

## 2023 LOCAL CONTENT & SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

"I applaud your excellent coverage of local news and hope that you continue to cover both sides of upcoming issues."

- Edward S., Jacksonville

WJCT's mission is to use our unique assets as a resource for citizens to come together to celebrate human diversity, experience lifelong learning, and actively engage in matters of civic importance, all to improve the quality of our lives and our community.

Our vision for WJCT is to be an indispensable community resource, connecting citizens to content, sharing ideas, and setting the standards through which the community learns and grows.

#### **Local Value:**

WJCT Public Media is valuable to the First Coast community's advancement.

- Hosted 30 community events for all ages
- Published 120 entries for the Jax PBS KIDS Writers Contest from K-3 students on wict.org.

#### 2023 Key Services:

In 2023, WJCT Public Media provided vital local services.

- Reached 20,000 subscribers for *Jacksonville Today*, the digital-first local news daily newsletter.
- Expansion of Jacksonville Music Experience partnerships to include sponsorship of Winterland Festival, Porchfest, and concerts at the Blue Jay Listening Room and Intuition Ale Works.
- ADAPT continued its relationship with the City of Jacksonville presenting the annual State of the River event for the fifth consecutive year.

#### **Local Impact:**

WJCT Public Media's local services deeply impacted the Jacksonville area.

- Presented 15 Family & Community Learning Workshops at early learning centers across Duval County.
- Distributed 9,000 lbs. of cold-weather necessities during the Mister Rogers' Sweater Drive.
- Presented the TEACH Conference for 364 VPK 5th grade educators emphasizing the importance of children reaching critical developmental milestones.



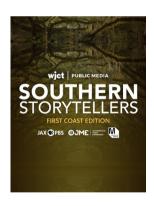
#### **Good Night Oppy**

WJCT Public Media and the Museum of Science and History (MOSH) cohosted a screening of *Good Night Oppy*, a poignant tribute to Opportunity, the Mars Exploration Rover affectionately known as "Oppy." The film chronicled Oppy's remarkable journey, defying expectations by exploring Mars for nearly 15 years despite being initially slated for just 90 days. Attendees were treated to an introduction by Eddie Whisler, director of the Bryan-Gooding Planetarium at MOSH, setting the stage for an enlightening afternoon immersed in the wonders of space exploration. The event, held at WJCT Studios on Sunday, April 20, drew an engaged audience of 163 citizens eager to celebrate Oppy's legacy and the spirit of exploration.



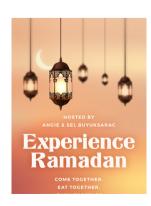
#### **An Evening with Amna Nawaz**

On October 3, WJCT Public Media hosted An Evening with Amna Nawaz, co-anchor of *PBS Newshour*, in conversation with David McGowan, President & CEO of WJCT Public Media attracting an audience of 174 citizens. The event commenced with a VIP reception, followed by a presentation at WJCT Studios. Attendees engaged in enlightening and engaging conversation with Amna Nawaz.



#### **Southern Storytellers: First Coast Edition**

In conjunction with the PBS series, *Southern Storytellers*, WJCT Public Media hosted an engaging evening celebrating the deep connection between artists and the South. Led by local storyteller Al Letson, the event featured a thought-provoking panel discussion, captivating performances by local artists, and exclusive previews of *Southern Storytellers*. Attendees had the opportunity to explore the unique stories and perspectives that shape Southern culture while experiencing the vibrant creativity of the region firsthand. Held at WJCT Studios on July 25, the event brought together a diverse audience of 230 citizens eager to immerse themselves in the rich tapestry of Southern heritage.



#### **Experience Ramadan**

For the first time, WJCT Public Media, Angie & Sel Buyuksarac, and the Atlantic Institute hosted a memorable evening of community and conversation as 67 guests gathered to break the fast together. Held at WJCT Studios on April 11, Experience Ramadan provided a welcoming space for meaningful dialogue and shared experiences. Attendees broke the fast together while engaging in discussions that fostered understanding and connection. Through this inclusive gathering, participants came together to celebrate diversity and unity, creating lasting memories of camaraderie and fellowship.

