Trujillo said.*

In 2019, that all changed. *"I think it's probably my fault, because that's the year I made a Facebook page for the farm," said Trujillo. "And it just exploded. Everybody wanted to come and take Instagram photos. We had 5,000 people come that year. That's ten times what we're used to."*

The family began reassessing the farm's operations, and how to accommodate more guests. *"Then COVID happened," said Trujillo. "These two years have been good to rethink what we're doing and what our plans are."* During that time, the nature of the farm's disrepair came to light, said Trujillo. After 50 years of tending to the flowers, her grandparents could no longer take care of the land themselves. She was summoned home by her family, and said it *"felt like an emergency"* when her aunt reached out about the condition of the farm. *"I came here thinking the issue was going to be getting the plants water — and it is," said Trujillo. "The flowers weren't getting watered, and irrigation is a primary need. But there's so much more than that."* For her grandparents, shifting responsibility on the farm means a slight of independence.

*"I've heard people compare it to taking away your grandparent's ability to drive. It does very much feel like that," Trujillo said. "It's definitely a transition period."* Trujillo said she saw herself taking over the farm sometime down the line but didn't think it was going to be so soon until she realized the place needs more care than it's been getting.

Another huge obstacle for the future is the viability of a flower farm in an age of perpetual drought.

*"We've talked about water my whole life, that it was going to be getting more and more scarce," said Trujillo. "We've been in a drought my whole life, so I don't know what a not-drought looks like,"* she said of her hometown of Pueblo.

Walking the old irrigation ditch of the land, established before Colorado was a state, Trujillo links the sale of the property's first water right to the now-unpredictable landscape.

Now, to get water for the flowers, Trujillo tells Rocky Mountain PBS a person must go to the water co-op and petition for how many acre feet of water they need. Her advice is to ask for more than you need because you're probably not going to get that much. *"There were so many historic farms settled here, because the area was once so fertile," Trujillo said. "And now, it's struggling."*

Walking through the family's field of tall, vivid green grass with dots of pink, blossoming flowers, Trujillo sighs. Even though peonies themselves symbolize prosperity, good luck and love, keeping this farm alive is an uphill battle.

*"It feels monumental. Just the obstacles, and trying to figure out how to keep this place going, and what it looks like down the line,"* she said. *"There is a community surrounding us, and for the most part they know that this isn't a profitable thing, but it can feel really exhausting. This year has definitely felt exhausting."*

Still, she plans to do all she can to keep the bouquets coming and her grandparents legacy going.

*"Physically being down here," Trujillo said, scanning the field, "it feels sacred, and worth saving."*

Trujillo began a Go Fund Me this year to fundraise for the flowers and the farm.

You can also follow the La Resolana farm on Instagram.



# LIVE MUSIC RETURNS

## THE WESTERN SLOPE SINGS AGAIN

Originally published on February 9, 2021 on RMPBS.org

Mesa Theater has opened their doors to live performances once again. Located in the heart of downtown Grand Junction, the venue once enjoyed multiple sold-out acts per week. But like all entertainment venues, Mesa Theater had to cease operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic – until recently.

January 20, 2021 marked the first music performance of the year to a live audience at Mesa Theater, welcoming singer/songwriter Ward Davis to a sold-out show limited to 90 people. Since its last closure on November 7, only the bar at Mesa Theater has been open. Since March of 2020, the venue has not hosted a maximum capacity event of any type on their property.

The inability to conduct business as usual has had devastating effects on the music industry in Colorado. According to Chris Zacher, Founder of the Colorado Independent Venue Association, an estimated 8,000 gig-workers have either lost all their income, or partial income. However, Zacher says there are still people within the industry that are not being counted, and that the real number could be closer to twenty thousand.

Revenue lost from the pandemic hasn't been fully accounted for, according to Zacher. "It's difficult when you don't have any money to take a grant from the government that requires you to bring people back on staff because that money is going to get eaten up rather quickly - by the end of this month we'll be shut down for 52 weeks, so the math just doesn't add up," he said.

According to a recent study by Pollstar, the music industry in the US lost an estimated \$9 billion in 2020.

For Mesa Theater, the loss of revenue is seen at the ground level. Rick Christensen, General Manager of Mesa Theater is currently working every position and has laid off every non-essential employee, leaving him to tend the bar alone most nights. Although the venue cannot afford to keep a regular staff on payroll, they must bring employees back to work the few gigs they are scheduling. "We're trying to not fall behind while still trying to move forward - we're all pulling our weight to keep it alive. If we would have brought everyone back we would have lost money," said Christensen. On January 20, Christensen was accompanied by limited staff, including the owner of the venue, Brett Strong, who was seen working the ticket booth.



