

KQED

GO PUBLIC 2025

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On the cover: KQED reporter Danielle Venton speaks with Zach Knight, co-founder and CEO of Blue Forest, near Camptonville, California.
(Beth LaBerge/KQED)

A Message from President and CEO Michael J. Isip

Quod erat demonstrandum.

“Thus it has been demonstrated.” On April 5, 1954, KQED founders Jim Day and Jonathan Rice set out to demonstrate that public media could be a force for the common good in a time very similar to the one we live in now — one of significant change and upheaval politically, socially, economically and culturally. KQED was one of the first public television stations in the country, and it helped shape what has now become a distributed national network of about 1,500 independent, noncommercial and locally managed and operated public radio and television stations. Each of these serves their communities with free and accessible information and services that inform, educate and enrich the public.

Loyal and generous contributions from people like you, foundations and corporate sponsors provide the vast majority of the support that makes KQED’s work possible, but the public media system is held together by annual federal appropriations to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). There is a concerted effort going on in Washington D.C. to defund CPB by challenging the integrity of public media, putting the entire system at risk.

In many communities, the local public television or radio station is the only source of information. PBS programming helps the social, emotional and cognitive development of 3- and 4-year-olds across the country — 52 percent of whom do not attend formal preschool. And because our broadcast infrastructure reaches 99 percent of Americans, we play an irreplaceable role in critical communication coordination between federal and local agencies in emergencies and disasters.



Entering our 71st year, we are staying true to our founders’ original vision of putting media into action for the public good and serving our communities as a multimedia organization as well as a community convenor. As you’ll find in this report, we are continually innovating the ways we deliver news, information and programming as well as building community in our headquarters with events that spark civic dialogue and showcase cultural experiences. You’ll also meet some of the supporters who, like you, help make this work possible.

Every day, KQED’s journalists, storytellers and those who work behind the scenes set out to demonstrate the worthiness and value of trustworthy information, civic and cultural connection and narrative that helps us all understand one another.

The path forward is a challenging one, but the belief, faith, trust and support from you — our community and donors — will form the tailwinds as we move forward. That has been demonstrated time and time again.

Thank you,

Michael J. Isip
President & CEO

Delivering Essential Voter Information in a Historic Election Year

In the 2024 election year, KQED stepped up and delivered unprecedented coverage and context for voters on every race in each of the nine Bay Area counties we serve. Utilizing all our platforms, we provided deeply researched, trustworthy and nonpartisan information to ensure voters understood what was at stake on Bay Area ballots.



New San Francisco Mayor Daniel Lurie delivers his ballot. (Beth LaBerge/KQED)

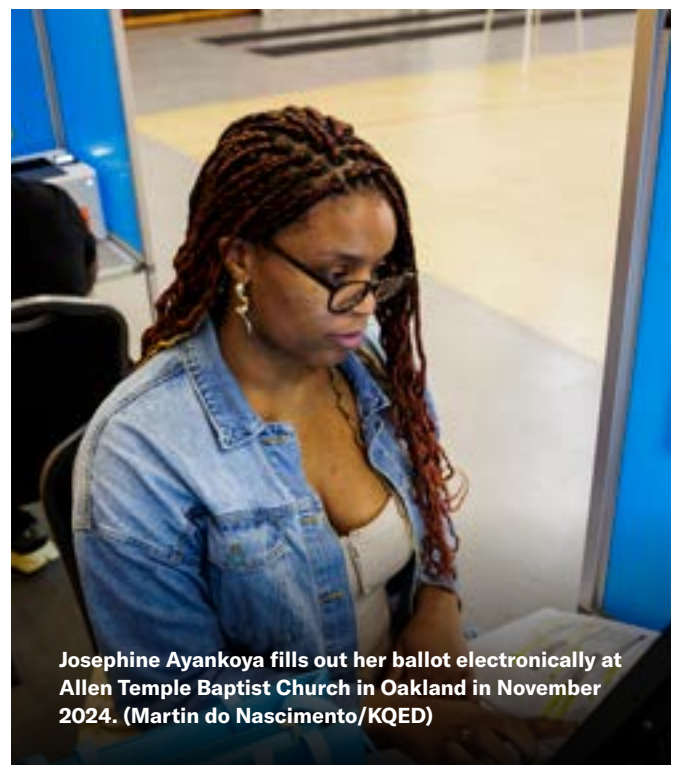
From an expanded digital voter guide offered in both English and Spanish to innovative podcasts, in-person events, including a San Francisco mayoral debate, in-depth radio, web articles and social coverage, KQED continued to grow its election service and exemplified the critical importance of public media's role in democratic discourse.

"Our goal was to meet voters wherever they were — on their phones, in their cars or at community events — with the information they needed to make informed decisions," said Ki Sung, Managing Editor of Digital News.

The centerpiece of KQED's election service was the 2024 digital voter guide. Created by KQED's trusted expert team of political reporters and journalists in collaboration with the digital team, the guide

made voting more accessible by bringing thoroughly researched, independent and nonpartisan context to each of the often complex ballot measures and local races, as well as sharing important resources and FAQs about the voting process. Around 100 reporters, editors and producers fanned out across the Bay Area to interview candidates and gather documents filed with each county's elections office. The team then sorted through the material to make the information relevant and easy to use.

From September 16 to November 15, 2024, the English-language voter guide received more than 1 million views from nearly 400,000 unique viewers. KQED also produced a Spanish-language version with an emphasis on coverage in San Francisco, Alameda and Santa Clara counties. After election day, the digital guides delivered the most up-to-date polling results for all races.



Josephine Ayankoya fills out her ballot electronically at Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland in November 2024. (Martin do Nascimento/KQED)



San Francisco Chronicle's Joe Garofoli and KQED's Marisa Lagos and Scott Shafer moderate the San Francisco Mayoral Debate from KQED. (Beth LaBerge/KQED)

KQED's commitment to comprehensive coverage extended beyond traditional reporting. The newsroom developed innovative approaches to election coverage, including visual storytelling for social media during the political conventions and creative ways to explain complex ballot measures. KQED's events program, KQED Live, presented informative in-person voter events. These included Bots vs. Ballots: AI and the 2024 Election, which addressed the impact of artificial intelligence on democracy; the final 2024 San Francisco Mayoral Debate, which featured the city's five leading mayoral candidates; and Decision 2024: The Race for District 16 Debate, which was presented via livestream by KQED in partnership with NBC Bay Area and Telemundo.

KQED's radio and podcast series *Political Breakdown*, hosted by veteran political journalists Scott Shafer and Marisa Lagos, made a transition from a weekly to daily format to provide listeners with critical context and analysis throughout the election cycle. The show's new format allowed KQED to deliver timely insights on breaking political developments, from exclusive interviews with candidates to analysis of crucial policy debates.

The impact of KQED's election coverage was felt throughout the Bay Area and beyond. The newsroom's focus on both high-profile contests and local elections helped citizens understand how their votes would affect their communities directly.



KQED broadcasted the San Francisco Mayoral Debate live on television and radio. (Beth LaBerge/KQED)

Supporting Early Childhood Coverage with the Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Access to high-quality early childhood care and education is a true lifeline for families in Silicon Valley. It's what allows parents to pursue their careers and education, paving the way for better opportunities and stability for their families. Unfortunately, Silicon Valley faces a serious shortage of skilled caregivers, leaving families scrambling for the support they need. And if they do find good care, it's so expensive that many families cannot afford it.

"The bottom line is that early childhood programs need greater public investment," says Christine Thorsteinson, Silicon Valley Community Foundation's director of early childhood initiatives.

SVCF believes that if more people understand the issue, more people will be inspired to champion it with their elected officials and support public investment. To this end, the community foundation made a grant to KQED with a goal of increasing the public's awareness of the challenges facing early childhood development in the area.