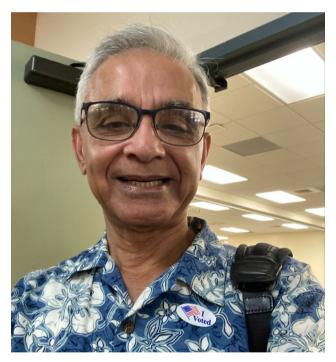


## Transition of Hosts: First Coast Connect Welcomes Anne Schindler as Permanent Host

WJCT Public Media's flagship weekday daily call-in radio program, First Coast Connect, transitioned from Melissa Ross to Al Letson (interim host), and ultimately to Anne Schindler as the permanent face of the show in 2023. Throughout this period of change, the program maintained its commitment to delivering insightful conversations with local newsmakers, civic leaders, artists, and activists. Under Letson's stewardship, the program continued to foster meaningful dialogue on the pressing issues impacting the First Coast community, while also providing a platform for diverse voices to be heard. Now, with Anne Schindler at the helm. First Coast Connect remains dedicated to its mission of informing, engaging, and empowering listeners, ensuring that it continues to serve as a vital resource for the community. The hour-long program airs weekdays at 9 AM on WJCT News 89.9 and is rebroadcast at 8 PM. Episodes are also available on-demand at news.wjct.org, through the WJCT app, and as a podcast on wjct.org/podcasts, or any commonly available podcast platform.

### Election Coverage through Jax Today Voter Guides

In the lead-up to the 2023 elections, *Jax Today* compiled comprehensive voter guides and included them in the *Jacksonville Today* newsletter and on jaxtoday.org. Covering a range of positions from the Jacksonville mayor to city council races to the Duval property appraiser, these guides provided valuable unbiased insights into the candidates' platforms and priorities. Viewed by over 65,000 people, these voter guides were essential for informed decision-making and local voting.







#### What's Health Got To Do With It? Live

Audiences joined Dr. Joseph I. Sirven, a neurologist and host of the weekly radio program What's Health Got To Do With It? and a panel of distinguished experts for a live discussion on pressing healthcare topics. This in-person event, recorded for future broadcast, marked the second season of WHGTDWI? the popular medical show featuring locally and internationally renowned health professionals. During the event on April 18 at WJCT Studios, the panelists, including Dr. Jennifer Cowart, a local hospitalist; Dr. Sunil Joshi, President of Family Allergy Asthma Consultants; and Chad Neilsen, MPH, Director of Infection Prevention at UF Health Jacksonville; delved into a range of topics, from the conclusion of the Covid pandemic emergency to the ongoing fight against high drug prices and the FDA's Alzheimer's disease drug debates. The 45 citizens that attended had the opportunity to engage with the experts, pose questions, and gain valuable insights into maintaining their health and well-being.

WHGTDWI? airs on Saturdays from 4–5 PM on WJCT News 89.9 FM and airs again on Sundays at 9 PM. Episodes are also available ondemand at news.wjct.org, through the WJCT app, and as a podcast on wjct.org/podcasts, or any commonly available podcast platform. What's Health Got To Do With It? is partly supported by the American Brain Foundation, the Eli Lilly, Neurelis, and Rethreaded Inc.

#### **Lunch & Learn Series**

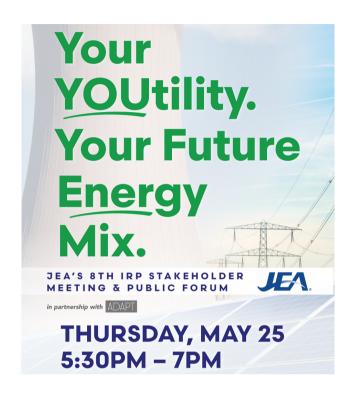
With a variety of community partners, WJCT Public Media hosted 11 free lunch and learn events at WJCT Studios covering health and retirement topics including:

- EoE & eosinophilic asthma
- Insulin resistance
- Fatty liver
- Cholesterol
- Strokes
- Alzheimer's
- Medicare
- Healthcare for seniors
- · Retirement planning
- Systemic lupus erythematosus

These community education events brought together doctors and leading medical experts who shared the most recent research and potential treatments for various health concerns. Other experts and skilled professionals with finance backgrounds educated citizens about retirement options and wealth management. Over 750 citizens gained invaluable information that is not always accessible, at no cost to the general public.





