



**April Gassler** 

Leadership Circle member since 2014

#### Dear Friends,

Time has sprouted wings and a year has passed since I became general manager of WAMU. With each passing day, I am more grateful to be a part of WAMU's extraordinary legacy — 61 years of excellence in public service media. It's an exciting time in the station's journey.



I remain in awe of WAMU's excellence-driven staff. That opinion is also shared by others as demonstrated by the numerous accolades we have received this past year. The work of the newsroom has been recognized by the James Beard Foundation and prestigious media organizations including the Radio Television Digital News Association, D.C. Society of Professional Journalists, Public Media Journalists Association, and National Association of Black Journalists.

We also came together as a community and developed new relationships to better serve you and our region. We've established strategic partnerships with *El Tiempo Latino*, The Creative School, *Street Sense Media*, and Apple News to serve new audiences.

We launched the fourth season of *Dish City* and launched a new initiative with *1A. 1A Remaking America* is a collaborative project with stations across the country designed to help us better understand the issues that divide us as a nation. The project is funded in part by The Corporation for Public Broadcasting. We also marked the return of in-person events with a screening of the film "The Big Broadcast of 1938" at the AFI Silver Theatre, hosted by Murray Horwitz and NPR's Scott Simon.

I hope you will take a few moments and read through this report. As you do, please know that it is due to your continued generous support and commitment to WAMU that we are able to provide this service to the region.

Warm regards,

**Erika Pulley-Hayes** General Manager, WAMU

## WAMU and DCist

## **Environmental Coverage**



Jacob Fenston, environmental reporter, spent the year diving deeply into the climate and environment of our region. He's followed hyper-local stories like the protest in the Brentwood neighborhood against increased bus pollution, the Maryland Naturalist Society's name change to move away from the namesake's racist past, and the destruction of a heritage tree in D.C.'s Takoma neighborhood.

Local reporting is making a significant impact on the community. In fact, by highlighting the destruction of one heritage tree, it spurred legislation in the D.C. Council to strengthen the law protecting historic trees from being destroyed. The Urban Forest Preservation Authority Amendment Act allows urban forestry to issue a stop work order before a tree is cut down. This reporting, is making an impact on the lives of the communities we serve for generations to come.

WAMU/DCist also aired and published longer-form projects that looked at the entire region. Over the fall and winter, Jacob dug into the local history of chestnut trees — exploring whether the tree could dominate the landscape again and if chestnuts could return to the American diet — and how their return could help fight climate change. He also explored how the disappearance of 70% of D.C.'s streams has changed the city and spoke to local Black environmentalists about their favorite local parks.

Environmental reporting on WAMU and *DCist* is made possible in part by John and Martha Giovanneli, and through funding from The Farvue Foundation, The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, and The Cornell Douglas Foundation.

# **Creative School Partnership**

## Equipping Young Journalists in Our Region



The newsroom partnered with The Creative School, a youth empowerment and storytelling nonprofit based in Congress Heights, to teach tweens and teens the fundamentals of journalism. Six students were selected to spend their spring break developing reporting skills and understanding journalism as a career path, as well as increasing their media literacy.

Throughout the week, WAMU and *DCist* reporters and photojournalists taught the students how to pitch and research a story, conduct interviews, and take photographs. They spent two days in the classroom learning fundamentals, then two days in the field talking to sources and collecting information.

The students wrote five stories, published on the *DCist* website, about important topics in their community, which were also shared by the PBS NewsHour Student Reporting Lab, parents and friends of the students involved, and seen by the community that helped execute the project. Students covered the community's perspectives on the war in Ukraine, how bullying impacts students and adults, how homelessness and climate change are connected, and how leaders can offer better mental health support to D.C.'s youth.

This workshop was developed by photojournalist Dee Dwyer as part of her Report for America fellowship work. Fellows are tasked with developing and implementing a service journalism project that directly serves their community.

# **Regional Coverage**







#### The Politics Hour With Kojo Nnamdi

Kojo Nnamdi continued to team up with resident political analyst Tom Sherwood to bring listeners a weekly conversation with local politicians on *The Politics Hour With Kojo Nnamdi*. This year, with primary elections happening in D.C. and Montgomery County, Kojo and Tom spoke with candidates about their platforms. In May, Kojo and Tom hosted a live candidate forum broadcast to hear from the top Democratic candidates for D.C. mayor. Kojo and Tom also spoke with Montgomery County Democratic candidates for county executive ahead of Maryland's July primary. The show also featured Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks to discuss issues facing PG County residents, and Justin Wilson, Mayor of Alexandria, joined a show to discuss top issues in Alexandria.

