
**WTTW
FY2022**

Local Content and Service Report to the Community



FIRSTHAND: Segregation

WHO WE ARE

WTTW is the PBS member station in Chicago. WTTW is committed to producing and presenting trusted, best-in-class content fueled by a distinctly Chicago sensibility. We engage our audiences by entertaining, inspiring, educating, and reflecting a diversity of perspectives. Our purpose is to enrich lives, engage communities, and inspire exploration. We produce audience-driven content that is essential to Chicago and beyond. We are engaged in the community. We foster a culture of innovation and creativity, and we strive for first-rate capabilities and sustainability.

LOCAL VALUE

WTTW serves a vital role in our region, serving approximately 1.2 million monthly households (or approximately 2 million viewers) in Chicago and its suburbs, southern Wisconsin, northwest Indiana, and southwest Michigan, and far beyond with our streaming content services. We provide relevant quality content and trusted news coverage to our diverse community across five distinct television channels – our primary channel, WTTW; our secondary channel, WTTW Prime; WTTW Create; WTTW PBS Kids 24/7; WTTW World; on our website at wttw.com; and via the PBS video app.

WTTW is essential to Chicagoans, valued for high quality content and community engagement. 70% of people in Chicago are aware of WTTW, and in a competitive survey conducted in November 2018, WTTW was the most trusted media brand of local television affiliates in Chicago.

KEY SERVICES

WTTW provided local, audience-driven content and community engagement initiatives across Chicago's diverse regions and neighborhoods.

Audience-Driven Content

WTTW acquires, produces, and distributes best-in-class content that enriches lives, engages communities, and inspires exploration. We have identified the following principles to guide our decisions. Our content must:

- Create an emotional connection, entertain, and inspire exploration
- Be responsive to the needs of our audience and society
- Reflect diverse cultures, represent community voices, and offer unique perspectives
- Address relevant and contemporary interests

WTTW tells local stories, amplifying local voices and broadening horizons. WTTW prioritizes the creation and production of content that meets the needs, wants, and aspirations of our curious audience across traditional and digital platforms across three primary content verticals.

News & Information

LOCAL NEWS

Independent, unbiased, and trusted news is essential to a high-functioning democracy. Partisan news is on

LOCAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

In FY2022, *Chicago Tonight* reached almost 241,000 monthly households (321,000 viewers) across the region on television, and served more than 1.6 million streams. 6.8 million users visited the WTTW News website, and viewed 10 million pages.

Source: Nielsen R&F 11.1+11.2+11.4 Jan 22, HH reach % for Calendar 2021

the rise, local news sources are shrinking, the line between news and commentary continues to blur, and journalists are under attack. Trust in the media has been questioned and perhaps impacted in unknown ways, and local reporting is threatened by changing business models.

In the past year, WTTW expanded news coverage to serve the needs of our community. With a focus on our purpose and mission, we deepened our coverage with original reporting and increased our footprint with a commitment to both television and digital journalism and distribution. We are continually re-imagining our nightly news series *Chicago Tonight* to address changing media habits and reach a broad and diverse audience. We have increased digital-first, text, and day-of news content production.



Photo: WTTW / Ken Carl

CHICAGO TONIGHT - Co-anchors Paris Schutz and Brandis Friedman

We focus our reporting in key areas: local news, analysis and enterprise reporting on our city, state, education, and criminal justice systems; the environment; science and technology; politics; business; and arts/entertainment.

WTTW News/*Chicago Tonight* and its sister programs *The Week in Review*, *Black Voices*, and *Latino Voices* are all available live on WTTW, wttw.com/news, Facebook, YouTube, and on demand across all of our digital platforms.

FY2022 HIGHLIGHTS

- ***Chicago Tonight: Black Voices and Chicago Tonight: Latino Voices*** – These two weekly series provide thoughtful and accurate coverage of current events to inform and engage the public, and create opportunities for real conversation and a platform for different voices and perspectives. The *Voices* series offer a mix of analysis and features on a wide range of topics, including arts and life, entrepreneurship and innovation, and equity and justice across the sectors of our society and in the Black and Latino communities

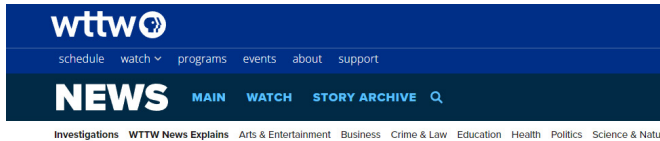
in Chicago. The producers work with a range of local grassroots organizations in story selection to ensure that coverage reflects the needs of the community.

wttw.com/voices

- ***WTTW News Community Conversations*** – On the last Monday evening of each month and inspired by the *VOICES* weekend programs, WTTW brings together viewers and community and thought leaders for a dynamic conversation around the issues affecting the lives of Black and Latino Chicagoans, using topics in the shows as a springboard for discussion. Topics in FY2022 included the impact of the arts sector as a significant economic driver for the city of Chicago, challenges and opportunities for Latino small businesses in the wake of COVID-19, mental health and suicide. In addition, WTTW highlighted important cultural topics such as the historic significance of the Pullman Porters, the meaning of el Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) in



BLACK VOICES and LATINO VOICES homepage



POLITICS

Tammy Duckworth, Kathy Salvi Spar in Only Joint Forum in Illinois US Senate Race

Heather Cherone | October 27, 2022 9:36 pm



2022 US SENATE FORUM

Chicago Mexican community, and the relevance of Emmett Till's story today.

wttw.com/events

- **2022 Midterm Election** – In advance of the 2022 midterm election for federal, state, and local offices, WTTW reported on the races, hosted virtual candidate forums, and launched a comprehensive digital voter guide that provided profiles of the candidates and key issues and a searchable map by congressional district, along with an explainer tracing what happens to a ballot after it is cast.

wttw.com/voterguide

JOURNALISM TRAINING

WTTW News also continued to provide fellowships and internships for aspiring young journalists.

wttw.com/news

LOCAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

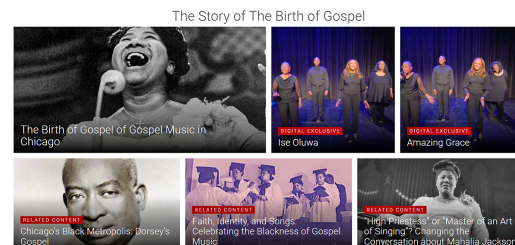
Throughout the year, WTTW served its local community and beyond with content that entertained and enlightened audiences, with the goal of enriching their lives.

Entertainment

Collaborating with the Chicago filmmaking community, WTTW created local signature franchises that reflect our audience's ongoing interests across key genres – local history; lifestyle and food; society and culture; and science, nature, and natural history. We celebrate the vibrant life of Chicago and its many talented content creators to tell the stories of our city's fascinating history and cultural scene, its industry, and its ingenuity.

FY2022 HIGHLIGHTS

- ***Inventing Improv: A Chicago Stories Special*** – It may be Chicago's greatest cultural export: improv.



