



SESAME STREET'S HISTORIC 50TH SEASON KICKS OFF NOVEMBER 9TH, 2019, WITH A STAR-STUDED PRIMETIME SPECIAL

Landmark season introduces a new child cast member and confronts the stresses and pressures faced by today's kids

Celebrity guests include Chrissy Teigen, Charlie Puth, Meghan Trainor, Misty Copeland, Elvis Costello, Dave Grohl, and many more

(October 16, 2019 – New York, NY) – *Sesame Street* got its start at the height of the civil rights movement and the war on poverty, in answer to a simple but powerful question: could television help prepare less advantaged children for school? In 1969, the show's founders tapped researchers, entertainers, and other visionaries to create a "street" like no other, where colorful monsters, humans, and even grouches lived side by side. Today, Sesame Workshop – the nonprofit organization behind the iconic show, which has grown to reach kids and families in more than 150 countries and 70 languages – is proud to announce the start of *Sesame Street's* landmark 50th season.

The new season begins with *Sesame Street's 50th Anniversary Celebration*, a star-studded primetime special that offers a sweeping look at fifty years on the Street. Hosted by Joseph Gordon Levitt, the special reimagines classic segments and songs like "People in Your Neighborhood" and "It's Not Easy Being Green" as the Sesame Street gang gets ready for a big celebration. *Sesame Street's 50th Anniversary Celebration* includes cameos from rarely-seen characters like Roosevelt Franklin and Kermit the Frog, and visits from celebrity guests **Whoopi Goldberg, Patti LaBelle, Elvis Costello, Meghan Trainor, Sterling K. Brown, Norah Jones, Nile Rodgers, and Itzhak Perlman**. Nearly every human cast member returns, too: **Bob McGrath** (Bob), **Sonia Manzano** (Maria), **Emilio Delgado** (Luis), **Loretta Long** (Susan), **Roscoe Orman** (Gordon), **Linda Linda Bove** (Linda), **Alison Bartlett** (Gina), **Nitya Vidyasagar** (Leela), and **Olamide Faison** (Miles). Legendary puppeteers **Fran Brill** and **Caroll Spinney** and current cast members **Alan Muraoka** (Alan), **Suki Lopez** (Nina), and **Chris Lawrence Knowings** (Chris) also appear in the special. *Sesame Street's 50th Anniversary Celebration* premieres on **Saturday, November 9th on HBO** and **Sunday, November 17th on PBS stations** and the **PBS KIDS 24/7** channel.

The first regular episode of the 50th season premieres on **Saturday, November 16 on HBO**. This season's celebrity guests include: **Chrissy Teigen**; musicians **Charlie Puth, Dave Grohl, and Maren Morris**; ballet dancer **Misty Copeland**; comedian **Michael Che**; and Olympic athlete **Chloe Kim**. The season also introduces "**Big Bird's Road Trip**," a special segment that tours the United States and beyond to find out what kids love about where they live. In each installment, Big Bird meets new friends – in person or via video chat – and learns all about their families, interests, and neighborhoods. (Nine of these segments were filmed on location during this summer's "Sesame Street Road Trip.")

"As we mark our 50th season, we want to remind families everywhere of the timeless lessons *Sesame Street* has always taught," said **Steve Youngwood**, President of Media & Education and Chief Operating Officer of Sesame Workshop. "Everyone, no matter where they are from, is equally deserving of respect, opportunity, and joy."

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Later in the season, a new neighbor will come to Sesame Street. Played by **Violet Tinnirello**, 8-year-old Charlotte – her friends call her “Charlie” – is the first child to join the *Sesame Street* cast in more than 20 years. Charlie is a military child who moves to the neighborhood with her family, bringing viewers along for the ride as she explores her new home for the first time.

