

# client spotlight

SOUTH FLORIDA PBS

# THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

South Florida PBS produces entertaining and educational original TV series for viewers of all ages, but that's only the beginning when it comes to the company's community outreach.



Everyone knows iconic PBS shows like *Masterpiece Theater*, and I bet you can hum all the songs from *Sesame Street*. But did you know there is a local PBS network in South Florida that produces its own local TV programming and hosts scores of live events each year in its viewing area, which ranges from Key West to Sebastian Inlet and from the Atlantic Ocean to Lake Okeechobee, serving approximately 6.3 million viewers?

"South Florida PBS is the largest public media company in Florida," said Jeneissy Azcuy, vice president of marketing and communications.

The company has roots dating back to 1955, with the founding of WPBT2, the public broadcasting station for Miami-Dade and Broward counties, and to 1969, when the precursor to WXEL, got its start. In 2015, WPBT and WXEL merged to create South Florida PBS which is presently experiencing a period of blossoming growth and creativity.

The company airs a long list of PBS programs, including over 10 locally-produced series, providing its viewers with lifelong learning experiences and celebrating our cultural diversity. As a testament to the creativity of the South Florida PBS team, led by President and CEO Dolores Sukhdeo, many of its productions have earned major awards.

A good example is *Kid Stew*, a recent addition to the programming lineup created by best-selling author James Patterson and co-produced by South Florida PBS. The series, which encourages kids to learn more about reading, the arts, culture and STEM, has a fast-paced, irreverent tone that has proven popular with its pre-teen audience. Last year, *Kid Stew* won five 2018 Regional Emmy Awards in its first season!

Preschool children are the audience for *KidVision Pre-K*, an original South Florida PBS production that not only makes learning fun for tots, but also provides guidance for parents and professional

development tools for teachers. Among the series' digital offerings are "virtual field trips" for preschool children guided by Miss Penny, the face of *KidVision Pre-K*. Teachers can use these "virtual field trips" to bring the world to their classrooms, while earning Continuing Education Units (CEUs) in the process.

South Florida PBS also produces highly topical environmental programming, including the documentary series *Changing Seas*, which takes viewers around the globe to learn about scientific discoveries in the oceans. Now in its 12th season, *Changing Seas* has won 9 Emmy Awards.

Closer to home, the series *Battleground Everglades* explores the current plight of the Florida Everglades and the impact of pollution on its fragile ecosystem.

In the public affairs arena, in addition to its monthly *Your South Florida* program, South Florida PBS produced a one-hour live special, *Parkland: The Way Forward*, with the Florida SunSentinel, which discussed solutions for mental health, gun policy and school safety in the wake of the 2018 shootings at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. The program, which aired in March 2018, was nominated for an Emmy.

But the South Florida PBS' commitment to providing lifelong learning doesn't stop at the "small screen". "Our community outreach events deliver enveloping experiences that are true to our mission of enriching lives and strengthening our diverse communities through on-air and online content,

experiential learning, and community engagement and outreach. Our goal is to create life-long learners of our viewers by providing them opportunities to actively immerse themselves in the programs on South Florida PBS (WXEL and WPBT) by engaging with our staff and the experts featured in the programs who provide local and current context," said Sukhdeo.

South Florida PBS' annual calendar of public events includes



Above: Best-selling author James Patterson with the cast from *Kid Stew*, a recent addition to the programming lineup created by the author and co-produced by South Florida PBS. Below: A panel of experts weigh in during a recent screening event.



a wide range of offerings from children's reading parties with Miss Penny to lectures by noted scientists, concerts and other cultural activities. "We do a lot of events throughout the Tri-County area," Azcuy said. "Each one is attended by 100 to 300 people, and we do about 70 events a year."

Many of these events complement a South Florida PBS TV series, such as public screenings of *Changing Seas* episodes. "Throughout the year, *Changing Seas* also attends fairs and festivals focusing on the environment where they educate the community about the program and teach residents how they can help protect our seas," Azcuy said.

In order to keep the public informed about its upcoming shows and activities, South Florida PBS produces a monthly Program Guide that is printed and mailed by Southeastern. During the winter months, The Guide is sent to around 30,000 South Florida PBS members and donors, and it also is distributed at the company's events.

"In addition, we print their Annual Report, entitled *A Year in Review*; their 18-Month Calendar, plus other marketing material," said Craig Swanson, Southeastern Printing strategic sales, who has been working with the South Florida PBS team for decades. "We also produce wide-format items for them, like Retractable Banners," he added.

Swanson works closely with Azcuy, along with South



Top: A backdrop of the many original programs produced or co-produced by South Florida PBS that have won Emmys. Above left: Miss Penny from *Kid Vision* with Word Girl. Above: Dolores Sukhdeo, President and CEO of South Florida PBS. Above right: Fiona Scott with Southeastern's rep Craig Swanson.

Florida PBS Art Director Fiona Scott, Chief Operating Officer Jeff Huff and other executives in order to ensure their printing needs are fulfilled in a timely fashion.

"Craig has been wonderful - he gives one-on-one service," said Scott. "I don't think Southeastern has ever missed a deadline."



## Promoting Healthier Lifestyle Options in Real Time

The Health Channel, a service of South Florida PBS in partnership with Baptist Health South Florida, was the first TV channel of its kind when it launched in the summer of 2018. The goal of this unique show is to connect viewers with medical and well-being specialists in real time, in order to promote healthier lifestyle options. The Health Channel also offers a host of interactive digital resources, including a website where you can live-stream the show; Health Channel app; YouTube channel; social media, and more. In addition, the Health Channel hosts live events for the South Florida community.

