

For Immediate Release

Get on Board with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library – Columbia County!

Columbia County, OR: - United Way of Columbia County and our community **partners** are proud to announce the **formation** of a local Dolly Parton Imagination Library. The program, considered a world class product for childhood success and achieving Kindergarten readiness will **fill** a niche in our county by providing free, new, age appropriate books for children aged from birth to their fifth birthday residing in Columbia County. Every child in our county can participate in the program. No child will be turned away.

About the Dolly Parton Imagination Library: Begun in 1995 as a charity in Sever County, Tennessee, Dolly Parton began the project so that every preschool child in her home county could have books in their home. Now the program distributes over 1 million high quality books each month to children around the world. The program is not a charity, social service, or government program. It is a gift from our sponsors to all preschoolers in our county. The program is low cost, but each child registered in Columbia County costs our group \$25 per year for postage to mail the books.

Our Mission: Our mission in Columbia County is to increase early literacy, school readiness, and ensure success in a child's future education and employment. Studies have shown increased interest in reading, promotion of the home literacy environment, and family engagement with parents reading to children in communities participating in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program. Research has also shown higher Kindergarten Readiness Assessment scores for children participating in the program vs. non-participants. Why does the program start so early? 90% of brain development occurs in the first 3 years of life. Learning to read is a process much like learning to speak or learning to walk. Children associate sounds with emotions and pictures with words. These are all important steps on the road to reading. When a child enters Kindergarten ready for school, there is an 82% chance the child will master basic academic skills by age 11, compared with a 45% chance for children who are not school ready. Later in life, children who do not receive high quality early childhood experiences are 25% more likely to drop out of school, 40% more likely to become teen parents, and 60% less likely to attend college.

How You Can Help: We need your donations to make this program a success. Our goal in 2018 is to fund the program for 1180 children. For that we will need \$29,500. We have cash commitments from local organizations and a major grant from The James and Shirley Rippey Family Foundation, but you or your business can make a difference in our community with your donation. Any amount will make a difference. Tax deductible donations can be made to **Imagination Library, c/o** United Way of Columbia County, PO Box 538, Rainier, OR 97048-0538, (503) 556-3614 or through their website www.unitedwayofcolumbiacounty.org. Be sure to note that your donation is intended for the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library