

# Terrebonne Foundation for Academic Excellence

## Imagination Library Overview

*The goal of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program is to enable children to read age-appropriate books by the time they enter school.*



### What is Dolly Parton's Imagination Library?

In 1996, Dolly Parton launched Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to benefit the children of her home county in East Tennessee. Dolly's vision was to foster a love of reading among her county's preschool children and their families by providing them with the gift of a specially selected book each month. By mailing high quality, age-appropriate books directly to their homes, she hoped that children would become excited about books and would feel the magic that reading can create. Moreover, the program could ensure that every child would have books, regardless of their family's income.

Dolly's Imagination Library became so popular that in 2000 she announced that she would make the literacy program available for replication to any community that was willing to partner with her to support it locally.

The program provides each child enrolled with a free book every month from birth until his/her fifth birthday. The goal is to enable every child in the parish to read age-appropriate books by the time he/she enters school.

Almost 700,000 children under the age of five, in the United States, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, receive books from the Imagination Library each month. Over 40,000,000 books have been mailed to children since the program began in 1996.

### How does it work?



A local champion agrees to secure funding and manage the program in their community. For a program to reach it's maximum potential, it is critical to have the support of community leaders, businesses, churches, parents, and educators...it takes the entire community to make the program a success!

The Terrebonne Foundation for Academic Excellence is proud to be the local champion for this program in Terrebonne Parish. Partnering with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library makes it possible for us to provide the books to the community in the most cost effective manner. As the local champion, TFAE promotes the program, registers children and secures funding to continue the program.

### TFAE...14 years of philanthropy at work...

- Awarded \$903,000 in grant dollars to TPSD teachers with \$395,000 in matching funds from BESE.
- Awarded 269 Teacher Grants and 84 School Impact Grants since inception.
- Awarded the first \$500 New Teacher Grants in 2012.

*"When Ford gets a new book in the mail he can't wait until bedtime to read it. It is a special treat to read the book together."* Parent



*“I have received many comments from parents of the Head Start children remarking on how excited the children get when a book arrives and how much fun the parents and children have reading the book together. I am so pleased that TFAE has sponsored Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library in Terrebonne Parish. Reading is the key!”* Head Start Administrator

## Why invest in Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library?

Consider this:

- \* If a child is not reading at grade level by 1st grade, it may take four to five years to catch-up.
- \* Most children reading well below grade level at the end of 4th grade will not graduate from high school.
- \* The majority of 4th or 8th graders are not proficient in both math and reading in any state.
- \* "It is estimated that the cost of illiteracy to business and the taxpayer is \$20 billion per year."

Reversing these trends requires starting early. The foundation of skills required to be successful in school, work, and life is built in the youngest years—birth to age five.

*Part of early childhood learning includes reading. Teaching your child to read early and well has multiple benefits and is the key to your child’s academic future.*



### A few benefits are:

- ☺ Reading helps develop a young child’s brain.
- ☺ Reading opens the door to a child’s early academic success.
- ☺ Early reading ignites a child’s creativity and imagination.
- ☺ A child who learns to read joyfully at home, at an early age, with a loving parent or caregiver, grows in self-confidence and independence.

*For an investment that holds its value... invest in our children’s early learning.*



According to U.S. Census data, there are 8,170 children under the age of 5 in Terrebonne Parish. The goal is to have 70% (5,719) registered in the program by 2017. The program was implemented in Terrebonne Parish in August of 2012. It was projected that 1,634 children would be registered in the first year. TFAE surpassed that number within the first nine months of implementing the program.

Twenty-five (\$25) dollars provides one child with 12 books for one year. The first book received is *The Little Engine That Could* and the last book received is *Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!*

TFAE and these community partners are committed to the program: Rotary Club of Houma, The Bayou Community Foundation-GNOF, Joseph L. Waitz, District Attorney, Fourchon Oilman’s Association, Inc., Wal-Mart Foundation & Facility 6521, Stephanie Hebert-Allstate Insurance Foundation, SCIA, Bayou Pediatrics Associates APMC, Miles Forrest, and Coastal Commerce Bank.

Please consider joining the above-named community partners. Through education, the quality of life in a community improves for all citizens.

*“If one wish of mine could come true, I hope my Imagination Library gives wings to all of your dreams.”*

*Dolly*