CHICAGO STORIES: THE BIRTH OF GOSPEL homepage

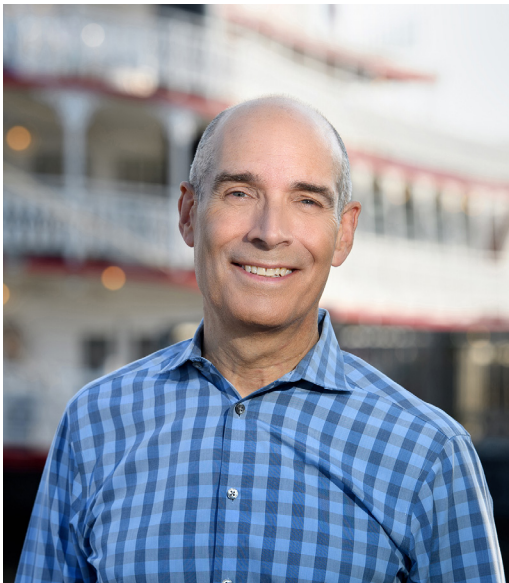


Photo: Ken Carl/WTTW

BEYOND CHICAGO FROM THE AIR - narrator Geoffrey Baer

vised theater was born on local stages and carried out into the world by the likes of Bill Murray, Tina Fey, Amy Poehler, and Stephen Colbert. But this art form wasn't created by a funny man – it was devised by a woman who wasn't out for laughs. *Chicago Stories* explored the life and legacy of Viola Spolin, the social-worker-turned-theater guru known as The Mother of Improv. The companion website extended the experience with an exploration of Spolin's legacy; a Q&A with local improvisers revealing how improv has changed over the years; a story about the healing power of improv; game demonstration videos; and a map of improv theaters across Chicago. WTTW hosted a free virtual behind-the-scenes screening and discussion prior to the premiere.

wttw.com/improv

- ***Beyond Chicago from the Air*** – In this television special and website, a sequel to the previous year's successful *Chicago from the Air*, narrator Geoffrey Baer again took viewers on a sweeping bird's-eye tour of the city and beyond, sharing

LOCAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

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fun facts and fascinating history as exhilarating drone photography captured towns, parks, railroads, waterways, monuments, and more in Illinois and beyond in summer, fall and winter. The companion website offered a “making of” behind-the-scenes video; a look at the history of commerce on the Mississippi River; the story of the former Native American city of Cahokia; and a map and guide to places along the waterways, on land, and on sites shaped by the settlers who lived there.

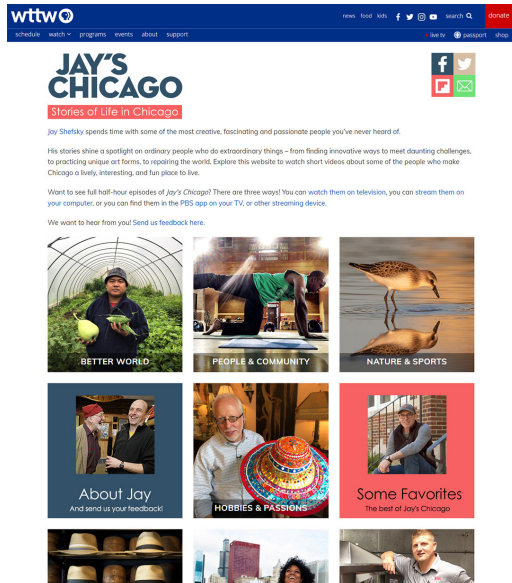
wttw.com/beyondchicago

- ***FIRSTHAND: Segregation*** – This Emmy Award-winning multiplatform initiative explored the personal, firsthand perspectives of people affect-



Photo: Davon Clark/WTTW

FIRSTHAND SEGREGATION - Courtney Jones



JAY'S CHICAGO homepage

ed by segregation in Chicago, one of the most segregated big cities in America. Throughout 2022, this initiative strove to put a human face on the impact racial divisions have on individuals, the city, and our region. Included on the website is a documentary series following fifteen Chicagoans affected by segregation; six expert talks by community and thought leaders; text and visual journalism exploring housing, education, policing, and the history of segregation in Chicago; community conversations extending the reach of the project into Chicago neighborhoods; a discussion guide for schools, libraries, and other community organizations; and special news coverage.

wttw.com/segregation

- **Jay's Chicago** – In this engaging local series, producer and host Jay Shefsky spends time with some of the most creative, fascinating, and passionate people in the community – individuals who make Chicago a lively, interesting, and fun place to live. His stories shine a spotlight on ordinary people who do extraordinary things – from finding innovative ways to meet daunting

challenges, to practicing unique art forms, to repairing the world.

wttw.com/jayschicago

- **The Great Chicago Quiz Show 2** – This season, Chicago's TikTok historian Shermann "Dilla" Thomas joined host Geoffrey Baer to test contestants – and viewers at home – to discover just how much they really know about Chicago food, sports, geography, business, historical figures and events, and more. The companion website featured an interactive quiz that visitors could play anywhere, tracking in real time how their knowledge stacked up against others.