#### Twenty Years Since 9/11

September 11, 2021, marked twenty years since the terror attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. To commemorate the anniversary, the newsroom created a special on-air report of the stories from that day, told from voices across the D.C. region. Reporters also produced a series of stories looking at specific aspects of local life that changed after 9/11. They spoke with Muslim and Sikh residents in the region and heard reflections from those directly affected by the attack on the Pentagon.



TYRONE TURNER WAMU/DCIST



# **Regional Coverage**



#### Voices Of Wards 7 And 8

Thanks to a fellowship with Report for America and the generous contributions of our Tower Society members Bruce Bittel Cohen, Dr. Eric D.K. and Ms. Pamela Melby, Nonna A. Noto, Matthew S. Watson and the Leonstar Giving Fund, photojournalist Dee Dwyer has continued to deepen WAMU and *DCist*'s connection with residents in Wards 7 and 8 through her "Voices of Wards 7 and 8" series.

Over the past year, Dee has captured the portraits and thoughts of residents on topics like the D.C. mayoral election, community policing and more. One piece highlighted the voices of kids who live or go to school east of the Anacostia River, sharing their thoughts on how adults can better help them succeed. Dee has also collaborated with producer Kayla Hewitt to begin bringing "Voices" stories to our airwayes.



#### **Newsroom Partnerships**

WAMU's desire to serve all audiences in our region has fueled our commitment to develop partnerships with trusted local news sources. This year our newsroom partnered with *El Tiempo Latino* to cross-publish news coverage on both organization's websites, translated into English and Spanish respectively. This partnership increases our coverage and service to Latino communities in the area. *DCist* also expanded its digital footprint by offering its news stories on Apple News. Our newsroom also continued partnerships with Virginia Public Radio, Virginia Public Media, and *Street Sense Media* (the region's media outlet for and partially by people experiencing homelessness) to better reach and inform all of our region's residents.

## **Podcasts**

#### **Dish City**

Dish City, WAMU's food podcast, returned for its fourth season to explore the D.C. region's iconic foods and food traditions. Following two seasons of pandemic-related pivots, hosts Patrick Fort and Ruth Tam returned to the changing D.C. region through its food. They explored questions like: why are there so many Asian carryouts in D.C.'s Black neighborhoods? And are Maryland blue crabs really seasoned



RUTH TAM, WAMU

with Old Bay? Patrick and Ruth also covered stuffed ham, boozy brunch, and much more. The show received a coveted 2022 James Beard Foundation Media Award in the audio programming category, which recognizes exceptional talent in the culinary and food media industries, for their episode from season three, "How American Chinese Food Became Delivery Food."

#### **Consider This**

WAMU continued its partnership with NPR to co-produce *Consider This*, a daily, 20-minute podcast covering the day's most timely news and topics from the Washington, D.C., metro region and beyond. From the national infant formula shortage, to what to do about the child care crisis in America, to reframing the minimalist lifestyle, to what you need to know about voting in D.C.'s primary elections,



Consider This poses complex topics that go beyond the headlines and into the hearts and minds of listeners. The podcast is the first of its kind—ever—to offer a mix of hyperlocal news and national news based on where our audience is. WAMU hosts and news producers lead the local portion of the show, alongside national stories from the hosts of NPR's All Things Considered.

#### On My Mind

Diane Rehm's weekly podcast, *On My Mind*, continued to delight listeners with in-depth and insightful interviews with journalists, politicians, experts, and more. Notable guests from the past year include Dr. Anthony Fauci, Henry Louis Gates, Fiona Hill, Susan Glasser, Joy Harjo, and Representative Adam Schiff.



## **Events**

#### **Kojo In Our Community**

Kojo Nnamdi continued to gather the community together through his *Kojo in Our Community* event series. In 2021, he convened virtual conversations about issues that were top-of-mind for area residents, like racial and class disparities in health care, and how the pandemic has impacted local businesses. The events transitioned into a live, on-air call-in series in 2022 to bring residents more ways of connecting and joining the conversation. These shows covered topics like gun



HOTO PROVIDED BY KID MUSEUM

violence in the region, to how public schools have become centers of political debates, to how we make the roads safer for all.

Kojo was recognized for being a visionary changemaker and recipient of KID Museum's 2021 Community Maker Award in recognition of his extraordinary accomplishments fostering empathy, understanding and service to the community.



In May, WAMU held its first in-person event since 2019 for a special screening of the film "The Big Broadcast of 1938." The musical comedy film showcases the joy of old-time radio and stars iconic voices and characters from the day, including W.C. Fields, Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour, and Martha Raye. *The Big Broadcast* Host, Murray Horwitz, opened the event with an exclusive conversation with NPR's Scott Simon. The sold-out event marked a thrilling return to in-person events.