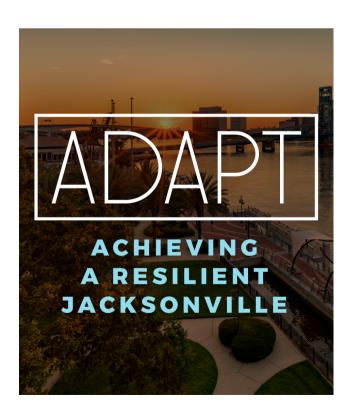


#### ADAPT: Your YOUtility, Your Future Energy Mix

On May 25, ADAPT and JEA hosted a community conversation titled "Your YOUtility, Your Future Energy Mix," focusing on JEA's plans for Northeast Florida's energy future. This event marked the 8th and final stakeholder meeting to develop JEA's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), which aims to balance reliability, affordability, and sustainability for the next three decades. Melissa Ross, Host/Executive Producer of Talk Shows at WJCT Public Media, was the moderator. The panel discussion featured Jay Stowe, managing director & CEO of JEA; Charles Moreland, deputy chief administrative Officer for the City of Jacksonville; Lisa Rinaman, riverkeeper at St. Johns Riverkeeper; Melanie Patz, president & CEO of United Way of Northeast Florida; and Sam Dean, director of plant facilities at Baptist Health. Over 130 attendees had the opportunity to engage in the discussion and participate in a Q&A session.

#### **ADAPT: Achieving a Resilient Jacksonville**

On Wednesday, November 8, Jacksonville Today's ADAPT hosted a panel discussion at WJCT Studios featuring key figures from Jacksonville, including Mayor Donna Deegan; Chief Resilience Officer Anne Coglianese; J. Logan Cross, executive committee chair of Sierra Club Northeast Florida; and Emily Pierce, regulatory and land use attorney at Rogers Towers. Led by moderator Jessica Palombo, editor of Jacksonville Today, the panel delved into the findings of the recently released Resilient Jacksonville report. This report highlighted local solutions addressing climate change-related issues such as flooding from sea level rise and extreme heat. With insights from diverse perspectives, including environmental advocacy represented by Cross from the Sierra Club and legal expertise provided by Pierce, the discussion offered valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities for building resilience in Jacksonville.



#### **Be My Neighbor Day**

Over 1200 First Coast children and family members gathered at WJCT Studios for the 7th annual Be My Neighbor Day on Saturday, May 13. In honor of *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood*, WJCT Public Media brought together friends and community partners in a free fun-filled Saturday festival sharing with families how to be caring neighbors.

#### Activities Included:

- decorating placemats to share with residents at Almost Home DayBreak,
- meeting a community helper and learning how children and families can be helpers too,
- · making a bookmark for someone learning to read,
- finding a cool place in their neighborhood to explore,
- and pledging to do something nice for a neighbor.

Over 30 community partners participated in the event, including new neighbors, Florida Masonic Child ID program, Northeast Florida Astronomical Society, and RoboThink First Coast. Jax PBS Kids Writers Contest winners read their stories to the live audience at Be My Neighbor Day. And the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department were on hand to meet kids and share safety tips.

Be My Neighbor Day is supported by PNC, Fred Rogers Productions, Baptist Health, Florida Prepaid, JEA, and Tom Bush Family of Dealerships.











#### **Mister Rogers' Sweater Drive**

WJCT Public Media partnered with VyStar Credit Union, Suddath, and the Tom Bush Family of Dealerships to collect and distribute sweaters, jackets, and blankets to members of the Jacksonville community. Over 9,000 lbs. of cold-weather necessities were collected throughout November as part of the 21st annual Mister Rogers' Neighborhood Sweater Drive. Representatives from WJCT Public Media, Suddath, VyStar Credit Union, and the Tom Bush Family of Dealerships gave out warm clothing and blankets to those in need at the Clara White Mission and City Rescue Mission on Wednesday, December 6.

#### **Read For The Record**

On October 26, WJCT Public Media urged the community to participate in the annual Read for the Record, organized by Jumpstart to promote children's early language and social-emotional development. This global initiative fosters intergenerational community engagement through shared reading experiences and emphasizes the importance of early literacy and access to inclusive literature. This year's selection, *With Lots of Love*, was given to Jax PBS KIDS Club members, and the campaign was shared on WJCT's social media channels, encouraging the community to read the same book on the same day.



