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# Engaging WUMB's Community Beyond Broadcast

Patricia Monteith

*University of Massachusetts Boston, pat.monteith@comcast.net*

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# ENGAGING WUMB'S COMMUNITY BEYOND BROADCAST:

*working collaboratively to discover, understand, and address local community needs and aspirations.*

*Patricia Monteith, General Manager, WUMB-FM, UMass Boston*



## Summary/Abstract

WUMB-FM, UMass Boston's National Public Radio affiliate, has a listenership of more than 100,000 people weekly.

Through its 7 station network, WUMB has a reach that extends throughout the greater Boston area and beyond into 4 neighboring New England states. Via the internet, WUMB reaches listeners in all 50 states and 113 countries. As a media outlet for the University, WUMB engages in a variety of community service activities throughout the Greater Boston area and beyond, acting as an independent non-profit media organization focused on serving the needs of the university's local, regional and virtual constituents.

WUMB draws upon these world-wide resources to engage in a variety of local community service activities beyond the daily operation of its core station.

## Goals and Objectives

*Through various community efforts, WUMB's objective is to serve the community, while raising awareness about WUMB's programming and our online/broadcast presence. WUMB's key community goals are to:*

- **Build Relevance:** WUMB strives to become an increasingly essential part of the way our community expresses itself and addresses issues.
- **Impact Behavior:** WUMB works to learn about the issues important to our community, and collaborates with partners who can help us address those needs. In this way, we become a catalyst for positive interaction and community change.
- **Strengthen Community:** WUMB engages with our community in part by being a convener, bringing people and organizations together in common purpose to create new opportunities for the community.
- **Enhance Diversity:** A commitment to Community Engagement pushes us to create connections across the full breadth of the community.
- **Increase Value:** The greater our impact on the lives of individuals in our community, the more they value the station. The station becomes more important to the community.

## Results

**1) Providing Aid to Those in Need: Warm Clothing Drive** – For 7 years, in partnership with the UMB Golden Key Society and nineteen Boston-area coffeehouses, WUMB annually collected 3,200 pounds of clothes that were donated to local shelters and community organizations.



**2) Learning about Literature: The Big Read** – WUMB has formed partnerships with 50 Boston-area libraries, high schools and community organizations over four years. Programs, activities and reading groups for more than 10,000 adults and students include "Meet the Author" events, a live cross-cultural videocast between high school students in Egypt and Brighton and competitive, fun game shows between local high schools. Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.



**3) Inspiring the Next Generation: Harmonicas for Kids** – In December, 2011 more than 40 students learned to play harmonica and learned about Blues music. The Dever-McCormack Middle School incorporated harmonica lessons into the curriculum. Each student received a free harmonica to take home.



**4) Supporting the Creative Economy: Local Economic Development** – As an incubator of creative workers and businesses primarily in the area of folk music, WUMB has an annual impact on the Boston area economy of \$3.5 million.



**5) Giving a Voice to the Under-represented: Commonwealth Journal** - This weekly talk show, primarily with greater Boston community organizations and people who may not otherwise be recognized, is hosted by UMass Boston faculty and staff and syndicated to 30 radio stations in Massachusetts.



## Approaches and Methods

WUMB-FM has developed a community ascertainment process to determine local needs and best methods for community service. This process includes information gathered from:

- the WUMB community advisory board,
- surveys distributed to local community leaders and organizations,
- meetings with community leaders and organizations,
- the UMass Boston faculty & staff *Commonwealth Journal* advisory panel,
- discussions with *Commonwealth Journal* guests,
- correspondence with campus and community stakeholders and our listeners, and
- social media.

## Key Partnerships

WUMB greatly appreciates the support of dozens of campus departments and external organizations whose efforts over the years have assisted us in meeting our community engagement goals. These include:

- Adams Branch, Boston Public Library
- Arts Midwest
- Mass Humanities
- Massachusetts Cultural Council
- Boston Area Coffeehouse Association and area coffeehouses
- Boston Museum of Science
- Dever-McCormack K-8 School
- John F. Kennedy Library
- National Endowment for the Arts
- UMass Boston Asian American Institute
- UMass Boston GoKids
- UMass Boston Golden Key Society
- UMass Boston Office of Community Engagement
- UMass Boston Osher Life Long Learning Institute
- UMass Boston William Monroe Trotter Institute