



2025 FYSH Fest Pre-Orientation Program

Monday, July 21, 2025

Dear Incoming Class of 2029,

Congratulations on your decision to attend Vanderbilt University and welcome to the First Year Students of Hillel (FYSH) Class of 2029! We are so excited to meet you and want to extend an invitation to you, and the rest of the Class of 2029, to join Hillel on campus a few days early for food, fun, and friends! Register today for FYSH Fest, Vanderbilt Hillel's eighth annual pre-orientation program.

Our goal is to ensure that you start your Vanderbilt experience with a warm welcome from the Vanderbilt Hillel community. FYSH Fest participants will be shown around campus and will make meaningful connections with peers before moving in. You will also learn more about our Hillel, your Jewish family on campus. We have amazing on-campus and off-campus activities planned for you.

In addition to the other incoming students, you will be joined by a group of student facilitators - hand-picked upperclassmen who have been through it all and want to share their wisdom. They represent a wide variety of majors, have lived in almost every dorm, come from all over the country, and can tell you about every activity on campus you need to know about. More importantly, they are all leaders on campus and will be there for you with mentorship and support before, during, and after FYSH Fest.

This FYSH Fest packet has all the information that you need to register for our August program. We provide the food, pay for the activities, provide t-shirts, etc. All you have to do is sign up! [You can register by filling out our online form](#) by Wednesday, July 30. When you register, you will be asked to make a voluntary donation of \$180 to help cover the cost of the program.

Have questions? Call Rachel Pacernick, Hillel's Engagement Director, at (734) 276-9709, or e-mail rachel.a.pacernick@vanderbilt.edu. She's excited to answer any questions you have about FYSH Fest and campus life in general. Once you sign up, you will get monthly emails (starting in May) before the program with additional important information that will make your experience coming to campus super easy.

Don't miss this amazing opportunity to hang out with us and make an early adjustment to campus life!

Sincerely,

Rachel

Rachel Pacernick
Vanderbilt Hillel Engagement Director



2025 FYSH Fest Pre-Orientation Program

Program FAQ

What is a FYSH?

Vanderbilt Hillel has extensive programming for our First Year Students of Hillel (FYSH). This includes our pre-orientation program, FYSH Fest, a mentorship program, a leadership and programming board, and social programming. Keep an eye out for our FYSH Programming all year long!

What is the FYSH Fest Pre-Orientation Program?

FYSH Fest is a pre-orientation program for all incoming students offered by Hillel and coordinated student facilitators. Facilitators (we call them FYSHcilitators) are hand-picked upper-class students who staff the FYSH Fest activities and guide the incoming students as peer mentors. FYSH Fest involves two days of activities on and off campus.

When is FYSH Fest?

You will need to be here for FYSH Fest on the afternoon of Thursday, Aug 14 for registration, our welcome dinner, and an off-campus adventure that evening! We will have programming all day on that Friday for students and parents beginning with brunch and culminating with Shabbat services and dinner. Students will then move into their dorm rooms on Saturday, with the rest of the Class of 2029. If you are Shabbat observant and moving in on Friday, you're still more than welcome to join us for FYSH Fest, just let us know!

Why participate?

This program is a great way for incoming students to meet upperclassmen and peers before the academic year begins. Many of our program alumni have even shared that they made their best friends at Vanderbilt during FYSH Fest. Incoming students also get better acquainted with campus, and get a personal upperclassman mentor matched to them as part of the program, who will be there to guide the start of their college experience.

Who is FYSH Fest for?

Everyone! It doesn't matter if you are an incoming first-year student or a transfer student. Hillel will offer fun activities for everyone regardless of your Jewish background or interests. All of the food will be provided by Hillel and is under kashrut supervision. Even the most observant Jewish students can enjoy FYSH Fest! All incoming students are welcome, regardless of their religion.

I am a transfer student, can I still attend FYSH Fest?

Absolutely! If you are a transfer student, we'd love to hear from you. Typically, transfer student move-in and orientation conflicts with the FYSH Fest Program. Even if you cannot attend all of FYSH Fest, we would still love for you and your family to join us for dinner on Thursday night August 14th. If you would prefer not to attend FYSH Fest, please still fill out our intake form and reach out to Rachel Pacernick (rachel.a.pacernick@vanderbilt.edu or 734-276-9709) so that she can plan something special with you and the other transfer students on campus during the first week of school.

How do I sign up?

[Fill out our online registration form.](#) Follow the instructions provided and book your transportation and hotel. When you register, you will be asked to make a voluntary donation of \$180 to help cover the cost of the program.

