



Fred Rogers

"If you could only sense how important you are to the lives of those you meet; how important you can be to the people you may never even dream of. There is something of yourself that you leave at every meeting with another person."

Fred Rogers (1928-2003) is one of the most beloved individuals in the history of television. Rogers grew up in Pennsylvania in a loving home, and his mother would be a major influence in his life. He was also bullied while young, which made him particularly sensitive to the emotions felt by children. A stellar student, he enrolled at Dartmouth College, but left after only one year to pursue his passion in music. After graduating in 1951, he went to work in television, first in New York then for the public television station in Pittsburgh, where he was a writer and puppeteer for a children's show. He also earned a divinity degree in 1962 and was ordained as a Presbyterian minister. However, instead of working in a church, his ministry ended up touching the lives of children all over the world. In 1966, *Mister Roger's Neighborhood* was born, a television show that alternated between practical activities in Mister Rogers' house and the imaginary land of Make-Believe. The program was filled with uplifting messages emphasizing kindness and the uniqueness of each person. Mister Rogers wrote virtually all of the show's music, including the legendary theme song "Won't You Be My Neighbor?" However, Mister Rogers was more than just friendly sweaters and a calm voice. He dealt with the most challenging issues facing children and the world, including divorce, racism, and violence. By the time he stopped recording in 2001, he had made over 1,000 episodes of his incredible program. He was awarded the most prestigious honors in his field and beyond, including a television Lifetime Achievement Award and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. He passed away in 2003 after a short bout with cancer.

Fred Rogers shared a powerful message of peace and love with generations of children in need of his care. He responded individually to every fan letter to ensure that each child knew how special they truly were. His legacy lives on today in the animated children's program *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood*, the award winning documentary *Won't You Be My Neighbor*, and the acclaimed film *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* starring Tom Hanks. The world will always need the kindness of Mister Rogers in our lives.