



TWIN  
CITIES  
PBS

20  
20



# report to the community

september 1, 2019 - august 31, 2020



TPT

IN 2020  
RESPONDS TO COVID-19  
CONFRONTS RACISM  
UNEARTHS ORIGIN STORIES  
INSPIRES HEROES  
ADAPTS EDUCATION  
BUILDS STEM INNOVATORS  
SPARKS LIFELONG LEARNING  
SPEAKS TO ALL AGES  
INFORMS MINNESOTANS  
CONTEXTUALIZES HISTORY  
SHARES LOCAL STORIES

**cover photo credits** (clockwise from top):  
Kyeland Jackson; Twin Cities PBS;  
Lorie Shauli; Krysta Scriptor; Twin Cities PBS

2020

2,413,497  
television viewers

109,411  
members

54,680  
sustaining members

12  
upper midwest regional  
emmy nominations

4  
emmy awards

368  
volunteers

2,479  
volunteer hours

# interrupted

2020 was a year of extraordinary change and challenge. In February, Twin Cities PBS (TPT) welcomed Sylvia Strobel as its 6th President and CEO. Three weeks later, the coronavirus took hold in Minnesota. Two months after that, the killing of George Floyd sparked a national reckoning for racial justice.

In a year that might best be described as “unprecedented,” TPT stepped up with fact-based information, accessible and highly engaging educational programming, and media that brings people together – even from a distance.



# tpt responds to covid-19

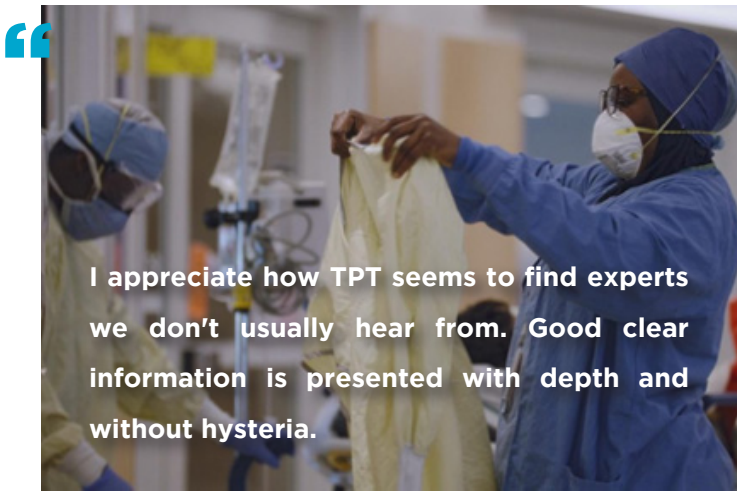
When the coronavirus began to spread in Minnesota and nationwide, TPT responded quickly and decisively to help our audiences navigate the pandemic – with content, care, and connection.

## content

With new information emerging by the hour, TPT vetted and delivered timely health and safety information directly from the source.

### ALMANAC

In February, TPT’s public affairs team launched **Coronavirus: An Almanac Special**, a 30-minute broadcast that aired on Friday nights for 16 weeks. Designed to deliver essential information and answer viewer questions, including in multiple languages, the special weekly broadcast was also picked up by dozens of other media outlets reaching communities across the state.



credit: frontline

### TPT NOW

TPT’s multi-lingual, 24/7 broadcast and online emergency preparedness and response system shared timely and essential messaging about COVID-19 in up to 8 languages. Working closely with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Governor’s office, as well as with its certified linguists, several community partners and a network of cultural and community-based media outlets, TPT NOW produced and widely disseminated:

- Real-time, multi-lingual broadcasts of several Governor Walz/MDH news conferences.
- Long- and short-form videos on quarantine, social distancing, isolation, and mental health.
- Dozens of PSAs and social media messaging in multiple languages focused on preventing the spread of COVID-19.