## VARIANCE PRO



Last year was equally rough for music artists, Ward Davis was no exception. "When this thing happened, I think everyone in my position started scrounging - trying to find a way to make a living," said Davis. "It was just whatever we could do to not lose our house." Much of his interaction with fans and search for income has been virtual, utilizing Zoom meet-and-greets and the Cameo app to play his music to virtual audiences and connect with supporters.

Both artist and managers are hopeful for any opportunity they currently have, even facing severe limitations. For many venues, this means trying to stay afloat without expecting profitable business. As the pandemic persists, indoor venues will have to limit capacity depending on usable square footage and appropriate limits in the current county dial level. Mesa County, which is currently at level orange, can see seated events at 25% capacity - which limits small venues like Mesa Theater to shows of one-hundred people

It will still be a long time until large indoor events will be seen anywhere in Colorado. Even when under Level Green, indoor events will be seen anywhere in Colorado.

## TECTION PROGRAM



MESA COUNTY  
**VPP**  
*Safe. Open. Together.*

Even when under Level Green, indoor events can only be conducted at a 50% occupancy limit, not exceeding 500 people per room. Outdoor events, being much easier to mitigate potential risks, could be expected this summer with easier restrictions. However, if other states are not following similar guidelines and opening at similar times, it will be difficult for more popular artists to route tours through the nation, potentially pushing larger shows into 2022.

Mesa County's own 5-star variance protection program has encouraged businesses to implement safety measures that will help slow the spread of COVID-19 locally and allow Mesa County to move forward with reopening efforts needed to help the local economy recover. Mesa Theater, 5-star certified, is currently allowed to host events with 100 people. The owners, however, limit their occupancy to 90 in their own effort of staying ahead of the curb.

For now, scheduling at the venue will be severely limited. However, Christensen hopes to continue welcoming artists through spring and summer, providing an opportunity for both the artists, and the venue, to see success as the nation rises from the sharp economic downturn created by the pandemic.

Ward Davis plays a sold out show to 90 people at Mesa Theater, Jan. 20



# EQUITY IN EDUCATION

## ACCESSIBILITY IN MANY FORMS THROUGH PUBLIC MEDIA

By design, Rocky Mountain Public Media is free and accessible to everyone, which requires a robust technology infrastructure to support content delivery not just online, but over the air through televisions and radios without our audiences having to pay for expensive subscription services.

According to a recent study by BroadbandNow, 674,433 people in Colorado lack access to an Internet service that can provide 25 Mbps (million bits per second) download speeds and 3 Mbps upload speeds.

This serious issue was never more evident than during COVID when school buildings closed and most school-age children tried to log on to remote learning. Many couldn't access lessons to keep up and now as kids go back into the classrooms, far too many feel left behind.

Anticipating this challenge, the Colorado Department of Education and others partnered with Rocky Mountain PBS to develop Colorado Classroom. Through this year-long program, RMPBS recruited and trained teachers to present their lesson plans on camera, which we then broadcast each weekday from 8-10 a.m. This essential programming engaged over 250,000 families in the first four weeks alone and ensured that children had access to a relatable teacher to learn from day after day - especially if they weren't able, due to circumstances or geography, to use school-provided online resources or digital video to connect with their usual classroom teachers.

We also provided resource books to hundreds of families on request, in both English and Spanish; the majority of these books were mailed to families and caregivers outside of the Denver Metro area.

### Kellen Browning

“The idea — in some ways a throwback to the early days of public television — has supplemented online lessons for some families and serves a more critical role: reaching students who, without reliable internet access or a laptop at home, have been left behind.”

— Kellen Browning,   
The New York Times,  
Jan. 3, 2021





While we launched special educational programs on our air, we also experienced major increases in RMPBS Kids viewership across all platforms, including our RMPBS Kids 24/7 channel and our PBS Kids app, where we are averaging over 5 million impressions a month.

When presented with the question of how to support equity in education, RMPBS explores all avenues of distribution to help ensure every Colorado kid has a chance to get off to the right start in school, and in life.

Looking ahead, we will continue to connect families with community resources they can trust as we all work together to support Colorado's kids. In 2022, we will launch a new RMPBS Kids newsletter and ongoing informational campaigns across our platforms to expand awareness of and access to essential family services.



