

Local Content and Service Report to The Community

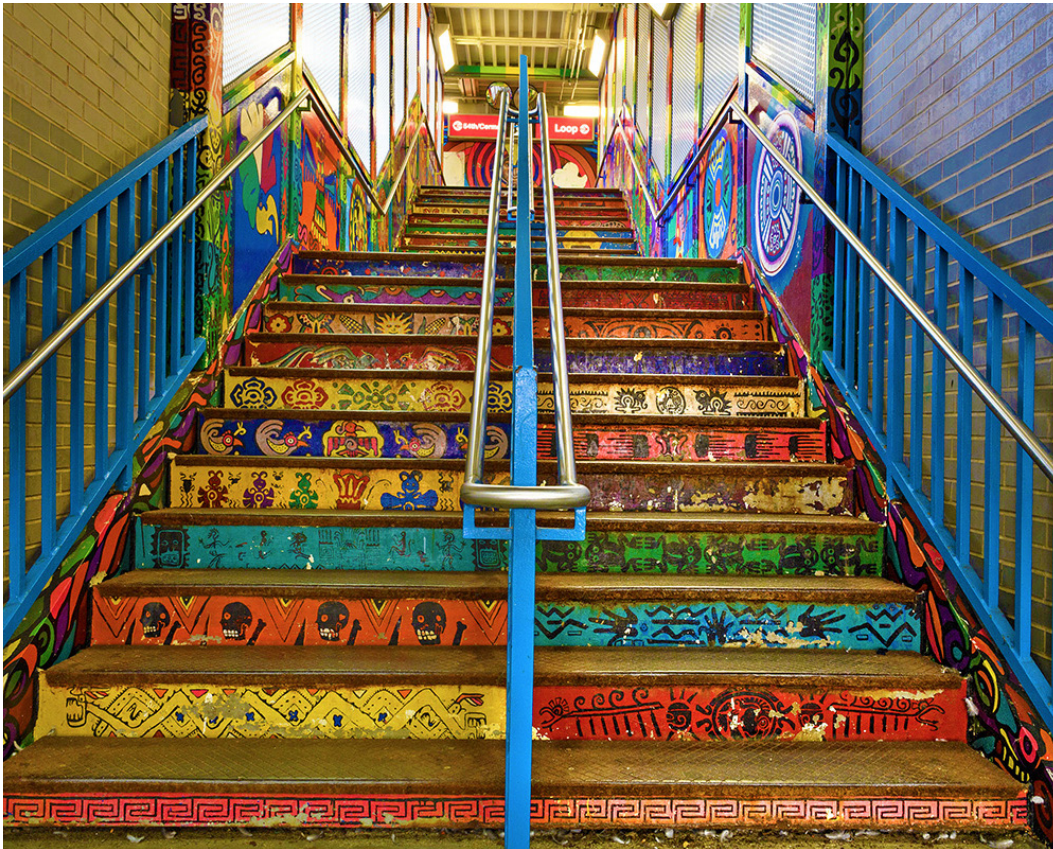


Photo: Ken Carl

Francisco Mendoza, Gallery 37 Students, and the Mexican Museum of National Art, 1998, 18th Pink Line Station.

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 1.4 million monthly households 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 four distinct television channels – our primary channel, WTTW; our secondary channel, WTTW Prime; WTTW PBS Kids 24/7; WTTW Create/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. 86% 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

LOCAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

In FY2020, *Chicago Tonight* reached almost 280,000 monthly households across the region on television, and served more than 2.2 million streams. 6.5 million users visited the WTTW News website, and viewed 10 million pages.

on 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 reimagining 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.

We focus our reporting in key areas: local news, analysis, and enterprise reporting on our city, state, education, and criminal justice systems; the environ-



Photo: Ken Carl

CHICAGO TONIGHT: Co-anchor Brandis Friedman

ment; science and technology; business; and the arts.

WTTW News/*Chicago Tonight* is available live on WTTW, wttw.com/news, Facebook, YouTube, and on demand across all of our digital platforms.