TPT NOW received the 2021 Public Media Award for COVID-19 Community Engagement from the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA) in recognition of its groundbreaking work.

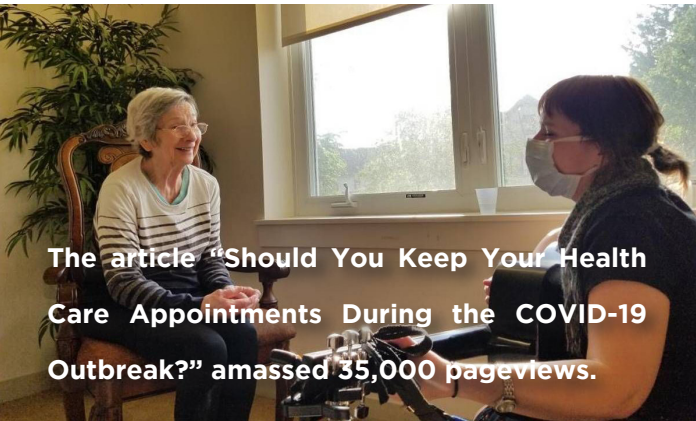
## care

TPT’s digital platforms offered timely content to help readers take care of themselves and others.

### NEXT AVENUE

As the pandemic struck, Next Avenue hustled to serve its national audience of older adults – many of whom are particularly vulnerable to the virus. Next Avenue has answered hundreds of readers’ questions through 200+ originally reported articles of essential health information, personal experiences, and thought leadership.

The industry leader has helped its readers navigate every stage of the pandemic – from prevention, diagnosis and management of symptoms, to caregiving, end-of-life planning, and grief. This exceptional work has been featured in Harvard University’s Nieman Journalism Lab, Current, and a panel on journalism innovation for the PBS Major Market Group.



credit: willow gardens memory care

## connection

As social distancing led to social isolation, TPT helped audiences connect to friends, neighbors, and even strangers.

### HIPPOCRATES CAFÉ

Co-produced with University of Minnesota Medical School’s Center for the Art of Medicine, this one-hour show shared intimate performances by 27 artists on the impact of COVID-19 through music, art, animation, photography, story, poetry, and dance.



I’m due July 5 with a C-section planned for the week prior...the same time cases are supposed to hit the top of the curve! I’m really looking forward to this! It makes me feel less alone in this insanity!

### PREGNANT IN THE TIME OF CORONAVIRUS

With uncertainty, fear and isolation at its height, this short-form series followed the experience of pregnancy shared by approximately 6 million women in the US during the pandemic.



# tpt confronts racism

TPT expanded and accelerated its work to offer historical context and space for reflection and healing as Minnesotans reckoned with racial health inequities, police brutality, and national protests for racial justice.

## RACISM UNVEILED

In April, TPT launched *Racism Unveiled*, a multi-year, multi-platform initiative designed to explore racism and racial inequities in Minnesota. Community-centered and impact-driven, the initiative combines community voice, journalism, interview, history, and first-person story to explore the legacy and impact of racism in Minnesota and illuminate solutions.

## DULUTH LYNCHINGS: 100 YEARS LATER

2020 marked the 100th anniversary of the horrific lynching of Elias Clayton, Elmer Jackson, and Isaac McGhie by a white mob in Duluth in 1920. In partnership with the Minnesota Humanities Center, TPT hosted a live virtual event for over 800 participants. Nine expert panelists reflected on the parallel failures of historic and modern criminal justice systems, the devaluing of African American lives, and steps we can take as a society.



credit: matt mead

## TALKING ABOUT RACE

Rewire launched a new content series in spring 2020, *Talking About Race*. In FY20, Rewire published 27 original stories to this growing collection, such as:

- ‘Our Culture is Beautiful’: The Voices of Indigenous TikTok
- Black Anxiety: How to Talk to Your Therapist About Racism
- Transracial Adoptees are Facing an Identity Reckoning

## BLACK MEDIA STORY SUMMIT

TPT and Black Public Media hosted the Regional Black Media Story Summit in February 2020. The all-day gathering for, by, and about Black content creators included roundtable and panel discussions to address the legacy of media narratives, the next generation of creators, and centering Black voices in media.