#### **Jax PBS Kids Writers Contest**

For the 29th year, staff and community volunteers judged 120 stories, awarding 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place for each grade, for the Jax PBS Kids Writers Contest. Grade-level winners were:

#### Kindergarten:

- 1st Eliora Ngarlem Nemo the Fish
- 2nd Reyansh Joshi The Flying Firetruck
- 3rd A'nyah Jones Pepsi the Dog

#### First Grade:

- 1st Gilberto Garcia Fred the hero
- 2nd Kiara Wanchoo The Imaginary space town
- 3rd Taylor Thanh Phan Where is Mama?

#### Second Grade:

- 1st Mason Zichen Zhang Germs That Make Me Sick
- 2nd Alana Burwell Mafresco & Eli
- 3rd Ruohua (Sophia) Li Bullyed away. Emma and Kate. (Mission 4 at school)

#### Third Grade:

- 1st Alyssa Blough Magical Creature
- 2nd Arjun Varma Ruddarraju What Do I Really Like?
- 3rd Arjun Sanghavi MAN OVERBOARD!

Every author's story was published on the Writers Contest webpage at wjct.org. Grade-level winners were entered into the People's Choice contest, which garnered over 10,000 online votes. The People's Choice winner was *Fred the hero* by Gilberto G. whose story received 5,358 votes.













#### **A Luncheon with Charles Sennott**

WJCT Public Media and its Board of Trustees hosted A Luncheon with Charles Sennott, founder and editor-in-chief of The GroundTruth Project, at the River Club in downtown Jacksonville. The event, titled "Truthful, Fearless, Fair & Smart: A Model for Local Journalism," highlighted Sennott's extensive experience in journalism, spanning 30 years across international, national, and local platforms. As an award-winning correspondent and best-selling author, Sennott shared insights from his career reporting from the front lines of conflicts worldwide, including the post-9/11 conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and the 2011 Arab Spring. His commitment to supporting and training the next generation of journalists is evident through initiatives like Report for America, which he helped launch to expand local reporting efforts globally. With his rich background in local news and dedication to impactful storytelling, Sennott inspired attendees with his vision for the future of journalism.

#### **An Evening with Amna Nawaz**

On October 3, WJCT Public Media organized An Evening with Amna Nawaz, featuring the esteemed co-anchor of *PBS Newshour*. In conversation with David McGowan, president & CEO of WJCT Public Media, Nawaz captivated the audience of 174 guests at WJCT Studios. The evening began with a VIP reception, setting the stage for an engaging presentation where attendees interacted with Nawaz and participated in enlightening conversation.

#### **TEACH**

WJCT Public Media presented the 8th annual TEACH conference on February 25, at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront, offering a day-long event tailored for VPK - 5th grade educators. The conference, presented in partnership with VyStar Credit Union, featured distinguished keynote speakers Ralph Smith and Sonia Manzano, who inspired 364 attendees with their insights and expertise. Managing director of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, Ralph Smith delivered an impactful morning address, emphasizing ensuring children reach critical developmental milestones. In the afternoon, Sonia Manzano, known for her groundbreaking role as "Maria" on Sesame Street, captivated the audience with her commitment to diversity and education. Attendees had the opportunity to participate in 21 educational breakout sessions and network with peers. The event gave educators valuable resources and insights to enhance their teaching practices. With VyStar Credit Union's Veronica Session-Fennell as the honorary chair, the conference showcased the commitment of both organizations to empower educators and enrich the community.

The Jacksonville Music Experience (JME) is an online platform dedicated to local music and curation on jaxmusic.org. The refreshed platform includes new features, short-form music reviews, curated playlists, long-form profiles of local musicians, weekly updates, a local music calendar, and concert recommendations, giving users a continuous range of music to discover and enjoy.

