



MEDIA FACT SHEET

The Dollywood Foundation General Information

[Dolly Parton](#) created [The Dollywood Foundation](#) (DWF) in 1988. Its original mission was to inspire children in her home county (Sevier County, Tenn.) to succeed in education, and to boost high-school graduation rates. Today, the Foundation's mission is to share the life and legacy of Dolly Parton as an inspiration for children to Dream More, Learn More, Care More and Be More™. Its flagship program, which Dolly launched in 1995, is [Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#). The Dollywood Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization headquartered in Sevierville, Tenn.

Contact Information

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The Dollywood Foundation: Major Milestones & Mission Highlights

- **1991:** Dolly started the Buddy Program to help reduce high school dropout rates in Sevier County. She asked every 7th and 8th grader to team up with another student, offering them \$500 each if they both graduated. As a result, dropout rates dropped from 35% to 6%.
- **2000:** Dolly created the Dolly Parton Scholarship, which provides a \$15,000 college scholarship to five high school seniors in Sevier County.
- **2007:** Dolly raises \$1M for new Sevier County Hospital Birthing Unit and Dolly Parton Center for Women's Services is established.
- **2016:** Dolly launches the My People Fund, which raised over \$12M for families who lost their homes in Sevier County fires on November 28, 2016.
- **2017:** The Foundation launched Dolly Parton's Imagination Library license plates in Tennessee with all proceeds going to support local program partners in the Volunteer State.
- **2017:** Dolly releases *I Believe in You* children's cd to benefit The Dollywood Foundation.

About Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Dolly Parton launched the Imagination Library in 1995 to foster an early love of reading and learning in her hometown of Sevier County, Tenn. The Imagination Library has since become the highest quality, most recognizable and most effective book gifting resource in the world. Policy makers, funders, early childhood organizations and families trust The Imagination Library **to inspire a love of reading among children of all ages.**

How Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Works

This premier program mails *free* high-quality, age-appropriate books to registered children every month from birth to age 5. Children enrolled from birth receive 60 books by the time they graduate from the Imagination Library program. The Foundation covers overhead costs and negotiates wholesale pricing for the books, while local community partners fundraise to cover the cost of mailing and decided-upon wholesale book prices.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Highlights

- Over 247 million free books have been gifted since the program's inception in 1995
- The Imagination Library operates in five countries: United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and Republic of Ireland
- There are currently 21 Statewide Programs in the U.S.
- Braille and bilingual books are included in book selections in the U.S.
- More than 3 million free books are gifted each month to children around the world

Dolly Parton Imagination Library: Major Milestones

- **2004:** First statewide program launches in Tennessee
- **2006:** Launches in Canada
- **2007:** Launches in the United Kingdom
- **2011:** Audio and braille books added
- **2013:** Launches in Australia
- **2017:** Official Dolly Parton license plate available in Tennessee; proceeds benefit local Imagination Library affiliates
- **2018:** 100th million books (COMC) dedicated to The Library of Congress
- **2019:** Launches in The Republic of Ireland
- **2023:** Gifts its 200 millionth book since inception
- **2024:** 1 in 7 children (14 percent) under the age of 5 in the U.S. receives a book in the mail each month from the program
- **2025:** Celebrates 30th Anniversary of DPIL

Dolly Parton Imagination Library: Select Awards & Accolades

- **2000:** The Association of American Publishers bestows its Honors Award on The Imagination Library
- **2001:** The Imagination Library receives the prestigious Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval
- **2011:** The Imagination Library receives the President's Crystal Apple Award from the American Library Association
- **2014:** Library of Congress Literacy Award taps The Imagination Library as a Best Practices Honoree
- **2019:** The Recording Academy MusiCares honors Dolly for her philanthropic efforts
- **2020:** Award-winning *Goodnight with Dolly* series launches
- **2021:** The Library of Congress awards the Imagination Library with the \$150,000 David M. Rubenstein Prize
- **2022:** The Council of Chief State School Officers honors Dolly with Distinguished Service Award
- **2022:** National Education Association awards Dolly with its Friends of Education Award
- **2022:** Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is awarded the Eric Carle Angel Award
- **2022:** Dolly receives the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy Award in New York City
- **2022:** Dolly receives the \$100 million Bezos Courage and Civility Award from Amazon founder Jeff Bezos
- **2023:** The King Center awards Dolly and her Foundation the Christine King Farris Legacy of Service in Education Award
- **2023:** The Dollar General Literacy Foundation Donates \$1M to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
- **2024:** The Education of Commission of the States awards The Foundation its Corporate Award

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library: More Background & Details

Dolly Parton grew up in Sevier County, Tenn. Parton, her 11 siblings and her mother and father lived in a one-room cabin. Dolly's father, Robert Lee Parton Sr., could neither read nor write, yet ran businesses successful enough to support his family. Dolly has called her father one of the smartest people she has ever known.

Dolly's admiration, love, and respect for her father inspired her to launch Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in 1995. The Imagination Library is the flagship program of The Dollywood Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Sevier County, Tenn. Its mission, and that of its founder, is to create a lifelong love of reading and inspire children to Dream More, Learn More, Care More and Be More.

The Imagination Library mails one free book a month to each child enrolled in the program. It currently mails 3 million age-appropriate, high-quality books each month to children around the world and to date, over 250 million books have been given to children in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and The Republic of Ireland. Research indicates that the Imagination Library makes a positive impact on early childhood development and literacy skills.

The Library is funded by both Dolly Parton and local community partners in all five countries. Penguin Random House is the exclusive publisher of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

For more information, please visit [ImaginationLibrary.com](https://www.imaginationlibrary.com).