



The Facts About Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Fairfield County

WHAT IS THE IMAGINATION LIBRARY?

- Dolly Parton created her Imagination Library to guarantee access to books and to inspire parents to read to their children as much as possible in 1996 for preschoolers in Sevier County, Tennessee, as a gift of encouragement for the children of her Smoky Mountain homeland.
- The Imagination Library of the United Way of Fairfield County is committed to improving early learning opportunities for all children birth to age 5 by sending new, age appropriate books to their homes and providing companion parental workshops and resources that support early literacy, school readiness and life-long learning.

WHY WE NEED IMAGINATION LIBRARY IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY

- Educators have emphasized that reading with a preschool child is the **single most important activity to prepare a child for school.**
- Nearly **60 percent of Ohio children who show up to school are not ready to succeed in kindergarten**, and those who have not developed some basic literacy skills prior to entering school are 3 to 4 times more likely to drop out in later years.
- By age 3, a child's brain reaches 85 percent development, and yet we spend 85 percent of our education funding after this age. There are very few programs to aid in early childhood learning, but Imagination Library can help!

HOW IT WORKS:

- From the day they are born, children who register for the program receive a book every month until their fifth birthday.
- Preschoolers currently living in the community may enter the program at any time and begin receiving an age-appropriate book every month until their fifth birthday.

- Families with preschool children who move into the community are eligible to register and become part of the program.
- Participating families who move out of the community will exit the program at that time. If a family has more than one preschool age child, each child may participate and receive his/her own library.
- Committee composed of individuals from education, child development, academia, and early childhood literacy select the books for Dolly's Imagination Library.
- The children's classic *The Little Engine that Could* is the first book of each library and *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* by Joseph Slate is the final book in the collection.
- Each book arrives in a polybag and is addressed to the child.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- It all begins when leaders in a community decide they want to bring the program to all of the preschool children in their area. The Fairfield County United Way is hoping to do just that.
- The cost of the program is approximately \$30 per child per year.
- There are 9,071 children under the age of 5 in Fairfield County. If 40 percent of those children participate, the total cost of the program will be \$90,700 per year.
- We are looking for sponsors to provide grants to offset the cost of the books/mailings, to sponsor one month of mailing (in exchange for recognition on the mailing bag) and to assist in collecting books from local post offices when they are returned.
- To get involved, simply contact the United Way of Fairfield County at **(740) 653-0643**.