FY2020 HIGHLIGHTS

- Coronavirus** – From the beginning of the COVID-19 statewide shutdown, WTTW presented daily trusted and fact-based news and information to Chicago, across television, digital and social platforms. *Chicago Tonight* reporters and anchors visited Chicago neighborhoods to deliver on-the-ground reporting on how the coronavirus pandemic affected local residents, highlighting their challenges and discussing solutions. WTTW News also convened a virtual town hall meeting, *Covering COVID-19*, to share experiences producing local news in the age of coronavirus with a group of Chicago/Illinois journalism students.
- Racial Equity** – In the wake of the George Floyd killing and the racial reckoning that followed, WTTW News provided extensive on-the-ground reporting of the protests and produced *Peace & Justice: A WTTW News Special and Community Conversation* about systemic racism in policing,

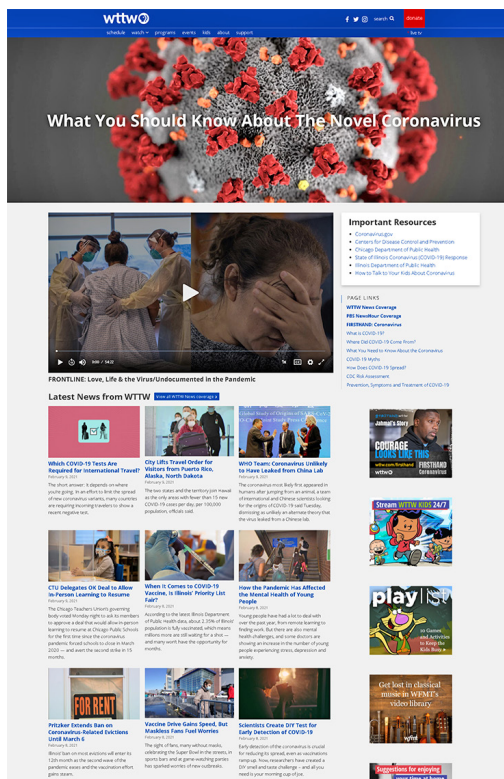
the trauma of growing up Black in America, and where we go from here in taking the steps to heal, rebuild, and create equity.

- 2020 Elections** – In advance of the 2020 primary elections for federal, state, and local offices, WTTW reported on the races, hosted live 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.

JOURNALISM TRAINING

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

wttw.com/news



WTTW NEWS: What You Should Know About The Novel Coronavirus

COVID-19

From the beginning of the Coronavirus shutdown, WTTW provided the community with content and resources, including:

WTTW Coronavirus Information Hub – this fact-based information hub, at wttw.com/coronavirus, answered questions about the virus, its prevention, symptoms, and treatment; provided resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Departments of Public Health for Illinois and Chicago, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Departments of Public Health for Illinois and Chicago, and WTTW News and *PBS NewsHour* coverage; streamed Governor Pritzker’s daily briefings on coronavirus efforts; dispelled myths about the virus; and offered expert advice for individuals and families.

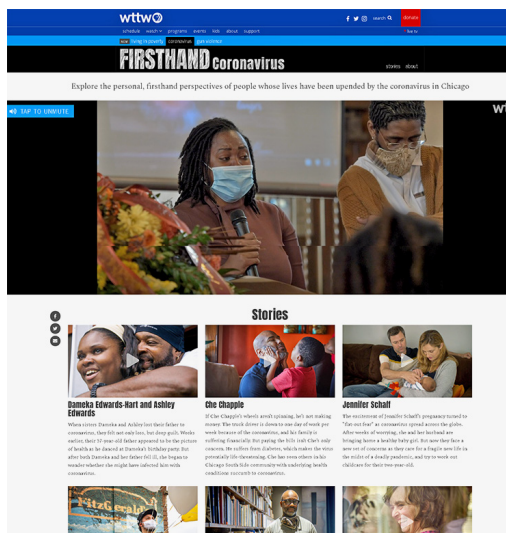
wttw.com/coronavirus

FIRSTHAND: Coronavirus – WTTW’s Lisagor and Emmy Award-winning multi-part digital series was produced and released in real time, and explored the personal, firsthand perspectives of a diverse group of 15 people whose lives were upended by the pandemic. WTTW followed them as they shared their experiences



FIRSTHAND: CORONAVIRUS: Front line worker Falguni Dave

Photo: Liam Alexander



FIRSTHAND: Coronavirus

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.

confronting an unseen adversary while adapting to a world that changed seemingly overnight.

wttw.com/firsthand/coronavirus

Resources for Kids and Families – To bridge the gap for kids out of school during the coronavirus crisis, WTTW provided educational resources, games, and activities for the very youngest members of the community throughout the day on WTTW’s primary channel, 24/7 on the PBS Kids channel, and at wttw.com/kids.