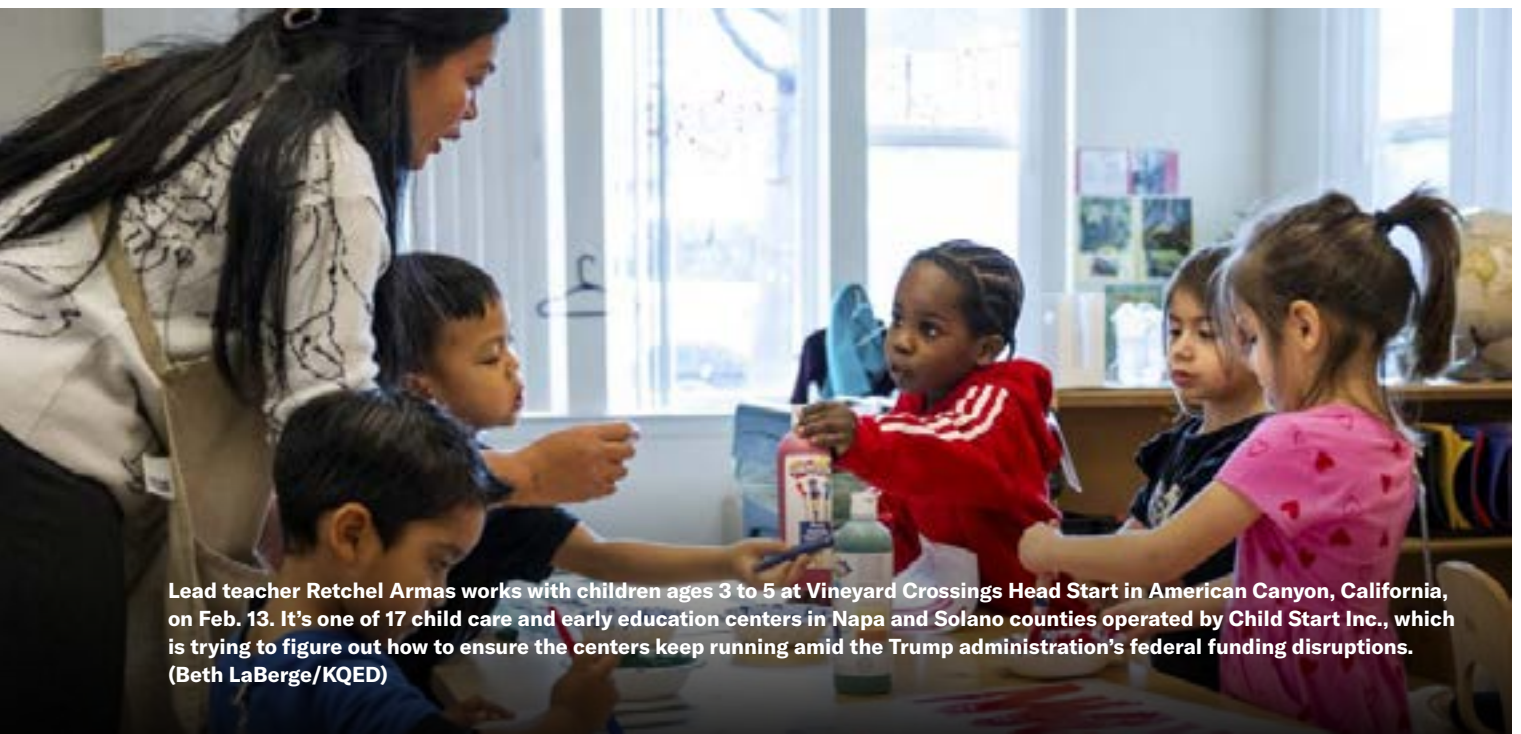
"With the grant, our newsroom has been able to not just cover this critical part of our community in a more sustained and contextualized way, but we've

also become a national pioneer in how we think about early childhood coverage," said Ethan Toven-Lindsey, KQED's vice president of news.

KQED used the grant to hire a reporter, Daisy Nguyen, to staff the newly created beat on early childhood issues. (SVCF has no editorial influence on KQED's coverage.)

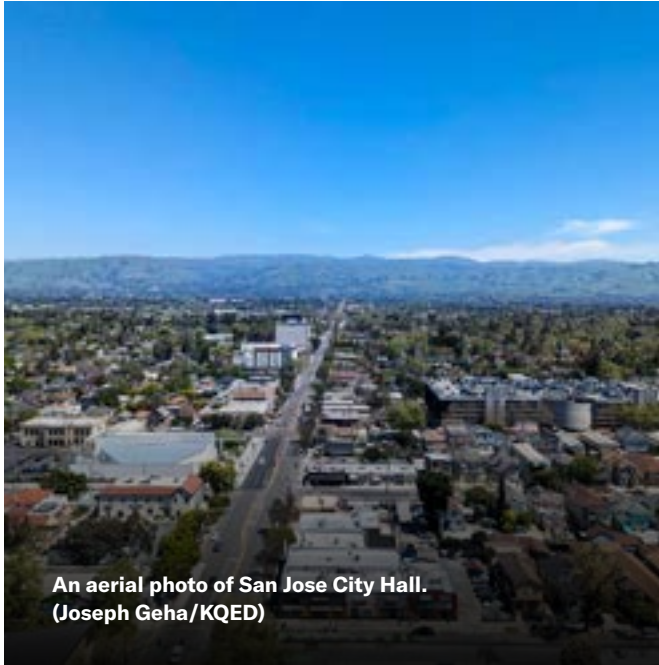
"With so little funding available for journalism today, we knew this grant could have a huge impact," says Thorsteinson. "And it has. **Through this investment, the important stories around childhood development are being elevated so they're getting the same type of coverage as other top-tier issues — housing, crime, climate change.**"

In fact, several of Nguyen's stories have been picked up and run on NPR programs, spreading the message even further. One of her stories described how the ending of federal pandemic aid for the nation's child care industry was forcing California to make tough decisions about how to subsidize its child care system.



Lead teacher Retchel Armas works with children ages 3 to 5 at Vineyard Crossings Head Start in American Canyon, California, on Feb. 13. It's one of 17 child care and early education centers in Napa and Solano counties operated by Child Start Inc., which is trying to figure out how to ensure the centers keep running amid the Trump administration's federal funding disruptions. (Beth LaBerge/KQED)

Reporting on the Complex Impact of Silicon Valley Innovations



An aerial photo of San Jose City Hall.
(Joseph Geha/KQED)

The San Francisco Foundation, our first funder, has called KQED “the original Bay Area media start-up.” Just as Hewlett-Packard was launched in a Palo Alto garage, KQED started in the back of a station wagon where the founders stored their cameras. We try to keep alive that scruffy spirit of innovation and also report diligently on the complexities of Silicon Valley, a region that boasts the country’s highest level of inequality, noting how the area’s ever-evolving technologies affect us all and also leave many behind.

The South Bay is the most populous region in the Bay Area, and it’s home to the largest number of KQED audiences and members. Our reporters are exploring the many facets of the region for all audiences through a wide range of programs:

- Award-winning Senior Editor of KQED’s Silicon Valley News Desk, Rachael Myrow, reports frequently on the tech sector with recent stories about California’s many bills attempting to regulate AI and about “What Big Tech Sees in President Trump.” In the latter, she delves into how “many

tech titans see the value in extending a hand in friendship, hoping at the very best for profit and at the very least, not to have Trump see them as an enemy.”