“Thank you for sharing this article it was so inspiring to see today’s youth engaged and sharing their experiences with so many.”

240,000  
pageviews of collection

# tpt unearths origin stories

As our state continues to change and diversify, TPT joined with the five other stations in the Minnesota Public Television Association to develop and launch *Moving Lives Minnesota: Stories of Origin and Immigration*. Grounded in more than 13 hours of community listening sessions, the initiative combines digital, broadcast, and user-generated content to engage statewide audiences in story sharing.

## COMING TO MNI SOTA

This original documentary explores conflicts, contradictions, and solidarity among the millions who have moved through, and to, Minnesota. By examining our state’s narratives, communities reveal unique stories that lead to greater understanding.



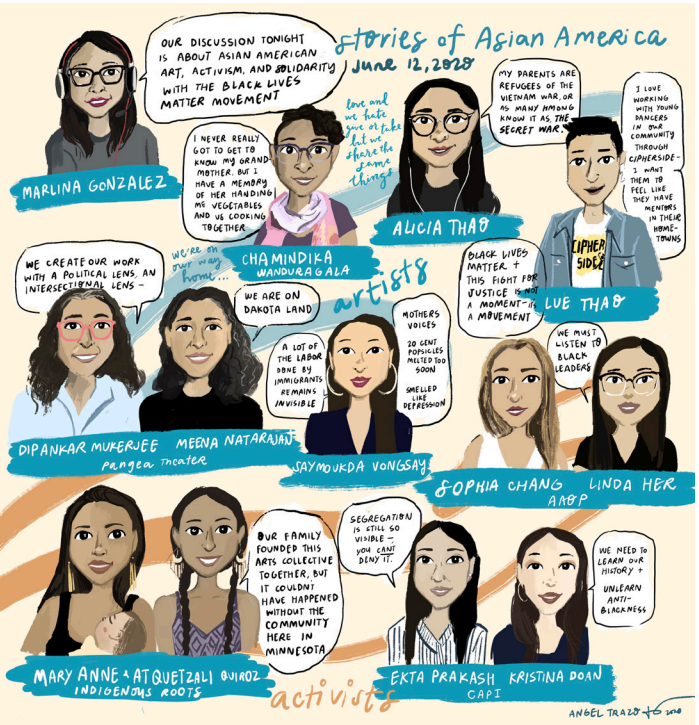
“You do great work chronicling the culture and history of our communities. We all hope to look back some day and say, ‘I’m glad I was there and I’m glad they shared our story.’”

## DEAR MINNESOTA

The audience-generated, multi-media project invites Minnesotans to share their own stories of origin and immigration by writing a letter that can include pictures, audio recordings, and video. TPT has gathered letters from participants across Minnesota, multiple generations, diverse backgrounds, and origins around the world - Ukraine, Philippines, Norway, Laos, Togo, Mexico, and regions of the United States.

## ASIAN AMERICANS

The two-part virtual event series highlighted the history, artistic expression, and experience of Asian Americans in Minnesota, coupled with broadcast of *ASIAN AMERICANS*. The events drew more than 350 people, 92% of whom said they learned more about Asian Americans and US history.



credit: angel trazio



# tpt inspires heroes

In June 2020, TPT premiered **Hero Elementary**, a new multi-platform, animated series for PBS KIDS national audiences. Five years in the making, the series is designed for children in grades K-2 with an emphasis on Latinx communities, children with disabilities, English Language Learners, and children from low-income households.

## TELEVISION

**Hero Elementary** is distributed on PBS KIDS, named by parents as the number one educational media brand for children. The first season includes 40 original, half-hour episodes and earned a 5-star rating for family programming from Common Sense Media.

“Halfway through the first episode, my son said, ‘AJ is my favorite because he has autism like me.’ I asked how we knew that, if it had been stated on the show. He answered, ‘I can just tell.’ We are so grateful that he sees parts of himself in a science superhero!”

## DIGITAL

Learners can power up with 25 science-themed playlists - online collections of related videos, digital or analog games, hands-on science activities, non-fiction e-books, Science Power Notebook, educator assets, and parent and caregiver resources.

108,000,000  
video streams since launch



## ENGAGEMENT

On the ground, **Hero Elementary** has engaged 54 formal and informal education partners nationwide, serving 3,500 students, averaging 55 hours program time per student. Certified trainers have trained more than 800 educators and provided more than 350 hours of professional development.



## RESEARCH

The groundbreaking research initiative tests all content with children to gather feedback and make changes across the development process. The program also includes embedded learning analytics to track student progress and make changes based on data.

# tpt adapts education

Last spring, TPT mobilized a cross-departmental team to respond to the urgent needs of educators, parents and children. The result was **TPT Learn**, a substantially expanded education initiative designed to leverage the power of educational media to engage and serve teachers and learners of all ages in Minnesota. All TPT Learn content is informed by an external Advisory Board of parents, educators, and nonprofit leaders.



### CREATE

new educational resources



### CURATE

existing TPT & PBS resources

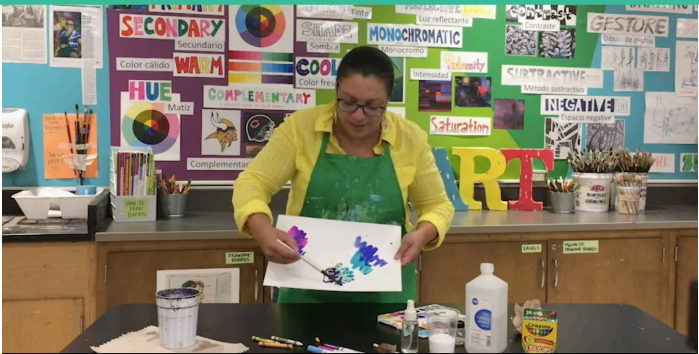


### ACTIVATE

resources in community

## PARTNER POWER

TPT collaborates with local educational organizations like Minneapolis Beacons Clubs, Neighborhood House, and Saint Paul Sprockets to provide media and hands-on learning for kids and educators in the afterschool space.



## TPT FOR TEACHERS

PBSLearningMedia.org provides thousands of free, standards-aligned learning resources to 2 million educators nationwide. TPT Learn will substantially build the Minnesota-focused content, leveraging existing and new TPT programming in the areas of arts and culture, history and civics, and STEM.

## FAMILY FUN

TPT invites kids, parents, and caregivers to monthly Second Saturdays and the annual Be My Neighbor Day with Daniel Tiger. Now virtual, revolving hosts invite families to play along with STEM experiments, yoga practice, or dance parties - all suited for home, available for on-demand access, and usable in other settings like day care programs.

“Frankly, we were blown away... [our son] literally ran around the final room from activity to activity with such happiness and excitement that we’ve only seen on rare occasions.”



# tpt builds stem innovators

For over 30 years, TPT has inspired youth to explore learning and careers in science, tech, engineering, and math (STEM). Anchored by the award-winning **SciGirls** multi-media initiative, TPT's STEM education department delivers broadcast, hands-on activities, outreach and engagement, professional development, and much more.

## SCIGIRLS

**Code SciGirls!** (Season 5) premiered in December 2019, with new episodes, a digital game, workshops and outreach focused on computer science and coding. TPT launched production for **SciGirls in Space** (Season 6), a blended series empowering girls to explore space science education and career paths. Finally, TPT secured support for **SciGirls in the National Parks** (Season 7), exploring citizen science in all its wild forms in 16 National Parks across the nation.



