



**MISTER
ROGERS'
NEIGHBORHOOD**

Fred Rogers watches as Olympian Suzie McConnell demonstrates how to spin a basketball during her appearance on MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD. McConnell won a gold medal for her efforts as a member of the 1988 U.S. basketball team. The program featuring McConnell is part of "Fun and Games" week on MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD, and premieres on PBS in most areas February 23, 1989. (Editors: Check with your local PBS station for the exact times program #1604 airs.)

For further information, contact David Newell or Lisa Belcher Hamilton [REDACTED]

MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD

*Family Communications, Inc.
4802 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213*

*Contact: David Newell
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February, 1989

Dear Neighbor:

Ready for some "Fun and Games" to beat the winter doldrums? Here's an all-new week of programs from MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD, featuring gold-medal Olympian Suzie McConnell, that can help. To help you let your readers in on this antidote for February, we've enclosed:

- * A Press Release
- * Program Notes for all February, March and April programs
- * A black and white photo of Fred Rogers and Suzie McConnell
- * A color slide of Fred Rogers and Suzie McConnell

If you need more information from the Neighborhood, please let us know -- we'll be happy to help.

Sincerely,

David Newell

David Newell
Director
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Lisa Belcher Hamilton

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DNLBH/sn

Enclosure

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"FUN AND GAMES" IN MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD
OLYMPIANS, DANCERS, MUSICIANS AND MORE!

For Immediate Release
Contact: David Newell or
Lisa Belcher-Hamilton

PREMIERE DATE: February 20-24, 1989
WEEK-LONG THEME: "Fun and Games"
EPISODES: #1601-#1605

Pittsburgh, PA -- From Mister Rogers learning how hard it is to spin a basketball on one finger -- courtesy of basketball gold-medalist Suzie McConnell -- to modern dancers who incorporate giant beach balls in their performance, it's an all-new week called "Fun and Games" on MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD. The week will premiere in most areas February 20-24, 1989, during the series' 21st season on the Public Broadcasting Service.

(Editors: Check with local PBS station for exact times programs #1601-#1605 will air.)

As is always true with Rogers' work, there are purposeful undertones to the programs' apparent light-heartedness. Explains Rogers: "Fun and games are a big part of healthy play, and they continue to be important throughout our lives. Fun provides a foundation for so many ways of growing--for self-expression, creativity and curiosity."

Suzie McConnell's sense of fun in the game for which she won an Olympic gold medal in Seoul is one reason Rogers asked her to appear on his Emmy-winning children's television program. Another reason is McConnell's example of self-discipline. "Learning to do something well is often hard," says Rogers, "but achievement can give you a very good feeling."

The pride of achievement is evident on the faces of the Special Olympic athletes Rogers visits as they practice for their wheelchair races and other events. The athletes' young helpers had plenty to be proud about, too. "I was so moved by the way these young people worked together," Rogers notes. "It's rare that we get to witness relationships that are so mutually helpful." In the course of the visit, one Special Olympic athlete coached Rogers on how to walk the balance beam. "Of course I couldn't do it nearly as well as he could," says Rogers, "and he helped me understand much better what it must be like to have physical limitations."

During the week, Rogers also visits:

-- The Dance Alloy, a Pittsburgh-based modern dance troupe known for their graceful fun, which they show so splendidly as they dance with giant beach balls;

-- A children's soccer team whose members attribute their delight in the game, even in grueling practice, to never having been made to play;

-- Boston-based folk singers Andy Holiner and Alice Johnson, who bring musical fun to young children through

modern American folk songs with irresistibly danceable rhythms.

Sometimes, in any neighborhood, the fun of games gets lost. In the Neighborhood of Make-Believe, that kingdom's most imposing puppet character, King Friday XIII, feels hurt when he's not asked to join a soccer team the neighbors are forming. Feeling left out, like coping with losing, is never easy, and Rogers talks about those feelings, too. "Often," he observes, "just helping children acknowledge sad feelings can help them cope."

In addition to "Fun and Games," premiere weeks during the 1988-89 season include "Josephine the Short-Neck Giraffe," airing May 1-5. "Josephine" will be the 13th musical story by writer-composer-lyricist Rogers on MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD.

Funding for MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD is provided by public television stations and by The Sears-Roebuck Foundation. The series is produced by Family Communications, Inc., the nonprofit company founded and headed by Fred Rogers.

For further information, contact David Newell or Lisa Belcher-Hamilton at [REDACTED]