(FAQ continued on next page)



2025 FYSH Fest Pre-Orientation Program

When Does My Student Move In?

Your student will participate in Vanderbilt's scheduled move-in day on Saturday, August 16th and will receive top-notch service from the Vanderbilt move-in crew. Your student will also have the full Vanderbilt Orientation experience.

Where Can My Family Stay?

We recommend making accommodations with hotels within walking distance of Hillel. On the following page, we have listed two options for hotels near campus. Make sure your reservation extends through the entire weekend so that you can move your student in during Vanderbilt's move-in-day.

How Long Should My Family Stay?

While FYSH Fest is primarily for the incoming students, we are happy to provide parent-focused programming during the program, as well. We can answer all your questions about Hillel and campus life, give you important tips about Birthright, Greek life, holidays, and much, much more. You are also welcome at our Shabbat on Friday evening with your student. It's important to note, though, that Hillel respectfully asks families to disengage from their students during the programming schedule on Thursday night and Friday during the day. You'll have plenty of time to shop and explore Nashville with your students before and after FYSH Fest. If your family is still in town Sunday morning after first year move in, we hope you'll stop by to say hi during our annual Move In Weekend Bagel Brunch!

When will the program be over on Friday? Should I make dinner reservations?

FYSH Fest culminates in a time honored tradition of our families and students joining to welcome the first Shabbat of the school year. We are so excited to bring in the joy of Shabbat with you in a new way this year. For the first time ever, we will be hosting an off-campus Shabbat experience from 5:00pm to 7:00pm, which will include songs, light bites, and mingling. We understand that this is an important time to get some last family meals and bonding time in before leaving your student at Vanderbilt for the school year, and we recommend planning for dinner no earlier than 7pm to ensure you can enjoy the closing programming that our student leaders have worked so hard to create, and experience your first Vanderbilt Hillel Shabbat as a family!

Will there be time for last minute dorm room shopping during the program?

We know how important it is to get the last minute shopping in before move-in on Saturday. Programming will start back up again on Friday with a late morning brunch to give you time for last minute shopping in the morning, breakfast with the family, or to sleep in.

Additional Questions?

Call Rachel Pacernick, Hillel's Engagement Director, at (734) 276-9709, or e-mail rachel.a.pacernick@vanderbilt.edu. She's excited to answer any questions you have about FYSH Fest and campus life in general.



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Tips for Parents

Directions to Hillel's Schulman Center for Jewish Life

From the West:

1. Take I-40 East
2. Use the right 2 lanes to take exit 206 for I-440 East toward Knoxville
3. Continue onto I-440
4. Take exit 1 for Murphy Rd toward US-70S E/West End Ave
5. Turn left onto Murphy Rd (signs for The Parthenon/West End Ave/US-70S E)
6. Use the left 2 lanes to turn left onto West End Ave
7. Turn right onto 25th Ave South
8. Turn left onto Vanderbilt Place
9. Hillel will be the first building on the right

From the North:

1. Take I-65 South
2. Keep right at the fork to stay on I-65 S, follow signs for I-40 W/Huntsville/Memphis
3. Use the left 2 lanes to take exit 84B for I-40 W toward Memphis
4. Continue onto I-40 W
5. Follow directions 2-9 for coming from the West

From the South:

1. Take I-65 North to Nashville
2. Use the right 2 lanes to take exit 80 to merge onto I-440 West toward Memphis
3. Take exit 1 to merge onto US-70S East/West End Ave
4. Merge onto US-70S East/Highway 1 East/West End Ave
5. Turn right onto 25th Ave South
6. Turn left onto Vanderbilt Place
7. Hillel will be the first building on the right

From the East (Airport):

1. Merge onto I-40 West
2. Use the left 3 lanes to take exit 213A for I-440 W toward Memphis
3. Follow directions 3-7 for coming from the South

Helpful Destinations

College Shopping Needs:

Wal-Mart Supercenter
(615) 352-1240
7044 Charlotte Pike
Nashville, TN 37209

Target
(615) 352-8461
26 White Bridge Road
Nashville, TN 37205

Markets (With Kosher Options):

Kroger
(615) 269-5649
4560 Harding Pike
Nashville, TN 37205

Trader Joe's
(615) 356-1066
90 White Bridge Rd
Nashville, TN 37205

Accommodations:

Nashville Marriott at Vanderbilt University
2555 West End Avenue
Nashville, TN 37203
1-615-321-1300

Homewood Suites by Hilton
2400 West End Avenue
Nashville, TN 37203
1-615-340-8000

Or another Vanderbilt Campus-area hotel

2024 SAMPLE FYSH FEST SCHEDULE

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

This is what we did **IN 2024!** We expect the program to look VERY similar to this program.

