



Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library is a book gifting program that mails high-quality books promoting early literacy and school readiness to children from birth to age five, no matter their family’s income or zip code. West Virginia is one of only 20 states that boasts statewide availability of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL) program, which requires funding to sustain its actively enrolled 52,000 children.

The total 60-volume home library includes titles which promote self-belief, emotional awareness, interpersonal skills, and overall positive themes, starting with the welcome book, *“The Little Engine That Could,”* and ending with *“Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!”* graduation book.

The long-term goal of DPIL of West Virginia is to provide every child access to high-quality developmentally appropriate literary material. As a result of the program, schools receive a better prepared kindergartener and studies have proven by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, DPIL graduates outperform their non-DPIL peers in academic testing. Statistics also reflect higher graduation rates, positively impacting economic and workforce development and even substance abuse prevention.

Project studies by Dr. Austin Persinger for Marshall University’s Center of Excellence for Recovery include behavioral health findings by the Robert C. Byrd Center of Rural Health, which focus on prevention risk and protective factors, and support that being read aloud to forges a safe emotional foundation and promotes nurturing interactions between children and caregivers which aids in long-term emotional health stability linked to the deterrence of drug use.

DPIL enrollment is provided free of charge in West Virginia through a partnership with the Dollywood Foundation and Marshall University’s June Harless Center for Rural Educational Research and Development, which relies on grants, fundraising, private donations, and corporate giving. We seek support to continue to grow the program and positively impact our children and the future of our state.

Thank you for your assistance and involvement in advancing this program!

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Enter Imagination Library in the 'Fund Designation' menu