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Article updated: 1/27/2013 8:16 PM

'Speedy Delivery!' at Naperville museum from 'Mister Roger's Neighborhood'

By Susan Sarkauskas

David Newell is devoted to making sure the legacy of children's television pioneer Fred Rogers lives on.

Newell, who played deliveryman Mr. McFeely on "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," spoke to the show's fans Sunday at the [DuPage Children's Museum](#) in Naperville.

Even though Rogers died in 2003, the show is still broadcast on some public-television channels, and can be watched on Amazon.com, YouTube and Hulu. And last fall, PBS debuted a spinoff, the animated "Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood," which is produced by the [Fred Rogers Co.](#)

"I thought I had a job for one year," said Newell of the show's debut season. Now he's the public relations director for the company, which Rogers started in 1971 as Family Communications.

Newell was at the museum to mark the end of its "How People Make Things" traveling exhibit, which was created by the Pittsburgh Children's Museum with the help of the Fred Rogers Co. His visit also promoted the museum's campaign to collect sweaters to donate to DuPage Public Action to Deliver Shelter and Hesus House homeless shelter, tying in with Rogers' famous practice of changing in to a cardigan at the beginning of every show.

Newell spoke to museum members in a private session, then posed for pictures and signed autographs with other guests, throwing out his well-known "Speedy Delivery!" catchphrase. He showed youngsters the puppets of Daniel the Striped Tiger, King Friday and more characters from The Neighborhood of Make-Believe, and talked with parents about episodes of the old show and the new show.

"I used to think he brought my mail!" said Christina Sanchez of Naperville, who brought her 4-year-old twins Haley and Joshua to visit.

Another mom spoke with Newell about the episode featuring Mr. McFeely's wedding. Turns out his real-life wife played the role of the maid of honor. McFeely noted how it was part of an episode about divorce, and that the show helped children deal with some serious topics.

Besides playing the "Speedy Delivery" man, Newell was the props manager for the show.

The sweater drive ends Feb. 28.

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