Scenes from the RMPBS Drive-In Tour

# COLORADO CLASSROOM

## SUPPORTING EQUITY AND ACCESS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

In the midst of a pandemic that shifted so much, many parents turned to home-schooling options – and to RMPBS Kids. In partnership with the Colorado Dept of Education and dozens of others, we developed Colorado Classroom to support families and caregivers with daily, teacher-hosted lessons that broadcast on Rocky Mountain PBS. Together, we helped ensure that Colorado’s kids didn’t fall behind before they even get started in school.



Shelan Polightly shares photo of her child enjoying Colorado Classroom via Facebook



Emily Wasner shares photo of her child enjoying Colorado Classroom via Facebook



RMPBS viewer shares photo of their pet cat enjoying Colorado Classroom via Facebook

We engaged over 250,000 Colorado families with this local content, many of whom lived in dual-language households and others who did not have access to reliable internet and online technology. Some of our highest viewership was in our state’s highest poverty zip codes. Because of the success of Colorado Classroom, we also helped other public television stations in Nevada, Texas and Florida launch similar programs.

“We are watching all the kindergarten and first grade lessons. The teachers are all amazing in their own way. Even though it is through the TV, they are so creative about the lessons and add fun to it... Colorado Classroom is a great tool for our family to get the kids more interested in learning for a little bit. Please tell the teachers they are doing a great job and we are so fortunate to have access to them for a few weeks! — Andrea Trujillo, Parent

The New York Times



# NATIONAL PARTNERS

PBS, NPR, Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), Frontline, NOVA, ProPublica — have all selected RMPM in the last year for special investment and partnership. For example, we worked with Frontline to produce *Lifelines: Preventing Youth Suicide*. This important series gathered first-hand stories of prevention, healing and hope in a state with one of the highest suicide rates in the country.

NOVA selected RMPBS to produce science, technology, engineering and math content highlighting diverse professionals in their respective fields of discovery.

And currently, we're in the midst of a year-long investigative project with ProPublica, one of the nation's most trusted partners in investigative journalism.

“Local news has suffered immensely in recent years,” Sarah Blustain, deputy editor, local, for ProPublica said. “We are excited to help sustain accountability reporting at the local level by working on ambitious projects with these talented reporters.”



Alexis, RMPM Photo Journalist

# SUPPORTING COLORADO'S INFORMATION ISLANDS

For many, Rocky Mountain Public Media serves as an informational safety net – and a way to stay connected to each other – particularly for those living in “news deserts” (i.e. communities that do not have a trusted local news source and instead must rely on information from the nearest major city). RMPM partners with hundreds of individuals and organizations across the state to ensure we are sharing stories alongside the communities we serve. Ensuring we distribute this content where and when people need it is critical to our sustainability.



We typically talk about our audience “reach” in terms of number of viewers or listeners; but this reach only tells us about our current audience – not who else could be watching, listening and engaging with our community-responsive content if, we provide it in new ways. We have increased daily digital content over 500% in the last 18 months and are nearing our 1,000th online story during that time frame. In fact, we’ve produced more local online stories this last year and a half than the entire seven years prior. Digital content and distribution is critical to engaging younger, more diverse audiences, including people who have not historically trusted in traditional media.

Our KUVU audience is listening not just on the radio, but increasingly online through the website and app, from across the world. The station remains a trusted “home base” for Coloradans and music-lovers no matter where their lives may take them.

THE DROP, one of public media’s first and only Hip Hop/R&B stations, started as a digital-only station in 2019. Digital natives found THE DROP and built a loyal following until we purchased a translator in 2021, allowing us to expand access onto the radio dial on 104.7 FM in Denver, Aurora and the surrounding areas. To date, THE DROP is one of the fastest growing radio stations in Colorado as we work to co-create programming alongside the communities we aim to serve, communities that aren’t often engaged through public media.



Buell Public Media Center - Rocky Mountain Public Media

# THE 'STATE CAPITOL' OF PUBLIC MEDIA

The Buell Public Media Center in downtown Denver is home to RMPM along with a dozen other local media organizations, including The Colorado Sun, The Associated Press, Chalkbeat and others.

Our new \$35 million state-of-the-art facility houses 10 production studios, collaborative working space, a 135-seat flexible theater, a sophisticated technology core to support rapid, easy content sharing across Colorado and the country, a rooftop deck, numerous event spaces, and a community media center in partnership with the City and County of Denver where anyone can gain access to tools and training to share your own stories.

Where most media organizations are built to limit community access and engagement, the Buell Public Media Center stands alone as a welcoming place to learn, partner, and connect community to public media in innovative ways that serve the public trust.

# PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Partnerships and collaboration have been a part of Rocky Mountain Public Media's DNA for nearly 70 years. We work alongside hundreds of partners in higher education, arts and culture, local media, nonprofits and others, to support our shared values and strive towards our vision of a Colorado where everyone feels seen and heard. Collaboration is key to true co-ownership of public media, which is why we count on you, just as much as you count on us.

