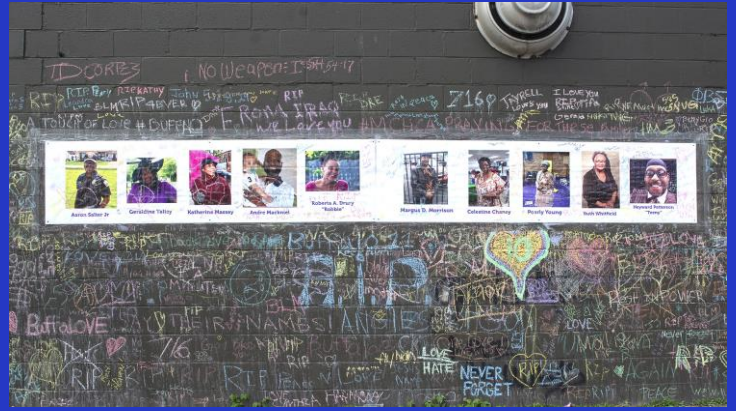


# 2022 Local Content and Service Report to the Community



Within two weeks of the May 14 racist mass shooting, WBFO launched a weekday program, “Buffalo, What’s Next?” to unapologetically confront what led to the mass shooting.

**Buffalo Toronto Public Media is a trusted public media resource that engages our community in Western New York through exploration and entertainment – everywhere.**



Buffalo Toronto Public Media and its television (WNED PBS, WNED PBS KIDS, and WNED Create) and radio stations (WBFO, WNED Classical and WBFO The Bridge) are a valuable part of Western New York’s advancement. The stations’ partnerships in the community are symbiotic and essential to the health and vitality of the entire region. We engage with our community in a variety of ways, including through broadcasted programming, in-person and virtual events at the station and out in the community, and opportunities that spark lively discussions about the state of our region.

**In 2022, Buffalo Toronto Public Media provided these vital local services:**

- BTPM provides in-depth and trusted local reporting through its WBFO news team. It provided critical reporting after the racist mass shooting on May 14, 2022, in Buffalo.
- Our Learning & Engagement team reached deep into the community, working directly with educators, creating meaningful community events, and participating in community-wide celebrations.
- BTPM supported the heart of our region’s arts and culture through the production of Kleinhans’ Gift to Buffalo, a 30-minute documentary and its comprehensive website and learning materials.
- Our classical musical station partnered with our local philharmonic orchestra to bring recorded concerts to our audience.

**Buffalo Toronto Public Media’s local services had deep impact.**

- Within two weeks of the May 14 racist mass shooting, WBFO launched “Buffalo, What’s Next?” to unapologetically confront what led to the shooting and how we move forward – as a whole community – from there. The Extremism in WNY series dove deep into the rise of white supremacy in our region.
- Our Mental Health Initiative and our Racial Equity Project pushed the conversation forward on race and mental illness in our region.
- Our outreach with the disabilities community allowed us to provide our first-ever Silent Disco, which was an inclusive event.

Buffalo Toronto Public Media seeks to enrich its local community through education, entertainment, engagement, culture, and civic involvement. Our projects always include elements of two or more of these in combination and are very successful when we partner with organizations in the community. The easing of the pandemic in 2022 allowed us to redouble our collaboration efforts and increase our impact.

### **Education**

Underlying all of our local initiatives is the goal of helping to educate and engage with our audience. “Kleinhans’ Gift to Buffalo” was a local production WNED PBS produced and aired in 2022 that shares the story of how a generous gift from Ed and Mary Kleinhans led to the building of a world-class concert hall in Buffalo. Our Learning & Engagement team created four lesson plans for middle school students to further examine philanthropy and the arts, the science behind the sound in Kleinhans Music Hall, the role of architecture in communities, and to use their own community as inspiration for a creative essay.

The Learning & Engagement team met with regional Boards of Cooperative Educational Services to disseminate the many free services BTM and PBS provide for educators. They also partnered with the Buffalo History Museum to provide a series of educational screenings for adult learners using WNED PBS original productions, such as *The Underground Railroad* and *Warrior Tradition*. Their quarterly newsletter to parents and educators moved from quarterly to monthly, providing more free resources to subscribers.

