

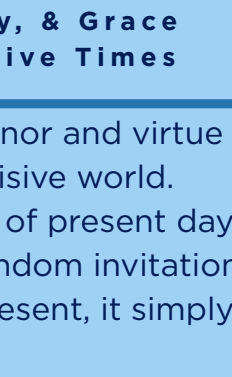
NEIGHBORS

September 22-26, 2025

Special Thanks to

The Louie M. & Betty M. Phillips Foundation

"Would you be mine? Could you be mine? Won't you be my neighbor?" For 31 seasons on public television, Mister Rogers' Neighborhood invited children to consider ideas that tend to divide people, rather than unite them: sharing, conflict, loss, grief, anger, war, racism. The 24th Annual Humanities Symposium extends Mister Rogers's exploration of what it means to be a "neighbor" to our increasingly globalized world where fences, borders, and walls prevail to limit and close off people from each other. If we believe with John Donne that "no man is an island," then it follows rather naturally that we ask serious questions about our relationships with others: Do we have a responsibility to care for our neighbors? Who are our neighbors? What constitutes a neighborhood? Where is the boundary between myself and my neighbor—and who determines this dividing line? Do "good fences make good neighbors," as the neighbor in Robert Frost's 1914 poem "Mending Wall" insists?

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2025
SEEK EXCELLENCE WITH HUMILITY

JANET AYERS ACADEMIC CENTER: 4TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

In the wake of the Covid pandemic shutdown, I longed for my favorite restaurants and coffee shops. Concerned about their future, I became a regular, visiting weekly to support local businesses and build relationships with baristas and bartenders. This presentation explores the complex, neighborly relationships between regulars and service workers, drawing from interviews with workers at Dozen Bakery, Brothers Burgers, and Tempo. WELLCore: Social Wellness		
12:00	DRS. CHARMION GUTSKE, DOUGLAS MURRAY, AND NATHAN GRIFFITH	THE CLOSER WE ARE TOGETHER THE FURTHER WE ARE FROM CARE (OR SO IT SEEMS TODAY)
Today, more humans than ever live in urban settings; one might expect that to mean that in times of need as "U-social" beings we would be more supported by members of our surrounding communities. Yet, often nothing seems further from the truth: many of us barely know the names of neighbors. While the rise of the pseudo-sociality of the internet is often cited as the primary cause of this, the members of this panel will reflect on the underpinnings of neighborliness especially in settings where neighbors might be much further apart, physically and in some cases culturally, in the works of Willa Cather, Jane Austen, and de Toqueville, with a possible foray into the works of a few medieval writers and invite discussion on why neighborliness seems to be so much harder to retain as we move closer together.		
1:00	OPENING RECEPTION	
Join us for afternoon coffee, refreshments, and delightful neighborliness!		
2:00	CHRIS THIESSEN	LISTENING FOR THE LOVE OF NEIGHBOR: How Popular Music Participates in the Pursuit of Just Relationships
This is not focused on hip-hop specifically, but I touch on hip-hop often as examples of my own musical journey and experience of music's ability to invite us into crossing social boundaries. My approach here is largely a marriage of sociology of music, Christology, and theological anthropology. If desired, I could also adapt this paper to more explicitly address hip-hop culture. WELLCore: Cultural Wellness		
6:00- 7:30	"ROOTS SO DEEP" DOCUMENTARY SCREENING - PART 1	
1890 Theater in Jack Massey Center WELLCore: Environmental Wellness		

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2025

OVER GRATITUDE WITH JOY

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OVER GRATITUDE WITH JOY

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Samaritan parable from the Gospel of Luke. Then students and faculty will be given the opportunity to rewrite and retell the story in a current context through guided application.		
WELLCore: Spiritual Wellness		
12:30	DR. KACIE HITTEL AND PROFESSOR DAN BRAWNER	SEEING OUR NON-HUMAN NEIGHBORS: A Drawing and Writing Workshop
Discuss importance of slowing down and paying attention. sketch and describe a plant or animal		
WELLCore: Intellectual Wellness		
2:00	JEFF MOLES, JASMINE LEDSINGER, AND AMANDA CLELLAND	NASHVILLE NEIGHBORS: Room In The Inn, The Store, and The Cookery - Panel Discussion
The three organizations will engage in a panel discussion on what it means to be a neighbor.		
WELLCore: Service Wellness		
3:30	DR. KEVIN TROWBRIDGE, DR. ANNA GRACE USERY, AND DR. CHRISTIE KLEINMANN	WON'T YOU BE MY (AI) NEIGHBOR? The Reconceptualization of Relationships in the Age of Artificial Intelligence
As artificial intelligence weaves itself into the fabric of our daily lives, it redefines what it means to be a neighbor—expanding, blurring, or even reinforcing the boundaries between us. This panel explores how AI challenges and reshapes what it means to be a neighbor, both in digital and public spaces. Are we building new bridges or new walls? How should we think about care, presence, and responsibility in AI-mediated communities? Panelists will discuss the promises and pitfalls of digital neighborliness and consider how we might build more inclusive, empathetic, and relationally rich neighborhoods in an increasingly automated world.		
WELLCore: Social Wellness		
6:00- 7:30	"ROOTS SO DEEP" DOCUMENTARY SCREENING - PART 2	
1890 Theater in Jack Massey Center		
WELLCore: Environmental Wellness		
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2025		
UNLEASH HOSPITALITY WITH LOVE		
JANET AYERS ACADEMIC CENTER: 4TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM		
9:00	DR. MICHELLE E. SHAW	RHETORIC NEXT DOOR: HOW WE TALK ABOUT THE NEIGHBOR
What does it mean to be a good neighbor—not just in theory, but in practice, in words, and in Spirit? This talk will explore the rhetoric of the neighbor as both a		