- KQED’s new South Bay Digital Editor, Joseph Geha, has most recently been covering the Valley Transportation Authority strike that has 1,500 bus and train operators striking for better wages and tens of thousands of riders disrupted. In “How the VTA Strike Underscores Silicon Valley’s Widening Income Inequality,” Geha explains how both the public transit workers and commuters struggle to make ends meet in a region where “most people are now spending more than 50 percent of their income on housing.”
- KQED’s *Silicon Valley Unseen* is a series from KQED Arts Reporter Alan Chazaro that surveys the tech capital’s overlooked subcultures from a local perspective, including an all-women, lowriders club, a 36-year-old Iranian food market, Silicon Valley street fashion and “Illicon Valley: Inside East Side San Jose’s Rap Hustle.”
- Last fall, KQED with NBC and Telemundo held a live bilingual debate between former San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo and State Assemblymember Evan Low, congressional candidates in Silicon Valley’s District 16. KQED Politics Reporter Guy Marzorati led KQED’s coverage of that race and frequently reports on San Jose city politics.

These are just some of the ways that KQED informs, inspires and involves residents of Silicon Valley. In 2025, the KQED Board of Directors is exploring ways to expand our organization’s contacts with the tech sector and with community groups in the region. We’ve also created a new role, Director of Silicon Valley Philanthropy, to specialize in finding new sources of support in the region. We welcome your thoughts about important stories and connections in the region that KQED should know about — please reach out to your gift officer.

Engaging More Deeply with Latinx Audiences

According to 2022 data, roughly 25 percent of the Bay Area population identifies as Latinx, yet they compose a smaller portion of KQED's overall audience and membership. To help ensure KQED engages more fully with the Bay Area's population, we launched a cross-departmental initiative that harnesses the station's award-winning storytelling and journalism, dynamic in-person event program and community-centered outreach to more intentionally serve our local Latinx communities.

In 2024, KQED's Latinx engagement initiative centered around a series of Latinx-themed KQED Live events, the creation of a newsletter called K Onda and the development and distribution of KQED's Spanish-language voter guide.



Youth dancers from the American Indian Cultural District kick off the two-day San Francisco Carnaval King and Queen Dance Competition festivities at KQED. (Vita Hewitt/KQED)

KQED Live's event program highlighted everyday experiences and heritages of Latinx communities. This included performances of music, dance and comedy as well as food events, such as the ongoing Latinx cabaret series *¿Dónde Esta Mi Gente?*; the Carnaval San Francisco King and Queen Dance Competition; the Living Altars event celebrating cross-cultural expressions of mourning and remembrance in Latinx and Filipinx communities; Be My Neighbor Day at Día de los Niños, the long-running celebration of children and books; and Anjitos, a Latinx street foods immersive tasting event. From August 1, 2023, through July 31, 2024, just over 25 percent of all onstage guests identified as Latinx. Meanwhile, Latinx audience members composed more than 13 percent of all attendees during this same period — a five-point increase over the previous year.

Rodrigo Duran, a KQED Community Advisory Panel member and Executive Director of Carnaval San Francisco, said: ***"I was drawn to KQED because of their approach to community engagement and relationship building in the Mission District. They were intentional and culturally sensitive to the voices and needs of the Latino community and I was proud to partner with them through Carnaval San Francisco."***

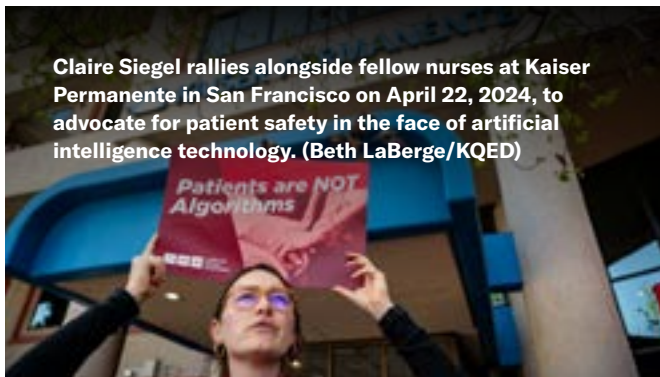
KQED also launched K Onda in April 2024 to elevate the voices of Latinx changemakers and to deliver news and event information of relevance to these communities. Edited by Bianca Torres, the newsletter has a devoted audience of approximately 5,000 subscribers and an engagement rate that exceeds KQED's other newsletter series. Subscriber Aniela V. commented: "I really appreciated and got excited by K Onda, and the effort to highlight and continue to uplift Latine/x stories."

One of the most valued features of KQED's news service is the development of an online voter guide that provides Bay Area audiences with fact-based and nonpartisan information about the various races on local ballots. In 2024, KQED produced a Spanish-language version of the guide that was reprinted and championed by the Spanish-language newspaper *El Tecolote*. KQED created printed versions as well as magnets to promote the guide at community events. Through KQED's Community Advisory Panel, KQED partnered with 40 community organizations, including The Unity Council, Calle 24 Latino Cultural District and *El Tecolote Bilingual Newspaper*.

We'll continue our efforts to better serve and reflect the Bay Area Latinx communities, including sharing our learnings and successes to this point and beginning to build a diverse audience-service model based on these experiences.

Paving the Way for Responsible AI Use in Journalism

In 2024, KQED increased our coverage of AI and how it's being adopted by public and private institutions here in the Bay Area. We also explored the potential consequences and benefits of those applications for our Bay Area communities.



Over the past year, our newsroom made a concerted effort to build coverage and interrogation of AI's impact into all our coverage streams — for instance, KQED Reporter Sydney Johnson examined San Francisco's efforts to ban AI software used to set rental prices, while Joseph Geha revealed how AI is being used to uncover racist land deeds in Santa Clara County. Throughout the year, *MindShift* paid attention to the debates on AI's utility and risks for classrooms. And we looked into generative AI's disruptive impact on culture making, including documentary filmmaking.

While KQED probes the ways AI is beginning to seep into most areas of modern life, we have also been exploring how AI can benefit our journalism and audiences — developing principles and frameworks emphasizing transparency and accuracy and creating uses that serve our mission. In our newsroom, we are thoughtfully implementing AI-powered tools to enhance our workflow — from using audio transcription to streamline production of promotions to developing a Slack bot that helps brainstorm headlines. We're also examining ways AI could help identify potential bias. Beyond these production tools, we're developing select projects to imagine new ways to interact with our audiences.

One key example is *Ask Forum*, an AI-powered tool KQED developed for the KQED Discord channel and community. In 2023, KQED launched a channel on Discord to create engagement between listeners and producers of its flagship, live call-in radio program, *Forum*. Members of the *Forum* Discord can explore the program's extensive archive by asking questions like "When was Jane Goodall on?"; "What was today's show about?"; or "Are there any shows about camping in California?" When users receive answers, they're getting accurate information drawn directly from actual *Forum* content, not AI-generated interpretations.

Our choice of Discord reflects our commitment to meeting audiences in new digital spaces. The platform enables real-time conversations where Discord members don't just consume content — they help shape it, offering insights that guide our digital evolution. Building on this spirit of collaboration, transparency remains central to how KQED implements AI tools such as *Ask Forum*. **We believe maintaining trust means being clear about when and how AI is being used in the search and discovery process. This commitment to openness has strengthened our community relationships while establishing a model for responsible AI use in journalism.** Audience feedback doesn't just improve the tool; it forms our entire approach to engagement, helping us understand how AI can best serve our community's needs.

These projects represent more than technological innovations — they're models for how public media can thoughtfully integrate AI while staying true to its core mission. By adhering to principles that include clear transparency, rigorous accuracy standards and targeted applications that enhance rather than replace human expertise, these initiatives demonstrate how AI can strengthen the relationship between KQED and its audience.

