

Dear Friend of Education,

Please join us in bringing the joy of reading to every preschool child who will be attending the Eastern Howard School Corporation.

The joy of learning how to read is immeasurable, both as a lifelong activity and a necessary skill. Research has shown that reading to a child greatly increases the chance that not only will he or she be a proficient reader, but he or she will enjoy reading. The Eastern Howard School Corporation would like to begin a program that brings age-appropriate books to every pre-school child, from birth until the age of five. The program is called *Dolly Parton's Imagination Library*, and I have personally seen its' success in my previous position as a superintendent in Southern Indiana.

In 1996, Dolly Parton launched an exciting new effort to benefit the children of her home county in east Tennessee. Dolly wanted to foster a love of reading among her county's preschool children and their families. She wanted children to be excited about reading and to feel the magic that books can create. Moreover, she could insure that every child would have books, regardless of their family's income.

So she decided to mail a brand new, age appropriate book, each month to every child under the age of 5 in Sevier County, Tennessee. With the arrival of every child's first book, the classic The Little Engine That Could™, they could now experience the joy of finding their very own book in their mail box. These moments continue each month until the child turns 5—and in their very last month in the program they receive the book, Look Out Kindergarten Here I Come.

Needless to say, the experience has been a smashing success. So much so that many other communities clamored to provide the *Imagination Library* to their children. Dolly thought long and hard about it and decided her Foundation should develop a way for other communities to participate. The Foundation asked a blue ribbon panel of experts to select just the right books and secured Penguin Group USA to be the exclusive publisher for the Imagination Library. In addition, a database was created to keep track of the information.

Consequently, in March of 2000, Dolly stood at the podium of The National Press Club in Washington, D.C. and revealed the plan for other communities to provide the Imagination Library to their children. And as only Dolly can say it, she wanted to “put her money where her mouth is” – and provided the books herself to the children of Branson, Missouri and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina – communities where her businesses now operate. If other leaders in their communities were willing to do the same, well something big might just happen.

You know what, it did!

Here’s how it works:

A community must make the program accessible to all preschool children in their area. The community pays for the books and mailing, promotes the program, registers the children, and enters the information into the database.

From there The Dollywood Foundation takes over and manages the system to deliver the books to the home. Hundreds of communities are providing books to hundreds of thousands of children. For Eastern Howard to get books to every child (birth to age five) we need to raise approximately \$9000 dollars per year. The Eastern Howard School Corporation will register students and enter the information into the database. Once a month, every child will go to his or her mailbox and receive a treasure that will last a lifetime. Just think, by the age of five, every child would have a personal library of sixty books.

Please consider making a donation to the Eastern Howard School Corporation to help us fund the Dollywood Imagination Library Initiative. Your gift will bring the world of reading into the life of a child. Thank you for your consideration and best wishes.

Sincerely,

Dr. Tracy Caddell
Eastern Howard School Corporation

For more information or to make a donation please contact Barbara Roesener at 765.628.3391 or email her at barb.roesener@eastern.k12.in.us .