Resources for Older Students and Young Adults – On WTTW Prime (11.2), WTTW presented a new weekday



CHICAGO BY 'L': WTTW host and producer Geoffrey Baer on location

afternoon lineup of educational content tailored to junior high and high school students and young adults. Also available was a series of PSAs encouraging students to write about what this content has taught them and consider how to apply it to the world around them.

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.

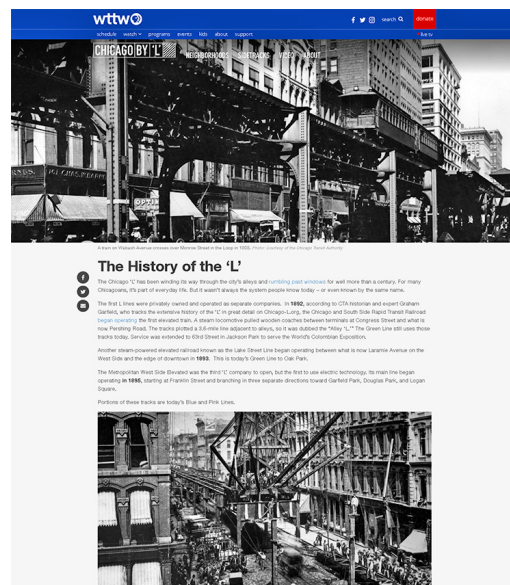
FY2020 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Check, Please!** – Chicago's varied ethnic and cultural makeup offers endless opportunities to explore new cultures and communities through the universal language of food. WTTW's weekly

LOCAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

Through our children's television and digital content and services, WTTW reaches Chicago-area communities with educational, inspirational, and commercial-free media content every day.

Check, Please! series featuring host Alpana Singh and regular person reviewers, and the show's comprehensive website, wttw.com/checkplease, serve as a vital resource for foodies looking for new and culturally diverse places to explore. During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the site shared a database of local eateries offering takeout and delivery, and recipes to make at home. Among the businesses featured on *Check, Please!*, many are minority- and woman-owned restaurants serving underrepresented cuisines in underserved neighborhoods outside the city



CHICAGO BY 'L'

center. We also take great care to select a variety of guests who reflect and celebrate Chicago's vast diversity.

wttw.com/checkplease

- Chicago by 'L'** – In this television special and website, host Geoffrey Baer boarded Chicago's famous Red, Blue, Green, Brown, Orange, Yellow, Pink, and Purple elevated train lines for a fascinating exploration of the colorful and diverse neighborhoods along the city's storied elevated train system. Featuring untold stories about the history of the city, *Chicago by 'L'* highlighted the vibrancy of Chicago and residents who inhabit it. Members and viewers were invited to a preview screening and presentation. Geoffrey samples street food and culture in a Vietnamese enclave in Uptown, where Native Americans and Appalachian migrants also historically settled. He visits the Mexican-American neighborhood of Pilsen. Issues of segregation, racism, disinvestment, revitalization and empowerment were showcased in African American neighborhoods throughout the city including Woodlawn,



Photo: Julie Florio

PREHISTORIC ROAD TRIP: Emily Graslie outside Hanna, WY



PREHISTORIC ROAD TRIP

Bronzeville, Englewood, North Lawndale and Austin. Puerto Rican history in Lincoln Park is highlighted, and the audience learns how the melting pot of Albany Park, sometimes nicknamed ChicagoUnited Nations has been the historic home of Persians, Koreans, Mexicans, Arabs, Orthodox Jews, Swedes and more.

wttw.com/chicagobyl

- FIRSTHAND: Gun Violence** – This Emmy Award-winning multiplatform initiative explored the personal, firsthand perspectives of people affected by everyday gun violence in Chicago. The project featured a 15-part digital series that follows five Chicagoans living with the repercussions of gun violence; six reported stories; five expertTalks proposing community solutions; a discussion guide; and a series of community screenings and conversations with experts that extended the reach of the project into Chicago neighborhoods.

wttw.com/gunviolence



Photo: Liz Markel

NATURE CAT: Daisy and friends at Girl Scout/Nature Cat Explorer Patch Day for GirlSpace.