Leading Statewide Journalism with The California Newsroom



KQED Reporter Ezra David Romero interviews Executive Director of the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency Mark Strudley at the Pajaro levee. The California Newsroom supported KAZU's Edward R. Murrow award-winning reporting on the Pajaro Flood. (Beth LaBerge/KQED)

Launched in 2020, The California Newsroom is a KQED-led collaboration designed to strengthen the quality of local news and amplify journalism, especially in so-called “news deserts” where public media may not be widely distributed. This collaborative effort is a partnership between CapRadio (Sacramento), LAist (Los Angeles), KCRW (Los Angeles), KPBS (San Diego), CalMatters, NPR and more than a dozen other organizations throughout the state.

The newsroom team primarily supports statewide journalism with mentorship and training for public radio reporters, editors and newsroom managers across California’s public media ecosystem. They do this by helping local newsrooms implement editorial best practices and standards and by offering editorial,

project-management and consulting support. The team also helps by coordinating and editing statewide coverage of breaking news events between large and small NPR member stations and NPR and by assisting with content and resource sharing between outlets.

In 2024, **The California Newsroom worked intensively to help develop journalists, editors and news directors at small stations so they can make a meaningful impact in their communities and in the state** and contribute to the NPR member-station ecosystem. This work supported the development of more than 300 radio and digital stories in 2024 — from breaking news and scoops in Fresno and Santa Rosa to data analysis in Sacramento and investigations that span the state.

Highlights included:

- A statewide analysis of police use of deadly restraint (co-published with KQED, *The Guardian US*, LAist, KPBS and CapRadio).
- Accessing salary and financial data for CapRadio in its reporting on financial mismanagement at the station, which The California Newsroom also edited.
- Supporting KAZU (Monterey/Santa Cruz) on how to access police reports and records related to sexual assault accusations against defense secretary Pete Hegseth.
- Helping KVCR (San Bernardino) assess statewide police use-of-force data for police accountability stories currently being reported.
- Continued reporting on a commercial real estate developer who misused more than \$100 million in state funds.
- An exposé of a Madera County Supervisor and Fresno police officer who allegedly attempted to blackmail city council members.

Major news outlets such as the *Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Fresno Bee* have followed coverage that began as California Newsroom projects. After seeing work by The California Newsroom, other outlets, including *The Guardian US*, *FRONTLINE* and *Open Vallejo* have invited the team to collaborate on future projects and events.

California Newsroom-supported projects received numerous awards, including National Edward R. Murrows for Josh Yeager's (KVPR) "Whitewater Rafting is Roaring Back to Life in California After Years of Drought," which documented the revival of the rafting industry on the Upper Kern River after a winter of heavy snow; and KAZU's "The Pajaro Flood: A Preventable Disaster," which documented the devastating impact of the flood, as well as provided listeners with real-time evacuation warnings and disaster relief resources. KQED's Tyche Hendricks won first place from the San Francisco's Press Club for continuing coverage for a story Amy Isackson edited, "New Bay Area Immigration Court Opens, Aims to Tackle Deportation Backlog."



Members of the Fallen Leaf Lake Fire Department from El Dorado County work to extinguish hot spots in Altadena, California. The California Newsroom coordinated statewide coverage of the Los Angeles wildfires. (Beth LaBerge/KQED)



Rosa Menjivar holds a sign outside a new immigration court in Concord, California. Menjivar was featured in Tyche Hendricks's award-winning coverage about the immigration court. (Beth LaBerge/KQED)

Elevating Youth Voices for Civic Engagement

KQED has been an unparalleled leader in providing a place for youth to build and share their civic voices. In 2024, using the momentum of the election year, KQED partnered with PBS LearningMedia and the National Writing Project to invite middle and high school students to express their ideas for how to make the world a better place.

Call for Change Youth Media Challenge is a project that empowers students to share their thoughts on a national or local issue to which they feel connected. After researching and developing a solution to the issue, students share an audio or video commentary or an editorial cartoon on KQED's public online showcase. KQED featured youth media pieces on our website, on our app, in newsletters and on social media and through partner institutions in education and public media.

This election project elicited powerful media pieces from students around the Bay Area on issues from teen mental health to reproductive rights, sea-level rise to wildfire management, rent control to sustainable cities. During the dozen years that we have amplified youth voices on election issues, we have heard how much of an impact KQED has on young people just beginning to discover their civic selves. ***"It means a lot to me that someone found my project interesting and wanted to hear what I have to say," one high schooler shared. "I think that it often feels that you can talk to the people who already know what you think, and they already know who you are, and it doesn't feel like you're making a difference, but to have your voice amplified is empowering."***

The Youth Media Challenge runs all year and is used by teachers in a broad range of subject areas and states. In 2024, the Youth Media Showcase received more than 2,100 student media submissions

from 15 states on topics from immigration to the environment to voting rights and received more than 70,000 pageviews. We offered more than 60 professional development sessions for educators, serving more than 3,800 attendees. In addition to PBS LearningMedia and the National Writing Project, we also partnered with 38 districts, three county offices of education and seven public media stations to elevate youth civic voices. The strength of our media-making curriculum and our public reach has brought many funding opportunities to KQED as well. We were recently awarded a significant three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education to develop and publish middle school and high school curriculum that connect the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights to media creation and student civic advocacy.





Students record their Election 2024 Call for Change videos before publishing them on the Youth Media Challenge Showcase. (Cheyenne Bearfoot/KQED)

Innovating Digital Video and Podcasts

Since its founding in 1954, KQED has looked forward and evolved to meet the needs of an ever-changing media landscape. Now, KQED is a leading example of how a community-supported, nonprofit journalism and educational media service can thrive in a digital world.

Rooted in the Bay Area, and globally relevant, KQED Studios is a research and development lab to grow and pilot fresh, compelling programs to meet the increasing demand of audiences who now spend more than eight hours per day with digital media.

In the last year, KQED Studios launched *Beyond the Menu* with Cecilia Phillips, telling the backstories of your favorite global dishes; *The Latest*, a continuously updating news feed podcast with new content throughout the day that uses Spooler technology in a way no other outlet has experimented with before; and *Close All Tabs*, hosted by GenZ tech journalist Morgan Sung, which uses irreverent humor and insights to break down the impact of internet culture on our lives. Featured in Apple Podcasts' "New and Noteworthy" and Spotify's "New Shows We're Loving," *Close All Tabs* hit over 100K downloads in its first month — a huge feat for a new podcast!

Next up is the launch of *Hyphenación*, hosted by Xorje Olivares: *It's where conversation and cultura meet.* *Hyphenación* is a fun yet deep conversational video podcast featuring Latinx millennials navigating adulting and having easy conversations about hard things.

You can find all of these programs and more on the KQED App or wherever you get your podcasts! You can also find direct links on kqed.org/kqed-studios.

Donations to the KQED Studios Fund provide working capital to support digital innovation by fueling the design and launch of new podcasts and other digital media. KQED continues to deliver excellent information and storytelling on radio and television — while simultaneously building for the future and reaching new audiences.

Please contact Matt Hitchcock, Senior Director of Major Gifts, if you would like more information about supporting digital innovation at KQED: majorgifts@kqed.org.

***"I am so proud to support this incubator for new programs. The enthusiasm and conviction from KQED's leadership is palpable. And, it's reassuring to know there's a really creative team working to keep KQED engaging, relevant, healthy and thriving."* —BIRONG HU**



Snap Judgment and Spooked Host and Executive Producer Glynn Washington with KQED's Chief Content Officer Holly Kernan. (Dawn Garcia/KQED)

We are grateful to the following donors for their support of KQED Studios Fund:

The Krishnan Shah Family Foundation

Birong Hu

Destino Fund

Anonymous

Steve and Shelley Brown

Sylvia Tarbell

Snap Judgment Casts a Light on the Experience of Death Row Inmates

Hosted by Glynn Washington, the radio and podcast series *Snap Judgment* mixes real stories with music to produce cinematic, dramatic episodes that dare listeners to see the world through the eyes of others. In one 2024 episode titled “Father Forgive Them,” the show explores the human impact of the death penalty and what is at stake in the debate over its use.