JILL AHROLD BAILEY, WAMU

## Year at a glance

radio station

> in the Washington, D.C., metro region\*



members



**4,21**8 members who

have been donors for 10+ years

**796** 

members who have been donors for 20+ years

216

members who have been donors for 30+ years

937

vehicles donated



\$1.5M

grossed from vehicle donations



Webby nomination



Public Media Journalists Association Awards

**Murrow Awards** 



James Beard Foundation Media Award

Society of Professional Journalists Awards



National
Association of Black
Journalists Awards



4,005
virtual event

in-person event attendees

# **Beyond the Region**



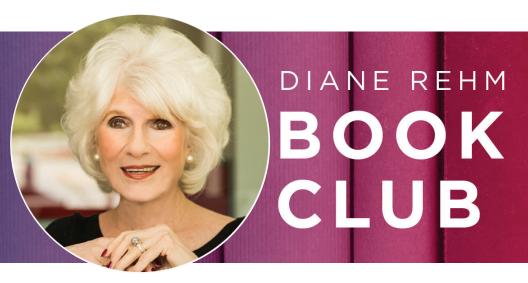
#### Remaking America

WAMU and 1A launched 1A Remaking America, a major reporting project covering the threats to America's democracy and convening conversations about how we can rebuild trust with each other. Remaking

America provides a platform for communication, comprehension, and change. The 1A team and partners work with listeners to get to the heart of the story, and go beyond it, by focusing on several key reporting areas including citizen spotlights, live events, explainer journalism, and listener-driven conversations. Over the next two years, the 1A team will partner with several public media stations across the country to deliver on-the-ground reporting and collaborative work on topics related to the growing political divides throughout the country. Partner stations include KVPR in Fresno, California; WBHM in Birmingham, Alabama; KUNC in Greeley, Colorado; KMUW in Wichita, Kansas; LPM in Louisville, Kentucky; and KUT News in Austin, Texas. Remaking America topics have ranged from anti-trans legislation, to the January 6 hearings, to the Supreme Court's shadow docket, to restrictive voting laws affecting Texas and beyond.

WAMU npr

Remaking America is built on the trailblazing success of 1A Across America, the show's first cross-country collaborative project that ran through 2021. 1A Remaking America is funded in part through a grant from The Corporation for Public Broadcasting and a gift from the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia/Novelli Apol Charitable Fund.



#### **Diane Rehm Book Club & Author Talks**

Since its inception in 2020, the virtual Diane Rehm Book Club events have been attended by nearly 14,000 community members locally and around the world. This year, Diane continued her book club discussions with panels of book critics and experts, and also held a handful of special, one-on-one conversations with authors about their latest work and careers. Her most poignant conversations included a discussion of "The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story" with three of the project's contributors and a personal conversation on love and loss with author Amy Bloom. The panel discussions are available to view on the Diane Rehm Book Club website, and the special author conversations have also aired on Diane's podcast, *On My Mind*.

#### **Hot Jazz Saturday Night**

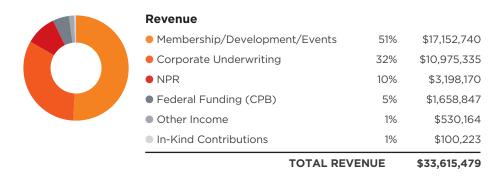
It's been two years since Hot Jazz Saturday Night returned to WAMU's airwaves, offering long-time listeners a Saturday evening musical respite from the world's events. Host and show creator, Rob Bamberger, curates three hours of vintage jazz, swing, and dance band music woven with compelling



stories about the era. Notable shows have included marking the centennial of the opening of the all-Black cast show "Shuffle Along" (1921) on Broadway, a special segment for the first national observance of Juneteenth, and a retrospective on the *Hot Jazz* program that aired four days after September 11, 2001.

# Your support made a difference

The report below covers American University and WAMU's fiscal year from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.





SURPLUS \$4,791,868

The resulting surplus was added to the WAMU Reserve Fund.

# Leading WAMU Forward

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Erika Pulley-Hayes, General Manager

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#### Legal Resource

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WAMU's mission and service to the community make it an integral and valued part of American University. The University provides critical support and expertise to WAMU, which is editorially independent and, like some other university units, is responsible for generating revenue to support its operations. WAMU's journalism and civic contributions are aligned with the University's commitment to community across the Washington, D.C., region. The American University Board of Trustees holds the broadcast license for the station.

## **THANK YOU**

Thank you to our donors, volunteers, corporate sponsors, and community partners for making all the initiatives from the last year possible; without your generosity and support, none of this would have been a reality.

WAMU would like to extend our gratitude to members of the Tower Society, foundations, and institutional funders who donated \$10,000 or more in the past fiscal year.

### **Tower Society Members**

(\$10,000 and above)

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Anonymous (2)

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#### Cover Image:

Khujasta Basiri and fellow Annandale High School graduates were exuding excitement for their futures on graduation day, June 1, 2022.
Photo: Tyrone Turner, WAMU/DCist

#### **Contact Us**

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