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## Mister Rogers spawns Tiger tale in new PBS show

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By Gary Levin, USA TODAY

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CAPTION: PBS

*Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* is returning to the Land of Make Believe.

A decade after the series stopped producing new episodes, and eight years after the death of its beloved creator, PBS is reading *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood*, an animated series aimed at preschoolers that will feature a tot-sized cartoon version of Daniel Striped Tiger, the hand puppet Rogers so effectively used to teach life lessons.

The series, due in fall 2012, has been in the works for four years, but since Rogers died in 2003, stewards of his Pittsburgh-based company wanted his legacy to endure. "We weren't going to find someone like Fred Rogers and stick a sweater on him, but the company wanted very much to remain in public television as a producer for children," says Kevin Morrison, its chief operating officer and an executive producer of the show, created by Angela Santomero (*Blues Clues*).

Forty half-hour episodes will each feature two segments linked with common themes, such as disappointment or patience, and feature other Land of Make Believe characters. And in an homage to Rogers, 4-year-old Daniel dons a sweater and even ties his sneakers.

Would Rogers, famously averse to merchandising, have approved of the project? "I think he would have," Morrison says. "He'd have thought anything that engages children and speaks to them the way he spoke to them would be a good thing."

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