

NEWS RELEASE



Maryland Public Television

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MPT unveils groundbreaking Maryland Center for Media Literacy & Education

*Launch event participants included Maryland First Lady Dawn Moore,
FCC Commissioner Anna Gomez, and Sheppard Pratt CEO Dr. Harsh K. Trivedi*

OWINGS MILLS, MD – [Maryland Public Television](http://MarylandPublicTelevision.org) (MPT) has launched its new Maryland Center for Media Literacy & Education (Center). The initiative and its mission were introduced during a livestreamed event on November 19 at the statewide public TV network's Irene and Edward H. Kaplan Production Studio in Owings Mills, Maryland. The event recording is available for viewing at mpt.org/media-literacy.

A major expansion of MPT's long-standing Education Division, the Center will address the challenges and impacts of today's media-saturated society and support the well-being of Maryland citizens. Its programs and resources on a variety of topics will empower individuals of all ages to navigate media in a complex digital world. The Center's website is MarylandMediaLiteracy.org.

Major funding support for the Maryland Center for Media Literacy & Education is being provided by the [Sherman Family Foundation](http://ShermanFamilyFoundation.org).

Media literacy at every age is vital, notes the Center's leadership. Social media is cited as a top source of news and information for adults and teenagers, with nearly half of teens ages 13-17 saying they are online "almost constantly." In addition, research revealed that 55% of students are not confident in their ability to recognize false information online, 94% of teens say they want their schools to teach media literacy, and 69% of parents fear their children are sharing private information on social media without realizing it. On top of these findings, older adults reported losing more than \$1.9 billion in online scams and digital fraud in 2023.



"Over more than five decades, MPT's education team has been a trusted partner in learning and a convener in Maryland, which is why we're well-positioned to spearhead this effort. We recognize media's power to influence our perceptions, beliefs, and actions, and it's more important than ever that everyone – from our youngest learners to our seniors – is equipped with healthy media habits," explained Betsy

Peisach, vice president, Maryland Center for Media Literacy & Education. “We’re committing the resources, expertise, and leadership over the long term to advance media literacy.”

Serving as hosts for the Center’s November 19 launch event were [Frank Sesno](#), former CNN anchor, correspondent, and Washington bureau chief, and current director of strategic initiatives and professor at the School of Media and Public Affairs at George Washington University, and [Kelsey Russell](#), a Gen Z national media literacy advocate and influencer with 100,000 TikTok followers.

The program featured [Maryland First Lady Dawn Moore](#), who spoke to the audience about the need for essential media literacy skills and the necessity for awareness of children’s digital media use.

“For the past 55 years, MPT has helped build strong citizens from childhood to adulthood, and the Maryland Center for Media Literacy & Education will build on that legacy. I’m proud this new Center will be a guiding light for our kids and adults,” said Moore. “As first lady, the wellbeing of our children is one of my top priorities – and that’s why I will continue to work in partnership with MPT to uplift the future generations of Marylanders.”

[FCC Commissioner Anna M. Gomez](#) and [Sheppard Pratt President and CEO Dr. Harsh K. Trivedi](#) took part in a conversation with Frank Sesno about the intersection of media literacy, technology, and mental health, and their impacts on individuals, families, and communities.

“If you’re on social media more than three hours a day, that’s specifically correlated with higher rates of anxiety and depression. We’re seeing unprecedented mental health issues and problems from too much social media,” said Dr. Trivedi. “It’s really about making information accessible – like the wonderful things MPT does and this coalition can do – and coming out with tangible things that parents, kids, and educators can use to help to teach skills, change behavior, and impact mental health.”

“What MPT is doing today to promote media literacy is important to make sure people can discern what is true and what is misinformation, disinformation, or mal-information,” said Gomez. “Remember, this is both a mental health issue and a public safety issue.”

The one-hour program integrated videos about social media use and media literacy topics of importance to students at several grade levels. These videos were produced by students from [Benjamin Tasker Middle School](#) in Bowie, Maryland, the [DC International School](#) in Washington, D.C., and [Stevenson University](#) in Owings Mills.

The Maryland Center for Media Literacy & Education’s staff, advisors, and partners are developing and curating tools and resources to promote media literacy knowledge and best practices. This team will also create effective learning opportunities that teach media literacy and support informed choices. Among the Center’s initial primary resources and continuing professional development assets are –

- Media STEPs frameworks and curated partner resources specific to [early learners](#), [twens and teens](#), and [adults and seniors](#).
- [Early Learning Media Ambassadors](#), who model best practices for teaching and learning with educational media in the early years. MPT uses a "train the trainers" model to develop media literacy ambassadors, equipping them with the tools to help children develop healthy habits to last a lifetime. In partnership with public libraries, ambassadors host free events, sharing media literacy tips and resources with families and educators in their communities.
- [Maryland State Department of Education-approved media literacy courses](#) for early childhood educators.

A network of nine dedicated education professionals is instrumental in guiding the Center's media literacy initiatives and advancing the movement statewide and beyond. The list of advisors is available at marylandmedialiteracy.org/advisors.

(Statistics sources: Pew Research Center, 2022; News Literacy Project, 2022; C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll, 2021; News Literacy Project, May 2024; FTC Annual Report to Congress, 2024)

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About Maryland Public Television

Maryland Public Television (MPT) is a statewide, public-supported TV network and Public Broadcasting Service member offering entertaining, educational, and inspiring content delivered by traditional broadcasting and streaming on TVs, computers, and mobile devices. A state agency, it operates under the auspices of the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission. MPT creates and distributes local, regional, and national content and is a frequent winner of regional Emmy® awards. MPT's commitment to educators, parents, caregivers, and learners of all ages is delivered through its [Maryland Center for Media Literacy and Education](https://www.marylandcenterformedia.org) and [Thinkport.org](https://www.thinkport.org). MPT's year-round community engagement activities connect viewers with resources on a wide range of topics. For more information visit [mpt.org](https://www.mpt.org).