Thursday, August 15th, Arrive in Nashville		
Time	Location	Description
5:30 – 6:45 p.m.	Vanderbilt Hillel	Hillel Welcome “Shabbat Favorites” Meal Come to Hillel to check into the program and for a welcome dinner. Mingle and meet the other families.
6:45 – 8:00 p.m.	Vanderbilt Hillel	Family ONLY – Reception Families are invited to join the Hillel staff for an after-dinner dessert reception and schmooze-fest! Come meet our senior staff members and mingle with other families.
6:45– 7:15 p.m.	Vanderbilt Hillel Patio	Student Ice Breakers and Dessert Hillel’s student leaders will introduce themselves and help you get to know each other.
7:30 – Late-Night	Late Night Adventure	Off Campus Adventure Students will travel by bus to The Escape Game in the heart of Downtown Nashville where they will help each other break out of a themed room before time runs out!
10:30 p.m.	Vanderbilt Hillel	Come and Get Your Students If you are a hotel beyond walking distance, please come and pick up your student from Hillel for the night. Students staying within walking distance of Hillel will head back to their accommodations in walking groups with other first years and upperclassmen. Students staying outside of walking distance from campus should plan to call a rideshare back to their hotels if a parent cannot pick them up. Hillel staff will be happy to wait with them and ensure they get into their ride safely!

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Friday, August 16th, Programming		
Time	Location	Description
9:30 – 10:30 a.m.	Vanderbilt Hillel	Good Morning Breakfast! Grab a Nashville nosh before the FYSH Fest program commences for a full day of programming.
10:30 – 12:15 a.m.	Leave from Vanderbilt Hillel	Student Tour of Campus Wondering where your classes are? We have you covered. We will provide personalized tours that will make sure you are navigating through your first week of classes with ease.
10:30 – 12:15 a.m.	Vanderbilt Hillel	Family ONLY - Everything You Need to Know to Have a Happy Jewish College Student Hear about all the important tips and tricks you need to know to support your college student (including some things you won't hear from Vanderbilt). Topics will include Birthright, Greek life, Jewish holiday observance, safety tips, and more.
12:15-1:15pm	Vanderbilt Hillel	Student Panel Our FYSH will have the opportunity to ask FYSHcilitators their burning questions about campus life, academics, social opportunities, Hillel, and WHATEVER else they may be wondering as they begin their college journeys!
12:15-1:15pm	Leave from Vanderbilt Hillel	Family Tour of Campus Max, a student tour guide and FYSH Fest Co-Chair, will take the families around campus to show them everything the show on the University tours and more.
1:15pm-2:15pm	Vanderbilt Hillel	Hillel Involvement Info Session for students and snacks before Lunch. Learn about all the ways to get involved in Hillel. We have something for everyone! Want to try baking? Join Miznon or Challah for Hunger! Want to go kayaking on the Harpeth? Join Hillel Out'Dores. Hear about these communities and many others from involved upperclassmen!
2:30pm-4:30pm	Nashville Adventure!	Nashville Pins Mechanical Enjoy Duckpin bowling, arcade games, pinball and much more at Pins Mechanical. Students will also be provided a Sushi lunch and parents can enjoy our open bar. Students will have bus transportation to Nashville Pins.

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Shabbat at Vanderbilt Hillel		
Time	Location	Description
5:30 – 6:30 p.m.	Vanderbilt Hillel	<p>Kabbalat Shabbat Services</p> <p>Welcome in Shabbat with services led by our Jewish Life Committee! Reform and Conservative minyanim will begin at 5:30pm and end in time to enjoy dinner at 6:30pm.</p> <p>Shabbat services are <i>not</i> part of the FYSH Fest program, so we will be joined by other Vanderbilt Hillel community members at this point in the day!</p>
6:30 p.m.	Vanderbilt Hillel	<p>Shabbat Dinner</p> <p>It's your first Shabbat on campus, of COURSE Hillel is feeding you! After concluding our Kabbalat Shabbat Services, we'll come together for a delicious Kosher dinner featuring Goldie's famous brisket.</p> <p>Shabbat dinner is <i>not</i> part of the FYSH Fest program, so we will be joined by other Vanderbilt Hillel community members at this point in the day!</p>