STORYTIME IN THE COMMONS is a free family event series hosted by the Nine Network of Public Media in the Public Media Commons. It brings the evidenced-based PBS KIDS® learning model to life each summer with appearances by beloved characters and activities that reinforce a love of learning.

The series was launched in 2016 as part of the Nine Network’s American Graduate Initiative to engage families in early learning and school readiness. It has continued to attract new families and bring other families back year after year.
This season, the five Storytime in the Commons events were themed to enhance the learning opportunities for children:

- Care for Our Environment
- Get into STEM
- Respect Others
- Embrace Cultural Diversity
- Be My Neighbor Day

Activities included reading stories (and the first-ever story in Spanish), meet and greets with PBS KIDS® characters and the Delta Dental Tooth Fairy and Tooth Wizard, games that help children grow, like building blocks, visits from the St. Louis Fire Department, Republic Services recycling, the St. Louis Children’s Hospital Healthy Kids corner, and more.

BE MY NEIGHBOR DAY

This year we finished the Storytime in the Commons series with a special day dedicated to Mister Rogers and the positive messages his show promotes. Nine Network partnered with The Fred Rogers Company and PNC to hold a Be My Neighbor Day.

Mister Rogers believed “we are all neighbors” and we explored what it means to be kind to your neighbors, a lesson both young and old can appreciate. Over 700 people attended September’s Be My Neighbor Day and enjoyed Storytime, meeting Daniel Tiger and Katerina Kittycat, activities and games, and a special Mister Rogers’ sing-along.

“I watched Mister Rogers every morning as a child, and remember feeling so happy and excited to see him and his world of make believe. Now, seeing his stories and lessons re-told through Daniel Tiger for my children makes me so happy!”

—Be My Neighbor Day attendee
“My toddler’s face lit up when she saw the Clifford character, and we enjoyed seeing all the different characters from the PBS show in real life.”
—Storytime attendee

MORE THAN HALF of America’s 3- and 4-year-olds do not attend preschool. For many of these children, PBS KIDS, with a 24/7 channel available to more than 95% of U.S. TV households, is a key source of educational media content.

BREAKFAST WITH A HEALTHY MESSAGE

Through a generous grant provided by Delta Dental of Missouri, Nine was able to provide transportation to families active in the Ready to Learn program. Attendance at Storytime enhanced learning opportunities. The families were treated to a healthy breakfast from Operation Food Search and a fun performance by Delta Dental of Missouri’s Tooth WizardSM and Tooth Fairy that teaches children how to take good care of their teeth.

The Ready to Learn initiative is a cooperative agreement funded and managed by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Innovation and Improvement. Its goal is to promote early learning and school readiness, with an interest in reaching low-income children and communities.

FRIENDS OF STORYTIME

These local organizations helped make the 2018 season special.

- Fire Dog
- The Magic House
- NCADA
- Operation Food Search
- Parents as Teachers
- Ready Readers
- Saint Louis Science Center
- St. Louis Black Authors of Children’s Literature
- St. Louis Community Credit Union
- St. Louis Crisis Nursery
- St. Louis Fire Department
- St. Louis Storytelling Festival
- VROOM

OUR VIDEOS EXTEND LEARNING

Based on our Early Childhood Advisory Council and partner Delta Dental of Missouri, Nine Network developed core messages for parents to extend learning opportunities at home using short videos. We shared the segments on-air and online. You can find them nineNet.org and on the Nine Network’s YouTube page.
With the support of the community, the Nine Network can aspire to:

- Create and share content for the public good.
- Listen to what’s important and bring people together around things that matter to them and to the community.
- Help people experience things that they wouldn’t otherwise experience.
- Shine a light on the things that make us St. Louisans.
- Care and act for the well-being of our most vulnerable and youngest community members.

We believe that when we succeed, we ignite the spirit of possibility in St. Louis.

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT.

DELTA DENTAL

AMERICAN GRADUATE AND READY TO LEARN

Storytime in the Commons is part of the Nine Network’s American Graduate initiative. American Graduate is dedicated to improving educational outcomes from cradle to career.

It is also funded by Ready to Learn, a program of the U.S. Department of Education that supports the development of educational programming and materials to increase school readiness for young children.

Local support for American Graduate and early childhood education is provided by:

Dana Brown Charitable Trust • Emerson Express Scripts • James S. McDonnell Family Foundation • Spire • Bank of America • Maritz

With the support of the community, the Nine Network can aspire to: