

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Comes to San Luis Obispo County

San Luis Obispo, CA – United Way of San Luis Obispo County is bringing Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to local children. Developed in 1996 by writer and singer Dolly Parton, the Imagination Library is intended to encourage a love of reading and learning. Her impoverished childhood and father's illiteracy inspired the country legend to create the program in her native Sevier County, Tennessee. Since then, the Imagination Library has delivered over 25 million books around the world.

Children enrolled in the program will receive in their home mailbox a new, age appropriate book every month from 0-5 years of age for just \$50 a year. All preschool age children are eligible. Starting at birth with "The Little Engine That Could", the last book of the series is "Look Out Kindergarten Here I Come". The community is invited to support this effort by contributing to the fund for the Imagination Library and giving the gift of literacy to local children.

"If a child can read at grade level by the time she or he is in fourth grade, they increase their chances of succeeding in middle school and graduating on time from high school", said Lily Aanerud, program coordinator and United Way volunteer. "This program unlocks the magical world of books and gets children excited about reading. Before they even enter kindergarten, they will have their own personal library of sixty books".

The program also helps strengthen families by encouraging positive interaction between adults and children through shared reading. The Imagination Library is especially valuable for children in underprivileged families, who may find books to be an unaffordable luxury in today's economic slowdown.

United Way is the official affiliate for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in San Luis Obispo County. In 2009, Dolly Parton announced anchor partnerships for the program with United Way Worldwide and Rotary International. Penguin Group USA is the exclusive publisher for all the books.

For more information about Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and other United Way of San Luis Obispo County programs, visit www.unitedwayslo.org.

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This news release is available on the United Way of San Luis Obispo County website at <http://www.unitedwayslo.org/News/index.html>