KIDS AND FAMILIES

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 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.

- **Prehistoric Road Trip** – This three-part national series and companion website produced for PBS followed host and tour guide Emily Graslie on an epic adventure through dinosaur country to search for mysterious creatures and bizarre ecosystems that have shaped Earth as we know it. Revealing the amazing wonders preserved beneath our feet, the program and its content-rich website combined science, culture, and history for an unforgettable expedition through hundreds of millions of years. Filmed across the Northern Great Plains featured many women and BIPOC paleontologists working in the field and in museums and research centers, this series placed special emphasis on women and people of color in science. Prehistoric Road Trip also explored at length issues of appropriation and repatriation of fossils and other materials from Native American lands.

wttw.com/prehistoricroadtrip

- **Special Content** – WTTW created immersive, original, and local digital content for Black History Month, Women's History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, LGBTQ Pride Month, and Native American Heritage Month.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

We believe kids are innately curious, born explorers; our content can support them on their journey. Through our kids 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 and Latinx students in Illinois enter kindergarten with lower rates of readiness than other students. According to the 2018 Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS), just 13% of Hispanic/Latino and 19% of Black kindergartners demonstrated readiness in all three developmental areas (Social & Emotional Development, Language & Literacy, and Math). WTTW Kids programming serves as an additional learning resource for partner organizations whose mission is to serve the educational needs of young children.

Children and families interacted with the walk-around Nature Cat at public events throughout the fiscal year, including two occasions with Erie Neighborhood House and various events with the Forest Preserves of Cook County and Brookfield Zoo. Characters from *Nature Cat* also appeared at a new traveling exhibit, *Nature Cat: Backyard and Beyond*, at Kohl Children's Museum, and took part in several events as part of a

new Explorer Patch merit badge partnership with the Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana. WTTW also hosted events for children and families in connection with *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood*, *Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum*, and *Molly of Denali*.

wttw.com/kids

ACCESS TO THE ARTS

WTTW 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, even during the pandemic that shut down many of their venues. During the coronavirus pandemic, WTTW provided virtual tours to numerous Chicago art and cultural institutions, and aired Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot's weekly series of virtual field trips, *Stay Home. Hit Play*.

wttw.com/stayhomehitplay

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Where conversations around civic and societal issues often 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 FY2020, WTTW hosted public screenings and panel discussions in connection with local and national content and programming. These included monthly screenings at the Chicago Cultural Center and other venues, and later virtual events highlighting WTTW-produced series, films by local filmmakers and aspiring student producers, and PBS documentaries. Many of the screenings featured films focusing on Black, Latinx, Asian, Jewish, or Native American people and their stories, including *Roll Red Roll*, *Voces: Adios Amor: The Search for Maria Moreno*, *The Feeling of Being Watched*, *College Behind Bars*, *The First Rainbow*



STAY HOME. HIT PLAY: Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot filming on the steps of the John G. Shedd Aquarium

Photo: Brenna Hernandez



FIRSTHAND Gun Violence: Community event with Dameka Edwards-Hart

Coalition, Cooked: Survival by Zip Code, East Lake, and Asian Americans. At the end of the year, WTTW partnered with PBS Books on a live Facebook event that attracted more than 10,000 viewers – a conversation with the author and illustrator of *Exquisite: The Life and Poetry of Gwendolyn Brooks*. And, WTTW held community discussions throughout FY2020 for *FIRSTHAND: Gun Violence*.

wttw.com/dei

WTTW also produced Grandparent Connection engagement events that brought local young people together with senior citizens to enrich the lives of both, and celebrated the value of education with the televised award ceremony Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching, an annual celebration of local educators.

wttw.com/goldenapples

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.