wttw.com/quiz

- **Chicago Stories** – In April, WTTW premiered a new season of the only weekly documentary program dedicated to uncovering the sweeping history, rich diversity, and breadth of human experience that shaped Chicago as a great American city. Featured were: a profile of the city's first female mayor, Jane Byrne; the dramatic stories of a devastating theater fire and a mysterious underground flood; the creative genius of some of the city's advertising legends; Chicago's Union Stockyards, which revolutionized meatpacking



BIRTH OF GOSPEL Community Conversation

in America; a Mexican-American parish that suffered great losses during the Vietnam War; and Chicago's role as the birthplace of gospel music, through the story of its creator Thomas Dorsey. For each story, a companion website was created that included original content including a feature on Jane Byrne's rise to power, an animated video explainer of Chicago's tunnel system that caused the 1992 Loop flood, exclusive video of three gospel performances by Trinity UCC Choir, and much more.

wttw.com/chicagostories

- *Special Content* – WTTW created immersive, original, and local digital content for Black History Month, Women's History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, LGBTQ Pride Month, and Native American Heritage Month, and a website for Ken Burns' series *Muhammad Ali*.

KIDS AND FAMILIES



WTTW Kids Learn & Play

H4 LOCAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

In FY2022, WTTW's educational content for kids reached almost 390,000 households monthly, or 680,000 viewers, and the station's community engagement events geared to kids and families attracted almost 62,000 attendees.

Research shows that parents and caregivers trust WTTW and PBS Kids content. Every day, children laugh and learn with the characters they've come to consider trusted guides and friends. This trust is at the center of everything we do and especially in what we share with the very youngest members in our communities and their families who depend upon us.

As we work to ensure that our content aligns to and leverages PBS initiatives and themes, WTTW presents the best children's media content from PBS Kids across our platforms – live and on-demand – to encourage and engage the curious explorer in all of us.

Our content encourages and engages the explorer in all of us, and we will continue to build a reputation as a leader in children's content and services. Notably, WTTW serves as co-producer of *Nature Cat*, the popular national STEM-based PBS Kids series that encourages children ages 3-8 to go outside and explore the outdoors, while learning about a variety of scientific topics along the way.

Community Engagement

As a trusted organization with purpose at the heart of all we do, WTTW has a unique opportunity to reach beyond our television, radio, and digital platforms to build personal connections with people across



Photo: The Fred Rogers

DONKEY HODIE, filmed in WTTW's studios

Chicago's many communities. We do this by meeting people where they are and working in direct partnership with local organizations and residents to enrich lives, engage communities, and inspire exploration. Our focus is on three distinct but connected areas.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

We believe kids are innately curious, born explorers; our content can support them on their journey. Through our children's television and digital content services, WTTW reaches Chicago area communities with educational, inspirational, and commercial-free media content 24 hours a day, every day. In the next three years, we will extend this relationship by providing educational tools, materials, and support to positively impact children, families, and teachers.

African American, Latino and Native American students in Illinois enter kindergarten with lower rates of readiness than other students. According to the 2019 Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS), just 15% of Native American, 17% of Latino and 23% of Black Illinois kindergartners demonstrated readiness in all three developmental areas (Social & Emotional Development, Language & Literacy, and Math). Focusing on these three developmental areas,

WTTW continued to offer free WTTW Kids Learn & Play, a series of bi-weekly collaborative, playful, and participatory learning experiences online.

Learn & Play then premiered live at Chicago Learning Days, a multi-day event in partnership with the Mayor's Office in which event hosts turned Chicago into an open house learning laboratory featuring 100+ fun and free events for youth of all ages. As a lead local partner, WTTW offered both Learn & Play and meet and greet sessions with WTTW Kids' Nature Cat and his pal Daisy.

Families interacted with other WTTW Kids characters Daniel Tiger and Katerina Kittycat at *Be My Neighbor Day* in Rockford, IL, where kids met first responders, explored Discovery Center Museum free of charge, and helped neighbors in need via a successful food drive.

