



2026 FYSH Fest Pre-Orientation Program

Friday, December 12, 2025

Dear Incoming Class of 2030,

Congratulations on your decision to attend Vanderbilt University and welcome to the First Year Students of Hillel (FYSH) Class of 2030! We are so excited to meet you and want to extend an invitation to you, and the rest of the Class of 2030, to join Hillel on campus a few days early for food, fun, and friends! Register today for FYSH Fest, Vanderbilt Hillel's ninth 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 29. 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



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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 20 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 2030. 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 Thursday programming on August 20th. 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)



2026 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 22nd 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 with our new FYSH Fest Tradition, 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 before leaving your student at Vanderbilt for the school year. 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?

We'd love to hear from you! 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

2025 SAMPLE FYSH FEST SCHEDULE

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

This is what we did **IN 2025**! We expect the program to look VERY similar to this program.

Thursday, August 14th, Arrive in Nashville		
Time	Location	Description
5:00 – 6:45 p.m.	Vanderbilt Hillel	<p>Hillel Welcome “Shabbat Favorites” Meal</p> <p>Come to Hillel to check into the program and for a welcome dinner. Mingle and meet the other families.</p> <p><i>Parking is limited in the Hillel lot and is reserved for families who have contacted Hillel and alerted us that they will be driving to campus. No parking is permitted in the Medical Center side of the facility.</i></p> <p><i>Limited parking may be available on Vanderbilt Place and surrounding streets. However, participants are encouraged to please consider walking to the Schulman Center from their hotels if possible.</i></p>
6:45 – 8:00 p.m.	Vanderbilt Hillel	<p>Family ONLY – Reception</p> <p>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.</p> <p><i>Siblings are invited to hang out upstairs at Hillel.</i></p>
6:45– 7:30 p.m.	Vanderbilt Hillel	<p>Student Ice Breakers and Dessert</p> <p>Hillel’s student leaders will introduce themselves and help first-year students get to know each other.</p>
7:30 – Late-Night	Late Night Adventure in Downtown Nashville	<p>Off Campus Adventure - STUDENTS ONLY</p> <p>Students will head to a fun off campus venue downtown to play games, get to know each other, and experience downtown.</p>

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10:30 p.m.	Vanderbilt Hillel	<p>Come and Get Your Students</p> <p>If you are staying at 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 stay at Hillel until all students are safely back with their families.</p>
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Friday, August 15th, Programming		
Time	Location	Description
11:00am - 12:00pm	Vanderbilt Hillel	<p>Lunch</p> <p>Enjoy a lunch of bagels, kugel, and salads to start off the day of programming.</p>
12:00pm - 1:30pm	Vanderbilt Hillel	<p>Parent Panel</p> <p>Parents have an opportunity to ask questions to Shannon, Ari, and a group of student leaders.</p>
12:00pm - 1:30pm	Vanderbilt Campus	<p>Student Tour of Campus</p> <p>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.</p> <p><i>Please make sure to fill out our FYSH Fest Participant Details Form so that we can put together your personalized campus tour.</i></p>
1:30pm - 2:30pm	Vanderbilt Campus	<p>Family ONLY Tour of Campus</p> <p>Join two of our student tour guides for a guided tour of campus!</p> <p><u>When tours are over, families will have the rest of the afternoon free until they are invited to meet us for our Shabbat experience at Acme at 5pm.</u></p>
1:30pm - 2:15pm	Vanderbilt Hillel	<p>Student Snacks + Break into groups</p> <p>Cool off from your campus tours with waters and popsicles!</p>

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2:15pm - 4:30pm	Vanderbilt Hillel	Hillel Involvement Rotations FYSH and FYSHcilitators will break out into four groups to rotate through a variety of activities and get a taste for everyday Hillel Programming.
5:00pm - 7:00pm	Acme Feed and Seed	Shabbat Off Campus Experience Enjoy songs, food, and mingling at a unique off campus Shabbat experience downtown. Enjoy light bites and mocktails before heading out to dinner (or to wherever comes next) with your family. <i>Hillel will provide transportation for students to Acme but not back to Hillel. Parents are invited to meet us at Acme beginning at 5pm and to stay until 7pm. We recommend families use rideshare since parking is limited downtown.</i> <i>If you prefer to pick your student up from Hillel at the end of the night (around 7:30pm), please let us know so that we can arrange transportation back to Hillel for your student.</i>