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JANET AYERS ACADEMIC CENTER: 4TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

concrete tools for practicing it—through listening, dialogue, and hospitality—in ways that honor both faith and humanity. WELLCore: Intellectual Wellness		
10:00	FEATURED SPEAKER: TOM JUNOD	HOW TO BE A MAN: Mister Rodgers, My Father, and Me
I grew up with a father who believed — and told me, in no uncertain terms — that he knew the secrets of what it took to be a man. But my life with Lou Junod was not so clear cut: I knew from an early age that he had his own secrets and made it my business to find them out. When I became a writer, I met a Fred Rogers, who from his televised “Neighborhood” had assured generations of American children that they were not only special, but loved. He was a very different kind of man from my Dad, but by showing me the power of kindness he let me finally decide the kind of man I wanted to be. He also helped me find the courage to write my memoir of my father, “In The Days of My Youth I Was Told What It Means To Be a Man.” WELLCore: Intellectual Wellness		
11:00	DR. KACIE HITTEL	HOW TO BE A DERRY GIRL
The Netflix show Derry Girls is a coming-of-age comedy about five teens growing up in Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland in the 1990s. The show depicts their schooling, their families, their friendships, and their many shenanigans, all set against the backdrop of the Troubles. Through a series of clips and conversation, we’ll explore what the Derry Girls can teach us about conflict, community, and connection. We’ll think about how neighboring Protestants and Catholics are depicted. We’ll discuss how humor helps us to engage with conflict. And we’ll share the hope that is the heart of how to be a Derry girl. WELLCore: Cultural Wellness		
12:00	DR. BARRY BALLINGER	DON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR: Criminalizing Neighborliness through Zoning
Mr. Rodgers' Neighborhood begins with a title card and the camera slow pulling back to reveal a detailed model of an American Main Street, a fine-grained, mixed-use small city, complete with a streetcar, sidewalks, parks, and a school. It presents a wholesome, family friendly, ideal for American life – a neighborhood that encourages neighborliness. However, land use policies such as zoning makes most of Mr. Rodgers' Neighborhood illegal to build today. Nashville's land use policies, which evolved from its segregationist past, determine who your neighbors are and who they are not, how we move about the city, and contributes to housing unaffordability and wealth redistribution. This presentation will reveal the regulations that make Mr. Rodgers' Neighborhood illegal, show how these regulations shape Nashville, and discuss neighborly reforms that urbanists are proposing in Nashville. WELLCore: Social Wellness		
1:00	DR. JUDY SKEEN	NEIGHBORS WITH PAWS, CLAWS AND HOOVES
Often we speak of nature as “out there” separate from ourselves. Viewing the other living creatures around us, those chosen as company and those who make their way into our worlds, as neighbors can enhance our lives and learning. What if fence lines are created for the protection of our animal company, not to keep them out but to keep them safe from modern threats? What might be learned if our capacity to see and hear all the life that surrounds us was extended and full of welcome? WELLCore: Environmental Wellness		
2:00	DR. NOEL BOYLE	DOULIA NEIGHBORHOOD: Eva Feder Kittay on Dependency and Community
Eva Feder Kittay's “dependency critique” contends that adequate accounts of the nature of community must include those with cognitive impairments, including severe cognitive impairments, as full members. Most accounts utterly fail this criteria. Kittay uses the concept of a doulia, inspired by the supporting roles that doulas play during childbirth, to suggest a foundation for community life that centers the universality of human dependency and inter-dependency. The resultant view not only recognizes cognitively disabled people as full members of our communities, but also celebrates the care that we all give and receive. Dr. Boyle's talk with engage philosophical and personal reflections on Kittay's work. WELLCore: Intellectual Wellness		
3:00	FEATURED SPEAKER: TOM JUNOD	WORKSHOP FOR WRITING STUDENTS
RSVP Required		
6:00- 7:30	“ROOTS SO DEEP” DOCUMENTARY SCREENING - PART 3	
1890 Theater in Jack Massey Center WELLCore: Environmental Wellness		
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2025 LIVE THE DREAM TOGETHER WITH HOPE JANET AYERS ACADEMIC CENTER: 4TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM		
9:30	JOYCE SEARCHY	LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS: Chasing the American Dream with Your Neighbor

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LIVE THE DREAM TOGETHER WITH HOPE

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9:30	JOYCE SEARCY	LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS: Chasing the American Dream with Your Neighbor
The speaker will reflect on the expectations placed on her as a child and the realities she witnessed growing as a girl in a segregated society. These experiences opened her eyes to injustice and fueled her early involvement in protest. What began as a personal response to inequality grew into a calling that shaped her career path for service to neighbors. WELLCore: Intellectual Wellness		
11:00	FEATURED SPEAKER: DR. ERIC CALDERWOOD	BRIDGES AND BORDERS IN THE LEGACY OF AL-ANDALUS
From 711 to 1492, large parts of today's Spain and Portugal were ruled by Muslims in a territory that was known as al-Andalus. Although al-Andalus ceased to exist as a place in 1492, its legacies and memories have survived in many forms and have animated a diverse range of cultural and political projects around the world. In the process, they have bridged some of the cultural divides that have defined today's world, producing neighbors where we might expect to find strangers. But these services of affiliation are not seamless and often run into limits. While al-Andalus has often served to create connections between national, cultural, religious, and ethnic groups, it has also served to draw boundaries between them. Such tensions are at the center of this talk, which will explore how the memory of al-Andalus has helped to create both bridges and borders, especially between Europe and North Africa. WELLCore: Intellectual Wellness		
12:30	DR. CHRISTINA ANANIAS	JOINING OUR NEIGHBORS IN WORSHIP: STRENGTHENING INTERGENERATIONAL TIES THROUGH MUSIC
2:00	DR. BLAKE W. REMINGTON	WATCHING, LOOKING, VIEWING: NEIGHBORS THEN AND NOW**
This will be a brief talk in AYERS followed by a walk to the "Some Were Neighbors" Holocaust Exhibition at the Bunch Library WELLCore: Intellectual Wellness		
4:30	RECEPTION & GALLERY TALK	NEIGHBORS: ARTIST IN RESIDENCE AT ARCADE ARTS
6:00	"ROOTS SO DEEP" PT. IV *PLEASE JOIN US IN THE 1890 THEATER LOCATED INSIDE THE JACK C. MASSEY CENTER	DOCUMENTARY SCREENING AND PANEL DISCUSSION WITH FEATURED FARMERS

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2025
S.O.U.L.

JANET AYERS ACADEMIC CENTER: 4TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

9:00	DR. BETH RITTER-COHN	DIVINE DISRUPTION: THE GIFT AND CHALLENGE OF RADICAL HOSPITALITY
The Greek word <i>philoxenia</i> is translated in the New Testament as "hospitality," but the literal meaning of the word is "love of strangers." In scripture, God repeatedly shows up in the guise of a stranger, offering opportunities to respond with either welcome or hostility. What does this radical biblical vision of hospitality invite us to think about today? How can we follow the example of Jesus and learn to be both a good host and a good guest of the strangers in our midst? WELLCore: Spiritual Wellness		
10:00	PHILLOGOI: PHILOSOPHY CLUB	JOIN US FOR A MODERATED DISCUSSION WITH PHILOSOPHY FACULTY AND STUDENTS
WELLCore: Spiritual Wellness		
11:00	DR. DAVID DARK	ART, EMPIRE, & THE END OF THE WORLD: LOVING MY NEIGHBOR IN THE EVERYDAY APOCALYPSE
WELLCore: Intellectual Wellness		
11:45	TEACHING CENTER LUNCHEON *RSVP REQUIRED	SERVICE LEARNING PANEL DISCUSSION
1:00	DR. RAY CHAO	NEIGHBORS, FEAR, AND THE LAW: THE TRAYVON MARTIN CASE AND ITS LEGACY
On February 26, 2012, 17 year-old Trayvon Martin was walking to his father's home when he was killed by George Zimmerman, a volunteer with a "neighborhood watch" group. Charged with second degree murder and manslaughter, Zimmerman's acquittal sparked immediate protests around the country and fueled discussions on race and crime. What, if anything, have we learned and what changes have been made in the law? WELLCore: Intellectual Wellness		
2:00	SANDRA HUTCHINS CREATIVE WRITING AWARDS	FEATURED READINGS: STUDENT WRITERS
4:00	FEATURED SPEAKER: C.J. SENTELL	NEIGHBOR AS VERB: PRACTICING THE POLITICS OF HOSPITALITY
In a world increasingly marked by isolation and division, what does it mean to neighbor one another well? Drawing from the daily work of The Nashville Food Project, this talk explores hospitality not as nicety but necessity—a daily, embodied practice that resists exclusion and cultivates community. Through stories of shared meals, gardens tended, and lives intertwined, we'll consider how food becomes a medium for justice, and hospitality a form of political practice. To neighbor, in this sense, is to open doors—of homes, of tables, of hearts. WELLCore: Intellectual Wellness		
5:00	CLOSING RECEPTION	FOOD CATERED BY THE NASHVILLE FOOD PROJECT