## EMPOWERING EDUCATORS

TPT trained 10 educators from across Minnesota for **SciGirls Strategies**. Each educator will train 10 high school STEM teachers in gender equitable and culturally responsive instruction, ultimately reaching 100+ Minnesota educators. TPT has also trained 1,000+ Minnesota educators in coding instruction to date as the state's lead partner for Code.org. Plus, 52 professional STEM women participated in role model training.



## POR LA FAMILIA

In FY20, TPT continued **CerebroEdu** with a short-form media series and training for 12 educators, reaching 750+ Latinx children and their families on neuroscience and mental health with resources in Spanish and English.

# tpt sparks lifelong learning

TPT's National Production unit focused on production and program development for major new projects for the PBS system.

## LAURA INGALLS WILDER: PRAIRIE LEGEND



The one-hour documentary takes an unvarnished look at the unlikely author whose autobiographical fiction helped shape American ideas of the frontier and self-reliance. Publishing her first novel at age 65, Laura Ingalls Wilder transformed her frontier childhood into the best-selling "Little House" series. Premiered on *American Masters* in December 2020.

## SUZE ORMAN'S ULTIMATE RETIREMENT GUIDE

Acclaimed personal finance expert Suze Orman provides essential advice on planning for and thriving in retirement. Since its March premiere, the pledge special has raised \$6.5 million for stations nationwide.

## FAST-FORWARD

The new film for PBS follows 4 Millennials, each paired with one of their parents, as they simulate being 85. The families grapple with the realizations, actions, and mindset required to age successfully. TPT will pair the film with a rich editorial collection and action-focused toolkit from Next Avenue. *Premiere in March 2021.*

## WHEN WHALES WALKED: JOURNEYS IN DEEP TIME

After this film's successful 2019 premiere, TPT hosted 7 Family Fossil Festivals nationwide using the film, hands-on activities, and virtual reality game to engage families in co-learning about deep time and evolution. These resources helped families increase their comfort level and learning around science, see connections between science and their lives, and feel greater capability to help their children with science.



“Awesome seeing many of the methods used in modern science and making them accessible.”



# tpt speaks to all ages

With engaged readers across the nation, TPT's digital publishing platforms, **Rewire** and **Next Avenue**, helped young adults and older adults navigate the many challenges of 2020.

## REWIRE

In addition to its work responding to COVID-19 and engaging audiences in conversation around race and racism, Rewire also sought out new writers and voices for fresh content on topics including health, money, work and relationships, suicide awareness, mental health, and self-care.



65% of Rewire's story sources and interviews were with BIPOC folks

Rewire also continued **Sound Field**, the award-winning digital series exploring the music theory, production, history, and culture behind our favorite songs and musical styles. The episode "Wait...Where Did Dubstep Go?" garnered more than 2.1 million views.



## NEXT AVENUE

Next Avenue worked every day to provide older Americans with the information, support and inspiration they need to navigate the experience of aging. In addition to Next Avenue's extensive work related to COVID-19, the team produced:

- **Still Here, Still Positive**, a multi-part series about Americans aging with HIV/AIDS.
- **In Good Company**, an impact-driven initiative designed to mitigate loneliness among older Americans.
- **Telling Our Stories**, a dozen moving essays submitted and read aloud by our readers.



credit: ash ponders, eve edelheit, amanda andrade-rhoades, bridget caswell

# tpt informs minnesotans

In addition to its comprehensive coverage of COVID-19, **Almanac** and its sister broadcast, **Almanac at the Capitol**, provided depth and illumination to statewide public affairs and policy issues.

## ALMANAC

In FY20, TPT continued its long legacy of providing trusted, fact-based reporting on political and public affairs issues. Both **Almanac** and **Almanac at the Capitol** delivered reliable, balanced journalism to Minnesotans statewide.



