

## Imagination Library Gets State Funding Kris Wiley for The News-Review

Early literacy got a big win at the end of the Oregon Legislative Session with funding to cover statewide implementation of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

Imagination Library is a book gifting program that mails one free, new, age-appropriate book to registered children from birth to fifth birthday every month.

Our program, launched in fall 2019 and sponsored by the Friends of the Roseburg Public Library, covers the Glide, Idleyld Park, Roseburg, Wilbur and Winchester zip codes. Currently, 1,394 children are registered; 815 youth have graduated upon reaching their fifth birthday.

About 3,000 children in our service area are eligible for the program, which provides access to quality reading material, supports developing early literacy skills, creates opportunities for child-caregiver bonding and helps prepare children for school and life success.

Senate Bill 5506 and House Bill 5506 were passed by their respective lawmakers on June 25, ensuring \$1.7 million for the program over the next biennium. I expect that funding to cover about 50 percent of the annual costs for each affiliate, although I do not have the details yet.

Each affiliate is required to fundraise \$25 per registered child per year, and our community has been incredibly supportive from the beginning. A number of foundations, businesses and individuals have ensured every child who registers is approved immediately to receive books.

The state funding will help all of the affiliates, although we will continue to rely on local financial support. Folks interested in donating to the program may stop by the library or mail a check made out to Friends of the Roseburg Public Library to PO Box 1921, Roseburg, OR 97470.

Because of the statewide initiative, we will have more time to reach out to eligible families and encourage their participation.

We know these books make a difference because we surveyed 1,050 parents/caregivers of children registered in our service area in May. We received 228 responses, a 22 percent response rate.

Eighty-nine percent of respondents indicated they have read all of the books received, and another 10 percent indicated they have read more than half of the books.

Ninety-nine percent of respondents indicated they either like, really like or absolutely love the program.

Twenty-one percent of respondents reported their child's/children's home library is made up only of Imagination Library books. The rest of respondents indicated a mix of purchasing books, receiving books as gifts and checking out books from a library.

We accept Imagination Library registrations on an ongoing basis. Online registration is available at [imaginationlibrary.com](http://imaginationlibrary.com); click "Check Availability." Alternately, paper registrations are available at the library's front desk.

Anyone may register a child; however, a parent's or guardian's phone number or email address is required. The first book is mailed eight to 10 weeks after registration. Imagination Library affiliates cover most of Douglas County and Oregon. Contact your local public library for more information.

### **Summer Reading Program for Adults Week 5 Bonus**

All adults are invited to participate in this week's summer reading bonus for a chance to win a \$10 In-N-Out Burger gift card.

This week participants are invited to share two photos: one of a book you currently are reading and one of a stack of books you plan to read.

To participate, visit the library's website, and click on "Summer Reading Program." Click on the link labeled "Week 5 Bonus" to upload the photos. Alternately, email me at [kwiley@cityofroseburg.org](mailto:kwiley@cityofroseburg.org) with your responses.

One winner will be drawn randomly from all fully completed submissions.

#### **This Week's Library Events**

Monday, July 3-Saturday, July 8 – 9 a.m.-6 p.m., StoryWalk® at Quintus Park

Thursday, July 6 – 1-2:30 p.m., Teen program: Make beads and bracelets

Friday, July 7 – 10:30-11:30 a.m., Children's program: Crafts at Stewart Park Pavilion