The episode focuses on three Oklahoma State Penitentiary death row inmates — Bigler Stouffer, Wade Lay and Donald Grant — as the men move closer toward their executions. Through interviews with the inmates and their loved ones, the episode reveals a profound and unique perspective on capital punishment.

Many death row inmates experience poverty, inadequate legal representation, racial bias or even wrongful convictions. With *Snap Judgment*’s signature first-person style, the episode allows listeners to consider the socioeconomic and psychological factors that contribute to incarceration. It also fosters empathy and challenges the assumption that all individuals on death row are irredeemable, presenting a more nuanced and human reality.

Donald Grant’s brother commented, “The reporters spent nearly a year getting to know me and my brother, even traveling with me to Oklahoma to witness his execution, one of the hardest moments in my life. Their sensitivity and patience allowed them to capture Donald as a full, complex person — something I had never seen before — while also laying bare the cruel machinery of the system with accuracy and objectivity.”

Since the story aired, people have started reaching out to *Snap Judgment*, saying it helps them see capital punishment in a completely new light. One listener put it this way: “I had no experience, no ability to stand in these families’ shoes before listening to these stories. These families of death row prisoners are all of us. I am rethinking past perceptions, with a sense of empathy, because of having listened to this. I can not see things quite as black-and-white as before ... there is so much gray in life.”



Snap Judgment’s “Father Forgive Them” episode won an Anthem Award for Best Audio and a Signal Award for Best Documentary. (Jifa Gonzalez)

Wade Lay has said the project has made him feel less alone. **Lay’s defense lawyer told our reporters that she printed a transcript of the podcast to include as part of the court filings for Lay’s competency hearing. Lay was eventually removed from death row.**

The series was created by Elliot Lightfoot, Producer; Gaby Caplan, Producer; Anna Sussman, Editor; Nancy Lopez, Editor; and Mark Ristich, Executive Producer. It won the Anthem Awards Gold Award for Best Audio as well as the Signal Awards Gold Award for Best Documentary.

Snap Judgment is a production of Snap Studios, which was acquired by KQED in the fall of 2023. Snap Studios is the producer of the popular series *Spooked*, which explores hidden stories from myriad cultures and traditions, and *Mind Your Own* with Lupita Nyong’o, a storytelling podcast series about what it means to belong, all from the African perspective.

On Our Watch Reveals Corruption in California

In February 2024, KQED launched *On Our Watch: New Folsom*, the second season of its award-winning investigative podcast. The series follows two whistleblowers within an elite unit at California's most dangerous prison: California State Prison Sacramento, colloquially known as New Folsom. Host Sukey Lewis and co-reporter Julie Small spent more than two years investigating allegations of abuse and corruption, interviewing dozens of officers and incarcerated people and poring over thousands of pages of once-secret prison records and hundreds of hours of interrogation tapes.

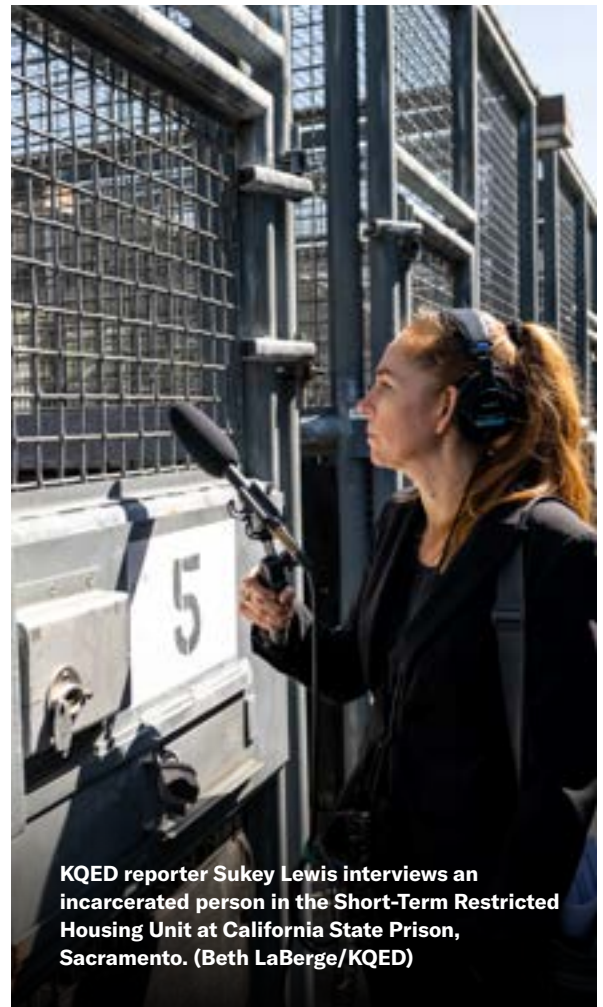
For decades, uses of force and correctional officer misconduct inside the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation — a prison system



Valentino Rodriguez Sr. holds a photo of his son Valentino. Valentino Rodriguez Jr. was a correctional officer at California State Prison, Sacramento, before he died of an accidental fentanyl overdose after complaining of harassment and threats from officers at the prison. (Beth LaBerge/KQED)



The East Gate of Folsom Prison in Sacramento. (Beth LaBerge/KQED)



KQED reporter Sukey Lewis interviews an incarcerated person in the Short-Term Restricted Housing Unit at California State Prison, Sacramento. (Beth LaBerge/KQED)



A correctional officer puts handcuffs on KQED reporter Sukey Lewis as a demonstration in the Short-Term Restricted Housing Unit at California State Prison, Sacramento, also known as New Folsom Prison, on April 13, 2023. (Beth LaBerge/KQED)

that employs more than 30,000 peace officers — was hidden from the public eye. **KQED secured a major legal victory for police accountability in 2024 with the passage of the Right to Know Law (SB 1421), which ruled that the state Attorney General may not categorically withhold these records.**

The passage of Right to Know peeled back some of that secrecy going back to 2019, allowing KQED reporters to finally get a picture of what was happening inside this closed system.

The resulting podcast series exposes this formerly closed system and documents the disillusionment and despair of two correctional officers who died after standing up for justice. Since the podcast's launch, it's garnered more than 1.6 million downloads and 3.4 million social media impressions.

The project's reporting and exclusive analysis, which was recently published in the data science magazine *Significance*, found that New Folsom had the highest overall use-of-force rate of any California state prison from 2009 through 2023 and that New Folsom officers used serious force — meaning they either badly injured someone or used deadly force — at a rate three times higher than any other prison in the state. The story also revealed a number that CDCR itself says it does not track: 31 current and former correctional officers took their own lives between 2020 and 2024.

The team heard from many current and former correctional officers, staff, internal affairs agents and a number of former wardens who wrote to thank us for our coverage. “I’ve worked with many people just like Sgt. Steele and Officer Rodriguez. ... Thank you for giving them a voice after they are gone,” wrote one man who retired last year from CDCR. “I will be advising all of my active and retired CDCR colleagues to listen to your podcast.”

The series has been used as a teaching tool in law and journalism courses around the country. The podcast's social media campaign sparked meaningful engagement, as listeners gathered in the comments to voice their compassion, outrage and gratitude. One commenter wrote, “I’ve listened to this season and the work you’re doing is so important.”