### **Entertainment**

Our audiences can trust our entertainment to be cultural, educational, inspirational, and enriching, whether it’s *Masterpiece* on WNED PBS, the *Oasis of Sanity* on WNED Classical, *Fresh Air* on WBFO or in-person events like our first-ever Silent Disco. This year, we were able to provide original local programming, including “Kleinhans’ Gift to Buffalo” with our partners at Kleinhans Music Hall and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO) and added to the “Shakespeare’s Greatest Hits” series in partnership with Shakespeare in Delaware Park. We provided a live radio broadcast of the “Concert for Healing” by the BPO, held for the community and families impacted by the racist mass shooting in Buffalo on May 14, 2022.

Buffalo Toronto Public Media’s new triple A music service, WBFO The Bridge, celebrated its first anniversary and hired its first program director. In addition, it partnered with a neighborhood association to be a media sponsor of its Porch Fest, which highlights local music talent. The station promoted the event as well as played and continues to play original music by local artists.

### **Engagement**

Engaging with our community is integral to the mission of Buffalo Toronto Public Media, and the loosening of the pandemic allowed us to expand our connections in the community this year. The first half of the year included a series of virtual events focused on mental health, including discussions about how the pandemic impacted people in abusive situations and how it increased burnout for mental health professionals. We partnered with Erie County to celebrate the county’s 200<sup>th</sup> birthday. As we pivoted from virtual to hybrid and in-person events, we held a special in-person event around the broadcast of “Hiding in Plain Sight.” In partnership with local Native American groups, we focused on teen mental health and suicide.

In partnership with the Holocaust Resource Center of Buffalo, we held a screening event for the “US & the Holocaust” documentary. The well-attended event provoked need conversation about the rise of anti-Semitic rhetoric and violence. We also partnered with local organization EPIC to present the PBS KIDS Talk About: Race & Racism to the community. The free event was held at the Buffalo Museum of Science.

We held a series of screenings at the Buffalo History Museum, including our own original productions as well as important documentaries like “Harriet Tubman: Visions of Freedom,” “Becoming Frederick Douglass,” and “Making Black America.” The partnership with the Buffalo History Museum allowed us to hold the events in the community and connect with an audience who doesn’t usually attend screenings at our building.

### **Culture**

Buffalo Toronto Public Media continued its popular Bob Ross Paint Nights in the first half of 2022, culminating in a weekend of live painting events in our studios. These events gave amateur artists an opportunity to learn how to paint from a Certified Ross Instructor.

We celebrated Black History Month with programming on each of our stations, highlighting the contributions of Black people throughout history. Similarly, we celebrated Women’s History Month in March, Pride Month in June, and Hispanic Heritage Month in the fall. We also participated in Juneteenth celebrations, the Pride Parade, and the Puerto Rican & Hispanic Heritage Parade. Like last year, we continued to broadcast Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra concerts on WNED Classical, but our commitment to local musical performance expanded to playing original local music on WBFO The Bridge.

Our connections to other local cultural organizations grew stronger and we expanded the digital series of soliloquies from Shakespeare’s plays with Shakespeare in Delaware Park, the second oldest and one of the largest outdoor Shakespeare companies in the country. We filmed them with local actors in iconic locations around Western New York.

### **Civic Involvement**

Buffalo had a traumatic year due to the racist mass shooting on May 14, 2022, that killed 10 people and wounded three others. Not only did WBFO cover its aftermath, but within two weeks, it launched a new daily show, “Buffalo, What’s Next?” that unapologetically confronts the reasons why the shooting happened (more on page 4). Beyond the show, WBFO continued its work on racial inequities in our region completing a much-needed survey as part of the Racial Equity Project that revealed that despite efforts, Buffalo has a long way to go in attaining equity for its Black residents. WBFO also produced a high-impact series on extremism in Western New York that examined its rise in recent years.

WBFO highlighted inequities for disabled people, including uncovering that the City of Buffalo did not have a required ADA coordinator. That reporting resulted in the city taking responsibility and creating the position.

The year ended tragically, with a once-in-a-lifetime blizzard that killed 47 residents in Western New York and paralyzed the city of Buffalo for days longer than its suburbs. Despite extensive damage to the Buffalo Toronto Public Media building due to the blizzard that included almost all of the newsroom, WBFO investigated and continues to investigate why Buffalo’s death toll was so high and why it took so long to plow out the streets and sidewalks.