## WELCOME

Welcoming communities into our work by engaging in conversation with those we aim to serve is a way of building not just audience engagement, but community-centered media that is more authentic, relevant and trustworthy.

## PROMISE

As we share these highlights from a few key partnerships, know that this is just the beginning. We have goals in the year ahead to test innovative ways to enlist cultural brokers in communities across Colorado to build durable, accessible channels for ongoing conversation between RMPM and the communities we serve to support better decision-making and, ultimately, better local content that matters to you.



# NATIVE LENS

Native Lens began in May 2020 as a way to build tools, training and access to share first-person perspectives of Native and Indigenous storytellers representing multiple North American tribal cultures here in Colorado.

Native and Indigenous led, the editorial team is supported by both KSUT Tribal Radio in Ignacio, CO, and RMPBS. Together, we collaborate to provide equipment and training to those who wish to tell their own stories, and then we share these powerful stories across digital and broadcast platforms.

In addition to publishing first-person stories, we've held engagement events, developed partnerships with organizations that can positively impact Native and Indigenous communities, and used digital channels to advance conversations of interest to storytellers and communities. These partnerships help create broader and deeper sharing that allow us to reach beyond geographic borders.



Sheila Nanaeto, KSUT Tribal Radio station manager, hosts her Wednesday morning show in Ignacio.

“  
THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH. AS AN INDIGENOUS PERSON,  
I REALLY SEE THE IMPORTANCE AND BEAUTY IN WHAT YOU ALL  
ARE DOING. IT'S IMPORTANT FOR US TO BE ABLE TO TELL OUR  
OWN STORIES. I AM MEXIKA NAHUATL AND MY WIFE IS DINE  
FROM FARMINGTON [INDIANA]. — VIEWER, INDIANA  
”

# KUVO JAZZ 89.3

For 35 years, KUVO JAZZ has been committed to enriching and maintaining a multicultural perspective and to fostering an appreciation for cultural diversity through music and conversation. KUVO JAZZ is the convener and connective tissue of the jazz community in Colorado and beyond; musicians, students, music venues and audiences turn to KUVO JAZZ as a nexus. Partnership with local and national performers, and jazz festivals like the Vail Jazz Festival, Chicano Music Festival, and the Five Points Jazz Festival allow KUVO to share the jazz experience with longtime fans and new audiences alike.

Rocky Mountain Public Media's recent addition of the Koelbel KUVO JAZZ Studio and Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Performance Studio—which boast state-of-the-art technology—offer the community new ways to access music as a pathway to community belonging.

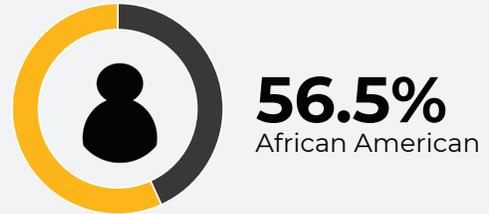


*Boulder's Caffè Sole Jazz Supper Club has partnered with KUVO for several years because KUVO is a community hub for Jazz lovers and they are truly an Oasis in the City. KUVO provides the heartbeat between the music, the musicians, the venues and the people. We are all better for it! — Suter Dubose, owner of Caffè Sole*



# THE DROP 104.7

THE DROP is one of public media's first Hip Hop/R&B stations and we partner with organizations and artists across Colorado to engage audiences from diverse neighborhoods and demographics.



2021 Nielsen Radio Market/Release: Denver, CO November

THE DROP is growing so fast that we're running to keep up with the community's demand to connect the music with opportunities to make social change right here in Colorado.

THE DROP was named by our audience and that type of co-ownership continues as we build partnerships that put us into the community at ground level to ensure we understand and reflect what people really want and need in their public media. In the last year alone, we've held food drives in partnership with Sonic Drive-In to distribute nearly 1,200 pounds of food to local food banks to ensure hardworking families have food on their tables.

We also sponsor Gateway High School in Aurora where our team has spoken at all-school assemblies, participated in graduation ceremonies, DJ-ed at Prom and Homecoming, and engaged students in radio workshops to share career pathways.

In partnership with The Confluence Center, we also brought student-produced content to THE DROP through two shows: *Voices of Montbello*, which features interviews between students and community leaders in the Montbello neighborhood, and *Know Justice Know Peace*, which offered listeners the chance to hear directly from the next generation of leaders from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Early College on politics and first-hand accounts of the Black experience.



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# COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT 2021

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*Thank You*



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