JME expanded its services to include full integration of NPR Live Sessions, providing access for local artists to national and international audiences. The JME team worked with both local and touring bands to record on-location performances (at the Blue Jay Listening Room, Hotel Palms, and Intuition Ale Works) and in-studio performances on the WJCT Soundstage including:

- Mattson 2 (Hotel Palms)
- Susto (Intuition)
- Howdy (Intuition)
- Bobby Kid (WJCT Soundstage)
- flipturn (WJCT Soundstage)

#### **Reach in the Community:**

- 3,300 subscribers to the weekly JME newsletter
- 6,000 visits to the interactive festival guide for Porch Fest
- 200,000 visits to the JME website (jaxmusic.org)

#### **Partnerships:**

- Florida Theatre Benise performed live at the WJCT Soundstage
- Blue Jay Listening Room JME Showcase Series partnered with Blue Jay Listening Room
- Winterland a two-day, free music festival in Downtown Jacksonville
- Porchfest Created interactive festival guide









#### **Impact and Community Feedback:**

"JME provides a platform for local artists that makes us feel seen, heard and valued. They give attention to quality music makers in every genre. Prior to JME, when local music was covered, it rarely meant music outside of the rock, country or folk scene. I love that they don't simply talk about local artists but they provide performance opportunities pairing them with unique acts that tour the world and wouldn't otherwise stop through Jacksonville. I'm also grateful for JME as a music consumer as they have become a trusted source for new music. Their team has an exceptionally keen eye/ear for music curation, evidenced by their reviews, playlists and showcases which are stellar and unique."

- Jay Myztroh, locally based musician, conductor, composer and vocal instructor at Jacksonville Arts and Music School (JAMS) Jacksonville Today is more than just a newsletter—it's a resource for over 20,000 readers seeking to stay informed and engaged. As a nonprofit local journalism service, Jacksonville Today delivers the local news Northeast Florida residents need to know in an easy-to-read format. With original reporting, exclusive analysis, and diverse perspectives on everything from local politics to cultural happenings, Jacksonville Today offers a comprehensive view of Jacksonville. Jacksonville Today is a member of The Institute for Nonprofit News.

#### Reach in the Community:

- Over 20,000 subscribers to the Jax Today newsletter
- 1.08M visits to the Jax Today site (jaxtoday.org)

#### **Impact and Community Feedback:**

"I enjoy waking up and receiving a snapshot of efficient, quality, and up-to-date unbiased news that apprises me of the day-to-day unravelings in Jax and its surrounding counties."

- Ah'Nay S., Jacksonville

"I love getting my news from you. The sensationalism that most news outlets have make them unwatchable/readable to me. How else can I get such great local news. Local is so important and in the past I was not informed locally and that was a huge gap in my understanding of the world I live in. So thanks so much for all that you do."

- Mary H.

"Thank you for all you do. It's wonderful having comprehensive local news stories. Thanks again." - Sheri L., Jacksonville





# "My kids and I had so much fun yesterday! Thank you and WJCT for putting on such a great event for the community."

- Amber P., parent of Jax PBS KIDS Writers Contest contestant and Be My Neighbor Day attendee

#### WJCT Public Media by the Numbers...

228 Over 20,000 70,100 hours of educational 756,960 citizens received the standards-based weekday daily homes reached children's Jacksonville Today by Jax PBS programming per newsletter week 624 315,427 169,141 hours of local 4,732 programming users for the JME attended in-person annually on WJCT's and virtual events website Radio Reading Service

WJCT Public Media significantly impacted the First Coast through its diverse range of programming, community initiatives, and educational resources.

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Sahar Aboudan

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Josephine B. Adamson

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Glenn Anders

Patricia Q. Anderson

Beville and Greg Anderson

Louise and Jon Anderson

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Barbara Aylsworth

Karen Backilman

Anne and John Baker

Margaret Baker

Martha and Tom Baker

Michelle Baldacci

Chris and Willis Ball

Christopher and Elizabeth Ball

Patricia and James Ballinger

Theresa Barengo

Kristanna Barnes

Michael and Susan Batten

Jane Beadles

Dan Bean and Anne Borngesser-Bean

David and Gloria Beeman

Eli and Martha Bekkum

Dwayne Beliakoff

Karen Berger

Vance and Clare Berry

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Sudhir and Prasanna Prabhu Joanne and Ed Pratt-Dannals

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Laila Samiian and Ehan Shirazi

Ralph and Adelva Sawyer

Susan West Schantz and Fred Schantz

Thomas and Natalie Schanze

**Margaret Schiffers** 

In memory of Marjorie E. Schmidt

Faith Schonfeld

Mr. and Mrs. R. Selover

Justin Sencer

Janet and Joseph Sexton\*\*

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