## Buffalo, What's Next?

In the wake of the mass shooting on Buffalo's east side on May 14, 2022, WBFO launched a new daily program, "Buffalo, What's Next?," that unapologetically confronts the reasons why the shooting happened. The hour-long show amplifies voices that have traditionally been marginalized through in-depth conversations and interviews and provides a forum for open, honest, and candid conversations about what happened, what's next, and what role each of us can play in solving the problems that caused it.



"May 14 was a tragic and defining moment in our city's history," said Tom Calderone, President & CEO of Buffalo Toronto Public Media. "Public media is in a unique position to help amplify the voices of people making real change in Buffalo and our larger community, and 'Buffalo, What's Next?' is one of the many ways we're helping our community heal and come back stronger than before."

Among the tough issues addressed by "Buffalo, What's Next?" are the lack of access to high quality and affordable food, the inequities in education, as well as, celebrating Black businesses, artists, and organizations working to improve Black neighborhoods.



## Kleinhans Gift to Buffalo

"Kleinhans' Gift to Buffalo," a WNED PBS original production, premiered March 21, 2022, and shared the story of how a generous gift from Ed and Mary Kleinhans, whose love of music, Buffalo, and each other, led to the building of a world-class concert hall. Historians, musicians, architectural scholars, and community members told us about the design, the architect, and how this concert hall

and civic auditorium has become a community asset where family is celebrated and memories are made.

Kleinhans Music Hall, nestled in a Buffalo neighborhood, is a national historic landmark, internationally recognized as one of the greatest music halls. Since its opening in 1940, Kleinhans has been the home of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and offered a stage for national changemakers like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Bob Dylan, and Toni Morrison. It's also the place where families celebrate important milestones like graduating from school, getting married, or attending a child's dance recital.

"For decades we have partnered with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra to bring musical performances to our international audiences, but we've never been able to tell the story of the hall itself," said Lynne Bader, WNED PBS Executive Producer. "Collaborating with Kleinhans Music Hall on this program enabled us to showcase another cultural gem and highlight its important role in our history and our region's growth."

## Friday Night Fight!

WNED PBS and the Community Health Center of Buffalo, Inc. (CHCB) partnered on a special event, “Friday Night Fight! Knock Out COVID,” to engage with the community on COVID-19 and help dispel myths about the virus and the vaccine on Friday, Feb. 18 on WNED PBS, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter.



The program, hosted by Claudine Ewing of media partner WGRZ-TV, began with a local documentary “Fight for Good: One Body, One Soul,” which presents candid community voices that offer an effective way to respond to unprecedented difficulties encountered in the current COVID-19 and future pandemics. Following the documentary, we held a live discussion to encourage viewers to seek accurate vaccine information and find out where to get a vaccine. Viewers submitted dozens of questions by calling or sending them on social media.

CHCB held vaccine clinics following the event and they were well-attended and multiple patients reported being convinced to come during the event.



## Inclusive Silent Disco

WBFO The Bridge held its first-ever Silent Disco in the Buffalo Toronto Public Media studios on Oct. 1, 2022. The event was designed to be COVID-cautious and included accessibility features like social distancing color-coded wristbands. BTPM consulted with local disability organizations to ensure accessibility, such as keeping the event on the first floor that is wheelchair accessible with accessible bathrooms, stationary lights to be sensory friendly, and providing white boards for anyone with non-verbal needs.

The disability community told us this was their first opportunity to attend a Silent Disco, which are usually held in bars that aren’t as friendly to disabilities. The Silent Disco was well-attended and well-received.

Buffalo Toronto Public Media is deeply engaged with our community. The easing of the pandemic gave us the opportunity reach deeper into our community and to throw our doors open for more events in our building.



Buffalo Toronto Public Media was part of Buffalo’s Juneteenth celebrations, handing out free books and other educational prizes to attendees and letting families know about our many resources.



After two years of virtual events, Buffalo Toronto Public Media held its first in-person series of Bob Ross paint events, extending his great painting techniques to yet another generation.



Buffalo’s Elmwood Village neighborhood has an incredibly popular local music event in which homes around the neighborhood invite local musicians to play all afternoon. WBFO The Bridge was a media sponsor of the event and played original local music by Buffalo-based musicians on the station.



Buffalo Toronto Public Media partnered with the Buffalo History Museum to hold a series of screenings at the museum, including The Underground Railroad and The Warrior Tradition.



Buffalo Toronto Public Media took full advantage of the world opening up and participated in many community celebrations, including the Puerto Rican and Hispanic Heritage Parade and Pride Parade.