77% of Almanac's survey respondents feel more connected to the state of Minnesota and its people



credit: kyeland jackson

## REPORT FOR AMERICA

**Almanac** was awarded a Report for America fellow, Kyeland Jackson, an early-career reporter who joined the program to report on racial disparities through the lens of data journalism.

## ONE GREATER MINNESOTA

**Almanac's** One Greater Minnesota reporter Kaomi Lee covered 33 new stories from around the state on issues like telemedicine, meat shortages, rural journalism, and more.

I love the idea that the show is not so Twin Cities-centric. It's good to be reminded that we're a big state.



credit: kyeland jackson





# tpt contextualizes history

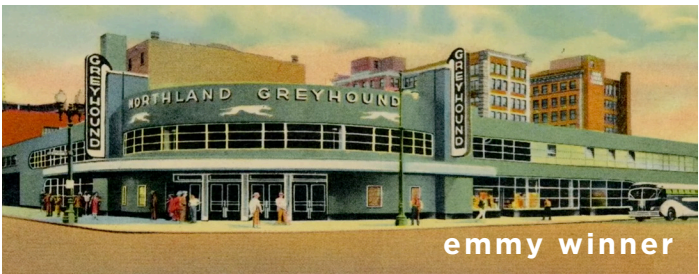
TPT's history series, **Minnesota Experience**, aired its second season with 13 new documentaries and a podcast.

## BECOMING BIG LEAGUE

The second season premiere explored Minnesota's most dynamic year in sports, 1960. The film delves into Olympic hockey, high-school hoops, pro-sports origins in Big Ten titles, and the beginning of a renaissance in women's athletics.



## FIRST AVENUE: CLOSER TO THE STARS



A “possibly true story” of the legendary Minneapolis nightclub, First Avenue, the one-hour episode explores the legacies of both onstage and backstage talents who have kept this landmark standing. In addition to its broadcast, the film was played nearly 8,000 times online.

## THIS FREE NORTH

This co-production celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the University of Minnesota's African American Studies program. Screened before a capacity audience in the University of Minnesota's Northrop Auditorium, the film reflects on the people and events that led to the program's formation and its influence on students today.



## LONG LOST

In its first podcast, the Minnesota Experience team collaborated with author Jack El-Hai to explore the unsolved case of the Klein brothers who went missing in Minneapolis in 1951 and were never seen again. Ranked in the top 20% of Apple Podcasts, the 6-part series drew more than 80,000 plays in 65 countries.

“ I listen to a lot of historical crime podcasts and I really appreciate that Long Lost focuses on both the human experience and impact of such a tragedy on the family and community. I really hope this podcast helps to open the case back up and find answers.

# tpt shares local stories

TPT's newest platform, **TPTOriginals.org**, is a multimedia storytelling hub that presented a wide range of stories, articles and films all aimed at inspiring Minnesotans to dive deeper into this place we call home.



credit: getty images

## SPORTSTALK

Celebrating the games Minnesotans love to play, the collection chronicles stories of hockey, baseball, and the ancient Hmong game, tuj lub.

35,000  
users per month

## RELISH

Chef Yia Vang of Union Hmong Kitchen takes viewers inside the home kitchens of local chefs as they prepare an ingredient or dish that has personal and cultural meaning to them. Each digital episode is served up with two recipes.



credit: xee reiter

## JIM CROW OF THE NORTH

As Americans sought to understand the roots of systemic racism, **Jim Crow of the North**, TPT's groundbreaking 2019 documentary on the history of redlining in Minneapolis, catapulted to over 1 million views on the TPTOriginals YouTube channel from across the United States and internationally.



## UNDER ONE ROOF

The collection of stories unpacks the complexity of Minnesota's affordable housing challenges from a variety of perspectives. Community-centered research led to the first-ever East Side Housing Summit, and included several additional convenings and collaborations.



**enrich  
lives and  
strengthen  
community  
through the  
power of media.**

**tpt.org**