In April 2025, *On Our Watch: New Folsom* garnered the highly prestigious Investigative Reporters and Editors Inc. (IRE) award for Longform Journalism in Audio. The judges commented, **“This investigation is a textbook example of how to tirelessly pursue truth and accountability, and then how to provide the complicated details, the findings, and the human costs in intensely compelling and compassionate audio storytelling.”**

Celebrating 20 Years of *Check, Please! Bay Area*

For two decades, *Check, Please! Bay Area* has been your trusted guide to the Bay Area's most delicious dining spots, and we celebrated this milestone with a brand-new season that premiered in April 2025! Each week, three Bay Area locals join host Leslie Sbrocco to share their top restaurant picks, swap dining stories, and debate their experiences. From the mouthwatering scent of buttery pastries in San Francisco's Mission District to vibrant Peruvian flavors featuring indigenous ingredients in Burlingame, this season is packed with bold flavors and must-try spots.



Leslie Sbrocco welcomes attendees at the annual *Check, Please! Bay Area* Taste and Sip event at The Galleria in San Francisco. (KQED)

Since its launch in 2005, *Check, Please! Bay Area* has explored the region's dynamic food landscape, welcoming locals who have reviewed over 800 restaurants in 94 cities across 12 counties.

Our very first guests reviewed a French spot in the Marina, an Italian trattoria and an Afghan restaurant in Fremont. Over the years, the show has spotlighted everything from neighborhood gems to Michelin-starred dining destinations, earning both James Beard and Emmy Awards along the way. Specially themed episodes have highlighted Bay Area sports stars, kid guest reviewers and even the cast of Broadway SF's *Hamilton*. With the addition of the *Cecilia Tries It* segment, viewers were treated to dozens of delicious, off-the-grid dining experiences from farmers markets and food truck gatherings to u-pick apple ranches and oyster tours.

In the 20th season, highlights include Palo Alto's Ethel's Fancy, where a Michelin-trained chef reinvents Japanese American cuisine and San Jose's Le Papillon, which has been dazzling diners for over 40 years, offering exquisite French-inspired tasting menus. In Berkeley, Via del Corso transports diners to Italy with handmade pastas and slow-braised meats, while in Oakland, Peony Seafood delivers a classic dim sum experience in one of the few Chinese banquet halls in the Bay Area. Adding to the fun with her own segment, reporter Cecilia Phillips embarks on flavorful adventures, from sampling malasadas at the Niles Farmers Market in a historic corner of Fremont, to diving into the high-energy world of Bhangra and Beats in San Francisco.

Leslie Sbrocco, the charismatic host of *Check, Please! Bay Area*, has led the show since its inception, winning a coveted James Beard Award, three Taste Awards and three Emmy Awards for her work. An award-winning author, speaker and consultant, Sbrocco is recognized as one of the Top 100 most influential people in the American wine business. Her engaging personality and deep industry knowledge have made her a regular guest on outlets like NBC's *Today Show* and CNN, where her humor and expertise delight audiences nationwide.



The crowd at the *Check, Please! Bay Area* Taste and Sip event. (KQED)



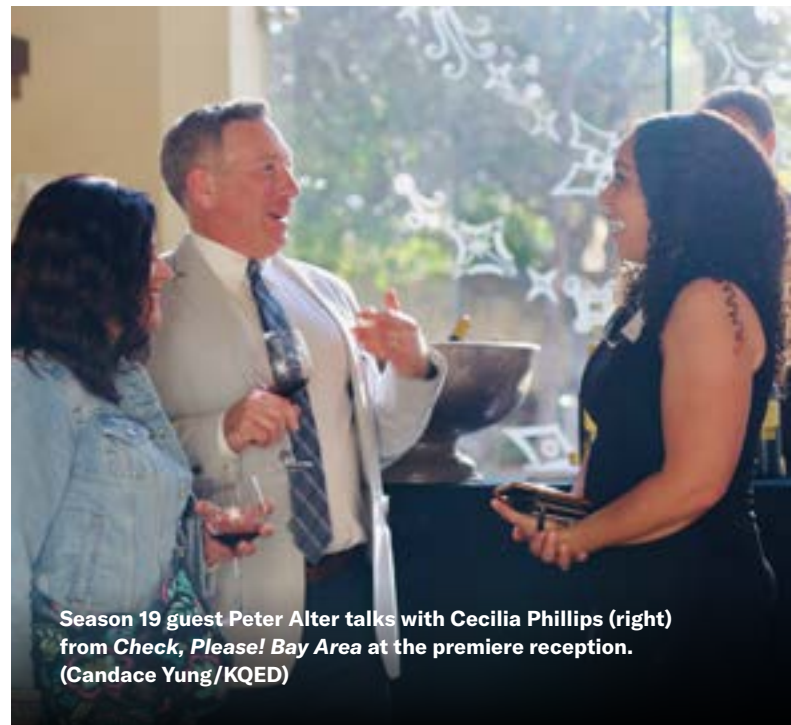
Host Leslie Sbrocco joins Season 19 guests Peter Alter, Kim Lammie and Travis Elder on set for a toast. (KQED)

Check, Please! Bay Area has had a lasting impact on both viewers and the restaurants it features. Former guest Carlos Rueda highlights the show's charm: "I think it's fun to watch things that are being curated by local people; they're kind of finding these hidden gems."

Patrick, owner of The Barn in Half Moon Bay, adds, "Locally owned, grassroots restaurants are an important part of the community. And I think the fact that *Check, Please! Bay Area* has been in business for 20 years is a reflection of that, that this is something that people need, that they value. And we really appreciate that you highlight these local businesses and give them the attention that they deserve."

Yelp reviewers have raved about discovering new favorites thanks to the show. "We tried this restaurant because my mother-in-law saw it on *Check, Please! Bay Area*," wrote one reviewer about Lita, featured on Season 19. "We can't wait to go back!"

To celebrate the season, *Check, Please! Bay Area* is also visiting Santa Cruz and the Monterey Bay Area in July with three special episodes highlighting the region's incredible culinary scene. Additionally, in November, another slate of special episodes — including a look back at two decades of the beloved KQED program — will bring even more exciting restaurant discoveries to the table.



Season 19 guest Peter Alter talks with Cecilia Phillips (right) from *Check, Please! Bay Area* at the premiere reception. (Candace Yung/KQED)

Check, Please! Bay Area airs Thursdays at 7:30pm on KQED 9. You can stream past and current episodes anytime on the PBS Video App and at kqed.org/checkplease.

Meet Volunteer Mary Anne Shattuck

Mary Anne Shattuck's first day as a volunteer was more than 20 years ago, and it was for a TV pledge phone shift with travel writer Rick Steves.

"I had been supporting KQED and its mission since 1985," said Mary Anne, "but I was unable to volunteer until I began working in San Francisco."

Throughout the years, Mary Anne has volunteered in every capacity at KQED, serving as a pledge supervisor, a docent leading our public tours and as an assistant with events. She has had the opportunity to get to know staff and volunteers alike. Television and Radio Pledge Host Greg Sherwood recalled Mary Anne's enthusiasm and upbeat attitude when chatting with members on the phone during pledge drives.

Mary Anne's favorite volunteer activity is supporting *Check, Please! Bay Area* as a production assistant. She said, "I find it fascinating to observe everyone and everything that makes for a successful episode. I have appreciated the opportunity to meet and work alongside the many wonderful employees who make that show a success."



Mary Anne Shattuck with KQED volunteers during the March pledge drive. (Mary Poppingo/KQED)

Cecilia Philips, a coordinating producer for the show, had this to say when asked about Mary Anne: "What isn't there to say about Mary Anne's vibrant and bubbly personality? Bouncing in with a smile and a story, Mary Anne is never at a loss of words as she entertains and hosts our nervous guests of the show before they hit the set. She is a consummate green room host, an engaging storyteller and a quick witted, thoughtful volunteer."