WTTW Kids at-home engagement opportunities continued including a newly expanded online Explore the Outdoors *Nature Cat* summer camp, and WTTW Kids monthly activity calendars.

WTTW reached viewers outside of Illinois as part of the WTTW produced *Nature Cat* Road Trip, stopping in Utah and Wyoming, and in Massachusetts with the *Nature Cat* Backyard and Beyond traveling museum exhibit, where Nature Cat met with fans and shared DIY nature activities.

wttw.com/kids

ACCESS TO THE ARTS

LOCAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

In FY2022, WTTW's 35 virtual screenings and panel discussions attracted more than attendees, with a total of almost 101,000 participating across all event categories, including kids and families.



Photo: Todd Rosenberg

WTTW News coverage of Chicago Symphony Orchestra

WTTW is a strong and treasured brand with a reputation as a steadfast champion of the arts and encourages everyone in our community to explore Chicago's rich, extensive, and diverse arts scene by highlighting the work of the city's best performing and visual artists. WTTW's *Chicago Tonight* programmed segments focusing on emerging artists, the diversity of Chicago's dance community, local businesses that support artists and collectors preserving their art, as well as new exhibitions. We believe that arts and culture are incredibly important for the health of the city, both for the economy and the city's life. The program also shared a weekly feature encouraging engagement in what the city has to offer, *10 Things to Do This Weekend*.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Where conversations around civic and societal issues can dissolve into stereotypes and shorthand, we will work to surface and spotlight the people, ideas, and stories behind the headlines. And across our platforms and in the community, we strive to create a forum for discussion and encouragement of diverse opinions, authentic communication, and mutual understanding.

In FY2022, WTTW hosted numerous virtual screenings and panel discussions in connection with local

and national content and programming, serving our local community with content that explored relevant topics including poverty, racial inequality, religion, Chicago and world history, and much more. These virtual events highlighted WTTW-produced series, films by local filmmakers and aspiring student producers, and PBS documentaries. Many of the screenings featured films focusing on Black, Latino, Asian, Jewish, or Native American people and their stories, including *For The Left Hand, Apart*, *Benjamin Franklin*, *The Great Muslim American Road Trip*, *Hiding in Plain Sight*, *Muhammad Ali*, and *Three Chinatowns*. In addition, WTTW held behind-the-scenes previews and discussions of two original multiplatform productions, *Our Soldiers: Our Lady of Guadalupe* and *The Birth of Gospel*.

WTTW strengthened its partnership with PBS Books by co-hosting four live Facebook events that attracted more than 36,000 viewers – a conversation with *Crooked Hallelujah* author Kelli Jo Ford; performance and talk with Kwame Alexander, author of *Becoming Ali*; conversation with Toni Jensen, author of *Carry: A Memoir of Survival on Stolen Land and From the Hilltop*; and Reshma Saujani discussed her book *Pay Up and The Future of Women and Work*.

Finally, WTTW held community discussions throughout the fiscal year for *FIRSTHAND: Segregation*.

wttw.com/dei

SUMMARY

It is WTTW's duty to advance and support our city by inviting people to explore new worlds, dive deeper into issues that matter most to them, and learn as we grow. We achieve this through world-class content, engagement in our community, and opportunities for adults and children alike to explore their world.

This means delivering trusted news and public affairs content; kids content that nurtures; and arts, music, and entertainment content that cultivates curiosity and opens doors and minds. It means going out into neighborhoods and building authentic connections with people of all ages to help them discover new possibilities, blaze new paths, and realize their dreams. It means focusing relentlessly on our audience and leveraging technology to meet them where they are. It means being valuable, valued, and essential.

WTTW will continue to evolve and innovate – producing and presenting unique, quality content that stands out in the media marketplace. The trust and equity WTTW has built over the years – and earnestly maintained – have made us a respected voice in the community. We are a media organization that tells true Chicago stories with the depth, clarity, and insight that the people in our region crave, and strives to make a meaningful, ongoing, and lasting impact on Chicago and on society at large.