



Quarterly Public Issues

Fourth Quarter 2020: October 1 – December 31, 2020

Established in 2015, WNRN's Hear Together is a multifaceted program that aims to identify the real issues facing our communities and highlight the nonprofits working tirelessly to fulfill those needs. Hear Together addresses these issues through produced segments that aren't isolated in one place during our broadcast day or week, but rather are woven into each hour of our regular music programming. Hear Together's coverage is threefold: Hear Together Profiles are reported, interview-based features; Community Connections are public service announcements promoting nonprofits' causes or upcoming events, written in each nonprofit's own words and recorded in their own voice; Culture Connections are public service announcements outlining upcoming arts and cultural events in the region. By offering our nonprofit neighbors a platform to voice their mission at no cost, we hope to promote awareness and increase action and involvement among our listening audience.

Hear Together provides over \$1.3 million in free airtime to area nonprofits whose marketing budget is otherwise minimal or nonexistent. Recently, in response to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we continued to create initiatives to address the ongoing needs of our nonprofit partners through modifications to our programming. We worked closely with each nonprofit, altering their messages as conditions continued to change, and offering to temporarily voice their messages in-house. Furthermore, we broadened our scope to include nonprofits offering COVID relief funds or resources for community members. WNRN has been operating in a limited capacity since March, and in this time, has featured 85 unique nonprofits in the aforementioned areas through Community Connections. Of the nonprofits who participated in a voluntary feedback survey in August, 71% reported that their Community Connection was a successful tool for spreading awareness about their organization's needs and offerings.

We were also able to complete and launch a three-part series that we started recording last year, but that has become ever more timely in light of recent racial justice issues. A first of its kind for WNRN, Hearing Hidden Voices is a production of Hear Together committed to amplifying voices in our community, even when the spotlight has been turned off. Each profile highlights the work of a different Lynchburg native whose tenacity made seminal strides in the fight for inclusion and equality of the Black community in our area – and beyond. Featured icons include Tennis Hall of Famer Whirlwind Johnson, pioneering aviator Chauncey Spencer, and ticket taker at Lynchburg's Historic Academy of Music Theatre's segregated box office Lottie Payne Stratton. These stories air in regular rotation on our airwaves, and have a dedicated page on our website.

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We have been able to establish plans and protocols moving forward while still social distancing and being mindful of pandemic conditions. In accordance with reopening guidelines established by the Commonwealth of Virginia, WNRN has resumed in-person Community Connection recordings with our nonprofit neighbors in a limited capacity, with safety protocols in place. At this time, nonprofits may still opt to have their messages voiced by WNRN's Managing Producer in light of safety concerns.

To date, WNRN has won four Virginia Association of Broadcasters Awards for its public service: three awards in the Best Public Service/Community Event category for Community Connections and one in the category for Best Human Interest Series for Hear Together Profiles.