Mary Anne is just one of our diverse community of 630 volunteers who serve KQED each year. Last year, volunteers contributed over 2,700 hours assisting with events, pledge drives, administrative tasks and other activities such as Night of Ideas and Taste and Sip. The impact our volunteers have as they support our mission to inform, inspire and involve our community is truly significant. Our volunteers provide essential support with our fundraising efforts, programs and events as well as outreach. Their presence makes a difference, and we are grateful for all they offer KQED.



Volunteer Mary Anne Shattuck at the KQED offices in San Francisco on March 20, 2025. (Martin do Nascimento/KQED)

Meet Donor Bruce Aidells

Bruce Aidells, often referred to as the “king of meat,” is a food writer, founder of the Aidells Sausage Company, media personality and nationally recognized expert on meat cookery. Two of his cookbooks were nominated for James Beard awards, and his writing has appeared in *Bon Appétit*, *Sunset*, *Food & Wine*, *Gourmet*, *Epicurious Fine Cooking* and more.

The first chef and co-owner at Poulet in Berkeley, he is married to James Beard award-winning chef Nancy Oakes, of Boulevard and Prospect. The couple’s generous philanthropy and hospitality has benefited local and national organizations in addition to KQED, including Meals on Wheels, SF Food Bank, ProPublica and the Ceres Community Project.

A KQED supporter since 1985, Aidells’ innate curiosity and belief in the power of learning has continued to lead him to pursue his education beyond his scientific studies and academic degree, citing public media as a major resource at every step.

Aidells learned to cook by watching Julia Child and Jacques Pépin on public television, and credits Child’s influence on his decision to leave biochemistry to pursue a culinary career.

“The first time I made sausage was from *Mastering the Art of French Cooking, Volume 2*, which was better than anything I could buy then. Judith Jones, the famous editor who published Julia’s first book, also edited two of my books, and it was a special experience to work with her. It probably wouldn’t have happened if I hadn’t watched Julia’s show as a high school kid.”

Observing that public media is one of the few remaining sources left for accurate reporting in the country, he notes that ethical journalism also helps citizens stay informed and combats a low level of trust among the American public.

“*Forum* did a strong job reporting on COVID-19 and had doctors on who were good communicators



with helpful information. I also listen to *NewsHour* every night. These programs provide more in-depth discussion on current issues that you can’t always get from a written article.”

With Oakes’ own artistic background, and their mutual interest in science and history, the couple almost exclusively turns to British mysteries and educational programs like *NOVA* and *American Experience* for their nightly entertainment, citing their high quality.

“We support public media because I can’t think of a better place for everyone to be able to learn at such a high level. We donate because if KQED, PBS and NPR are no longer there, a way to experience knowledge and learn about the world goes away.”

Meet Donor Maria Manetti Shrem



Maria Manetti Shrem, center, cuts ribbon in front of the newly named Maria Manetti Shrem Art District at UC Davis. College of Letters and Science Dean Estelle Atekwana, left, and UC Davis Chancellor Gary S. May, look on. (José Luis Villegas)

Committed donors are essential to the work of KQED, and we are honored that one of our longtime supporters is Maria Manetti Shrem, co-founder of the Manetti Shrem Museum of Art at UC Davis, and a generous funder for Bay Area arts and medical programs. Maria began donating to KQED in 1987, and her commitment to our work has grown steadily over the past 40 years.

Her connection to KQED stems from her desire to ensure that enlightenment, education, connection and culture are accessible and ongoing. Having grown up in Florence, Italy, during the reign of Mussolini, Maria's early years were dominated by oppression. At the time, society encouraged young women to abandon their studies in favor of supporting their families, but Maria's mother, Tosca, with hard work and sacrifices, ensured that she was exposed to hope — in the form of culture and learning. At age 15, Maria fell in love with opera upon hearing the great soprano, Renata Tebaldi, in *La Bohème* at Il Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and that experience foretold her commitment to art, culture and learning decades later.

In the 1950s, Maria was inspired by the "Made in Italy" craftsmanship movement that was emerging in her

hometown of Florence. The movement had a profound influence on her appreciation for fashion and design, and in the 1960s, Maria launched her first company, Gaya Knits. In 1972, Maria followed "the love of her life," accepting that she would lose all her fortune and need to start from scratch, landing in San Francisco. This is where she built her next business, making household names out of Italian luxury brands Gucci and Fendi.

In this new life in a new city, there was a connective force for Maria's long-held values of enlightenment, education, connection and culture: KQED. She said, "I hope other people become motivated to become benefactors. Everybody should consider donating. After all, without patrons, there would be no art, and without information and knowledge, there would be no democracy."

Maria adopted the Buddhist philosophy of detachment from material belongings, and as she crested the height of her company's success, she began to divest of her properties and assets and entered the next stage of her life as a philanthropist. "Seeing talented individuals pursue their dreams in the arts, music and science makes me truly happy. I have never been happier in my life."



Maria Manetti Shrem rests a hand on an artist in front of a ceramic workspace with attendees exploring the studio behind them. (Manetti Shrem personal collection)



Maria Manetti Shrem with art students from the UC Davis College of Letters and Science who intern at the Manetti Shrem Museum of Art. (Manetti Shrem Museum of Art)

With her late husband, Jan Shrem (who peacefully passed away in September 2024 at the age of 94), she embarked on a mission to “give back with warm hands while alive rather than after passing.”

With such warmth, Maria has supported arts programming and reporting on KQED, including opera performances on television and *Forum*, a daily favorite on KQED 88.5 FM.

In addition to her long support of KQED, Maria holds a special place in her heart for UC Davis. In 2024, inspired by the Florentine Renaissance, Maria made the largest philanthropic commitment to the arts in UC Davis’ history by bringing a holistic approach to arts and humanities with the help of her philanthropy strategist, Mauro Aprile Zanetti. They created eight endowments at the College of Letters and Science, ensuring in perpetuity that thousands of students, faculty members and internationally renowned artists would have the best environment for their ideas and dreams to flourish. Knowing that this would create a lasting legacy to nurture critical thinking, Maria said, “The arts and humanities are more endangered today than ever before.”

On January 26, 2025, the Maria Manetti Shrem Art District / Renaissance Program was officially inaugurated at UC Davis with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. “It was a meaningful way to begin the new year, offering hope amid the ongoing cuts to arts, humanities and research across the country.”

Reflecting on her life, Maria said, “More than 30 years ago, thanks to SFMOMA, I realized I needed to expand my knowledge of contemporary art, just as Michelangelo and Leonardo were contemporary in their time. Understanding and making art accessible to everyone is about knowledge and awareness. Everyone can contribute to passing the torch of our cultural heritage to future generations. That is what I strive to do by supporting education, the arts, music and medicine.”

“Maria has been one of our most dedicated supporters and she’s a dear friend to KQED. We’re proud to be among the many civic, cultural, scientific and educational Bay Area institutions who are stronger because of her generosity. The impact of her investments will be felt for generations to come. We thank her, deeply,” said Michael Isip.

Dorothea Lyman

Dorothea Lyman, born in 1917 — just a few months after the United States entered World War I — lived to be almost 107 years old by the time she passed away in 2024. She was born just a few days after her father died while serving with the U.S. Army as part of the war effort.

Dorothea’s nephew, Richard Lyman, attributes his aunt’s empathy and generosity — which included a large bequest to KQED — to having lost her father at such an early age. As Dorothea’s niece, Anne Lyman Davenport, puts it, “She was always very frugal, watching her pennies, but she was also very generous. She never tooted her own horn. She believed in right and wrong. She believed in good manners. She believed in equal rights. She believed that treating all people with respect was important.”

