

NEWS RELEASE

Oct. 22, 2019

**Book launch party scheduled Oct. 30 at SVC**

**SAINT VINCENT COLLEGE PROFESSOR, WIFE TEAM UP TO EDIT  
“MISTER ROGERS AND PHILOSOPHY: WONDERING THROUGH THE  
NEIGHBORHOOD”**

LATROBE, PA – Since 2000, Open Court Publishing’s series “Popular Culture and Philosophy” has examined the philosophical elements behind popular movies, television shows, books, artists and more, with its 130-book series including editions on “Seinfeld,” “The Simpsons,” “Harry Potter,” Bruce Springsteen, “Star Wars” and “The Twilight Zone,” among others.

Thanks to a member of the Saint Vincent College faculty, the series’ newest edition covers a cultural and societal icon dear to the Saint Vincent and Latrobe communities.

Released Oct. 15, “Mister Rogers and Philosophy: Wondering through the Neighborhood” was edited by SVC Assistant Professor of Philosophy Dr. Eric Mohr and his wife, Holly, the director of religious education at Saint Mary of the Mount Roman Catholic Parish in Pittsburgh. The book is a collection of 30 essays from philosophers, psychologists and educators from across the U.S. that examine the philosophy behind the teachings of Fred Rogers as well as the impact that the legendary television series “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood” has made over the past four decades.

To commemorate the release of the book, a launch party will be held at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 30, in the Fred M. Rogers Center. Editors and contributors will be on hand for a panel discussion, which will include an audience question-and-answer session as well as a book signing. The event is free and open to the public, though reservations are encouraged due to limited space and can be made online at <https://hipaa.jotform.com/92936914695171>.

“Holly and I are thrilled with how it turned out,” said Mohr. “It may in fact be, at this point, the definitive collection focused on the philosophical implications of Rogers’ work specifically. We have a tremendous selection of papers that hit on many major identifying characteristics of the show and Rogers’ vision. The cooperation we had with the contributors was excellent.”

While contributors to the book hail from across the U.S., including faculty from such institutions as Baylor, Rutgers, Boise State, Western Carolina, Bridgewater and Marquette, Saint Vincent is well-represented among the book’s contributors. Sydney Ball, a junior biology major and Fred Rogers Scholar from Pittsford, New York, collaborated with Mohr on a chapter. Additionally, Dr. Sara Lindey, professor of English, and Dr. Jason King, professor of theology, teamed up on an entry.

“The process for finding authors was relatively simple,” Mohr said. “I put out a call for abstracts through both Open Court and a philosophy database called PhilPapers and sent it to an email list of about 100 people who were contributors to previous volumes in the series. From just these sources, we had plenty of abstracts to choose from and there were many who expressed great excitement that this project was being done, whether they ended up being a part of it or not.”

The writers share their own memories and experiences of watching the show, compare Rogers’ goals and teachings to those of a number of noted scholars, psychologists and educators and examine Rogers’ masterful way of teaching his young audience about sensitive – and often frightening – topics through his careful, simplified language and by the use of the puppet inhabitants of the Neighborhood of Make Believe. Along with a number of examples from episodes from the show’s 41-year run, the authors also frequently include anecdotes from “The Good Neighbor,” Maxwell King’s biography of Rogers, as well as segments from the award-winning 2018 documentary “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?”

“I had always believed Rogers’ vision and methods were rife with philosophical significance,” Mohr explained. “However, much of the discussions about Rogers typically focus on his methods because of the fact that they are effective, not the underlying questions about why they are effective. Much of Rogers’ philosophy, if you can call it that, has to do with the content of the lessons and what I believe to be the deepest philosophical point in his vision – that there will never be another person exactly like you. What does it mean about us if this is true? The implications can be overwhelming.”

An avid fan of the “Popular Culture and Philosophy” series, Mohr was thrilled to be able to bring the latest volume to fruition.

“I very strongly support the ‘Popular Culture and Philosophy’ series because of the way it relates philosophy with people’s favorite things,” he said. “People usually don’t think of the philosophical implications in movies, television shows and music, so this is a fantastic avenue to raise awareness of philosophical questions within popular cultural trends.”

“Mister Rogers and Philosophy: Wondering Through the Neighborhood” is available for purchase through Amazon and at book retailers nationwide.

For more information on the upcoming launch party or on the book in general, contact Mohr at [eric.mohr@stvincent.edu](mailto:eric.mohr@stvincent.edu).

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