“We can’t wait to share this season with families and fans of all ages,” said **Ben Lehmann**, Executive Producer of *Sesame Street*. “Even as we take time to look back and honor our history, we keep innovating to bring today’s preschool kids something that’s tailored just for them – holding on to all the fundamentals that make *Sesame Street* so magical.”

Season 50’s curriculum focus – “**Oops and Aha!: Embracing the Power of Possibilities**” – addresses a pervasive issue facing young children. “Today’s preschool kids are under an unprecedented amount of stress and pressure to meet certain academic and social-emotional benchmarks, often before they’re developmentally ready,” said **Dr. Rosemarie Truglio**, Sesame Workshop’s Senior Vice President, Curriculum and Content. “That result-oriented mindset can make kids afraid to take even the safest risks – never trying to pour their own milk for fear of spilling it.” Fortunately, caring adults can help relieve that pressure by giving kids room to make mistakes and tools to persevere afterwards. In one episode, for example, Abby Cadabby’s brother Rudy feels upset when he “ruins” a drawing; Alan encourages him to keep trying, and Rudy eventually creates a new picture inspired by his mistake. By modeling positive thinking, self-confidence, and perseverance, this season offers children – and parents! – a fun way to practice essential self-regulation strategies and creative thinking skills.

Throughout 2019, Sesame Workshop has marked *Sesame Street*’s cultural and philanthropic impact through the decades with celebrations for fans and important new work. The nonprofit organization brought community events to ten US cities in a summertime “road trip,” published a signature research report about how identity impacts children, debuted a host of fashion and lifestyle collaborations for all ages, and expanded the *Sesame Street in Communities* initiative to help families coping with foster care and parental addiction. Earlier this year, *Sesame Street* received an institutional Peabody Award and a twelfth Primetime Emmy Award, bringing the show’s total number of Emmys to 193. In December 2019, *Sesame Street* will become the first television show to receive a Kennedy Center Honor in the history of the award.

Leading up to the Season 50 launch, celebrity fans are sharing their favorite *Sesame Street* memories under the hashtag #ThisIsMyStreet. Participating celebs include: **Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Jack Antonoff, Garcelle Beauvais, Alessia Cara, Chance the Rapper, Priscilla Chan, Michael Che, Common, Misty Copeland, Terry Crews, Zoey Deschanel, Peter Dinklage, Josh Gad, Ilana Glazer, Ellie Goulding, Andy Grammer, Josh Groban, Kathryn Hahn, Laurie Hernandez, Colin Hanks, Mindy Kaling, Ellie Kemper, Jack McBrayer, Keegan-Michael Key, John Legend, Blake Lively, Lucy Liu, Padma Lakshmi, Kate McKinnon, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Olivia Munn, Bill Nye, Patton Oswalt, Busy Philipps, Questlove, Seth Rogen, Paul Scheer, Jason Schwartzman, Amanda Seyfried, Jenny Slate, and Allison Williams**, plus all the guests from Season 50 and the primetime special.

Sesame Street content continues to be available to PBS KIDS viewers daily on local PBS stations, the PBS KIDS 24/7 channel, and anytime via the free PBS KIDS Video app. Funding for *Sesame Street* on PBS is provided in part by Beaches Resorts, Blue Lizard, Chrysler Pacifica, and SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment. Funding for *Sesame Street*’s *50th Anniversary Celebration* on PBS is provided in part by Chrysler Pacifica and Macy’s. Starting next year with Season 51, episodes of *Sesame Street* will debut on forthcoming streaming service HBO Max before airing on PBS KIDS.

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About Sesame Workshop

Sesame Workshop is the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street, the pioneering television show that has been reaching and teaching children since 1969. Today, Sesame Workshop is an innovative force for change, with a mission to help kids everywhere grow smarter, stronger, and kinder. We're present in more than 150 countries, serving vulnerable children through a wide range of media, formal education, and philanthropically-funded social impact programs, each grounded in rigorous research and tailored to the needs and cultures of the communities we serve. For more information, please visit www.sesameworkshop.org.

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