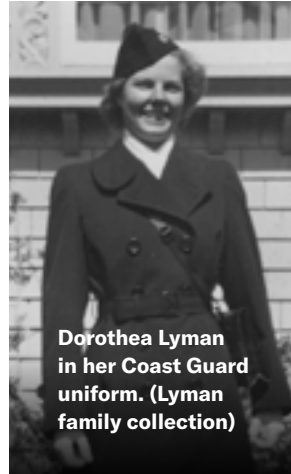
Born in Oakland, Dorothea graduated from UC Berkeley in 1939. During WWII, she served in the Coast Guard Auxiliary in San Francisco — a “coast watcher.” During this time, she started working at Del Monte Corporation at its Bay Area headquarters. After a nearly 40-year career, she retired in 1979 and moved to a senior-living community in Santa Rosa, where she created a library, led exercise classes and ran the Saturday night movies program.

All of this might sound like a lot to take on for a retired person. But Dorothea was just getting started.

At age 80, she drove a ski boat at full speed in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. At age 93, she went ziplining with her nieces. She went skydiving at age 94. At age 97, she drove at the Infinity Raceway in Sonoma. And to top it all off, she took a glider ride over Clear Lake at age 98. Some of her other adventures included trips to Antarctica, Africa, South America, Canada, Mexico and Europe. She hiked the Himalayas, visited Galapagos and journeyed across Russia in the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

As Lynne Slattery, KQED’s VP of Philanthropy puts it, “Dorothea’s legacy gift to KQED is a testament to the values she held dear in her lifetime, and to her generous spirit wishing for a resource like KQED to benefit generations to come — people she would never

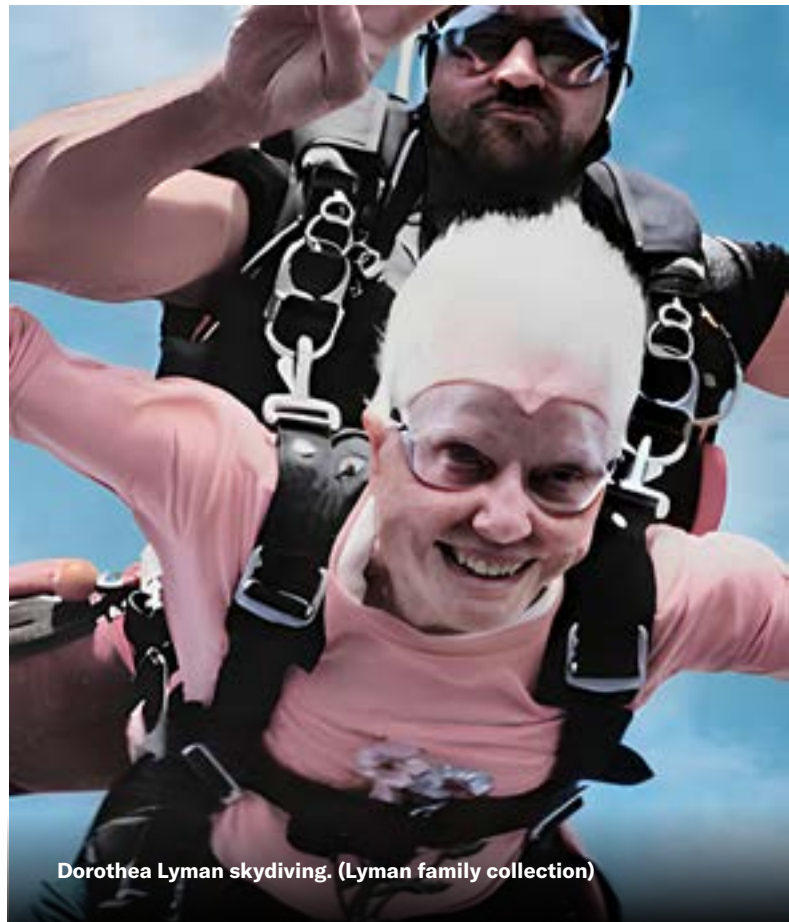
know, but to whom she extended empathy. Dorothea has left a legacy in more ways than one, and she inspires us to keep public media strong for the people of the Bay Area and beyond.”



Dorothea Lyman in her Coast Guard uniform. (Lyman family collection)



Dorothea Lyman at 2 years old. (Lyman family collection)



Dorothea Lyman skydiving. (Lyman family collection)

Noemi Efros



Noemi Efros. (Efros personal collection)

Supporters often reach out to tell us how they are using KQED's services and what an important role our work plays in their lives. Some testimonials are lighthearted and funny; others recount driveway moments. And some, like the testimonial from Noemi Efros' daughter upon Noemi's passing, reflect on deeper themes such as democracy and freedom of the press.

Her daughter shared with us that Noemi was born in the former Soviet Union in 1945 and immigrated to the Bay Area in late 1990. She came here with her husband, daughter and her father to build a new life for her family. Having spent much of her life behind the iron curtain, she highly valued freedom of speech and access to accurate information and in-depth discussions, especially with regard to politics. To her, KQED and NPR reporting exemplified all these important qualities.

As her health was deteriorating in recent years, Noemi continued to rely on KQED to give her a window into the larger world she cared so much about.

Noemi's family celebrates these values in her memory, and KQED recently learned that Noemi wished for a gift to be directed to KQED as a testament and reflection of the legacy she hoped to leave behind. KQED's Senior Director of Major Gifts, Matt Hitchcock, said, "We are deeply grateful to Noemi for her generosity and for making KQED available for generations to come."

If you are interested in making KQED a part of your legacy, please contact Mark Jones at 415.553.2230 or legacy@kqed.org.

Thank You!

On behalf of our board and staff, thank you for supporting KQED. In the past year, many of you signed up to make challenge grants, helped us meet matching grants or increased your support. We are so appreciative for your contribution.

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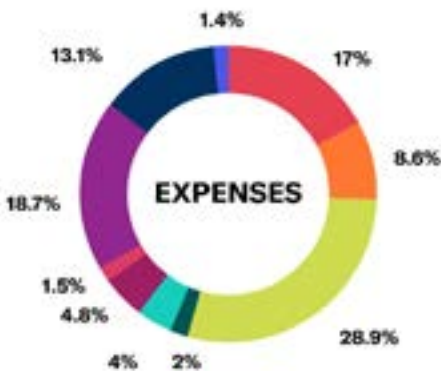
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Total Operating Financial Information

For the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024



| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Individual Member Contributions | \$55M |
| Underwriting | \$13.1M |
| General and Project Grants | \$9.8M |
| Corporation for Public Broadcasting | \$7.6M |
| Investment Income Appropriated from Endowments | \$6.3M |
| Other Revenue | \$4.6M |
| Contribution of Nonfinancial Assets | \$3.9M |
| Trade Revenue | \$0.3M |
| Total Revenues | \$100.6M |



| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Program Services | |
| Television Production and Broadcasting | \$18.9M |
| Radio Production and Broadcasting | \$9.5M |
| Multiplatform Content | \$32M |
| Education | \$2.3M |
| Program Promotion | \$4.4M |
| Digital | \$5.3M |
| Events | \$1.7M |
| Support Services | |
| Fundraising | \$20.7M |
| General and Administrative | \$14.5M |
| Asset Impairment | \$1.5M |
| Total Expenses | \$110.8M |

*This financial information was derived from KQED Inc.'s unaudited financial statements for the year ended September 30, 2024. Audited 2024 fiscal year financial statements will be available in early March 2025 and are audited by Grant Thornton LLP. For a complete copy of the 2024 Independent Auditor's Report and Financial Statements, email capigo@kqed.org.

*Financial information includes revenue and expenses for Snap Studios.

*Expenses include \$8.2M in depreciation and amortization expenses.



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We're here to help answer any questions you have.
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