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The first episode of “Enchanted Planet” is set to air at 6:30 a.m. on Sunday on Rocky Mountain PBS. Viewers in the Grand Valley are likely to recognize some local faces on the show. Pictured from left are Rio Alexander, Chloe Brooke Watkins, Sarahndipity Johnsen, Chaz Roi and Mateo Alexander.

Children’s program with local ties set to air on Rocky Mountain PBS

By **ANN WRIGHT**
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In the middle of the pandemic, the opportunity to create a children’s television show landed in Sarahndipity Johnsen’s lap.

But it didn’t come with a TV studio attached, and the studios at Colorado Mesa University and 970West Studio weren’t available because of COVID-19.

Johnsen was not to be deterred, though. “I made a green screen studio in my living room,” she said.

The camera rolled in January, and Johnsen and her TV guests sang and danced, worked with puppets, made crafts, read stories and created “Enchanted Planet.”

The first episode of this educational program for kids is set to air at 6:30 a.m. on Sunday on Rocky Mountain PBS. The next three episodes of “Enchanted Planet”



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Pictured from left are Chaz Roi, Chloe Brooke Watkins and Sarahndipity Johnsen, who will be in the first episode of “Enchanted Planet” on Sunday on Rocky Mountain PBS.

will be shown the following Sundays in September.

“It has been navigating one unforeseen event after another and it all worked out beautiful,” Johnsen said. “I’m so grateful.”

The idea for “Enchanted Planet” began with the characters in Johnsen’s “Animals Get Funky” children’s book series and continued with educational events planned for her nonprofit, We Create Heart.

However, We Create Heart launched the same week lock downs swept

the country in 2020. The events Johnsen planned had to move online as classes — a baboon craft and a baboon dance or talking about feeling with Confused Camel — and many people watched in the Grand Valley and beyond.

Johnsen decided to build on those classes with a television show for kids age 9 and younger. When a grant came through from the Sessions Family Foundation to make it possible, work began in earnest to develop “Enchanted Planet.”

In the process of creat-

ing the show, there have been plenty of complications and hurdles, from lighting issues to figuring out closed captioning, she said.

But along the way, Johnsen was able to work with more than 30 artists — musicians, writers, graphic designers and others — mostly from Colorado.

“All these people who were gig workers ... it was so exciting to put them to work,” Johnsen said.

Some of the faces and names on “Enchanted Planet” will be familiar to viewers in the Grand

Valley. Among them are musician Chaz Roi and librarian Sandra Nuñez Currier, who brings a Spanish language element to the program.

Each episode moves through eight learning segments, because “I really wanted to allow (kids) to engage, but not bore them,” Johnsen said.

Viewers also will have the chance to submit home video to be included in future episodes of “Enchanted Planet.”

“We’ve already started pre-production on Season 2,” said Johnsen, who was excited about additional grants and support We Create Heart has received for “Enchanted Planet” from entities such as Alpine Bank, the Grand Junction Commission on Arts and Culture and the Western Colorado Community Foundation.

Johnsen is grateful for the support and excited for the Grand Valley to see “Enchanted Planet.”

Along with being viewed on September Sundays on Rocky Mountain PBS, “Enchanted Planet” can be watched after its air date on the PBS Kids app.

For information about Johnsen and “Enchanted Planet,” go to wecreateheart.org.