



United Way of Youngstown
and the Mahoning Valley

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PRESS RELEASE

United Way's Imagination Library Reaches Major Milestone

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(Youngstown, OH) – 5,000 children in Mahoning County now receive free books once a month thanks to the United Way of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley's Imagination Library. In 2014, United Way launched the literacy program, which provides a free book to children birth to age 5 living in Mahoning County. United Way funds the program through a partnership with the Dolly Parton Foundation.

"We are so proud of the growth of Imagination Library. Being able to reach this many children is truly amazing," said Bob Hannon, President of the United Way of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley, "We want children to be ready to learn when they reach kindergarten, and getting books in their hands as early as we can is a great way to get them on the right path."

Imagination Library is an early literacy initiative that provides more than free books to the children. United Way expanded the program by partnering with the Public Library of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley to host "Imagine with Us" Literacy Events. Parents and their children are invited to these events, which are held throughout the year at various Library Branches, schools, and United Way partner agencies. Librarians share important literacy techniques to the parents, in turn giving them the tools necessary to teach their children to read.

" , " said Kathy Mock, United Way's Director of Education and Initiatives, " ."

Last summer, the Navarro Family donated \$25,000 to help grow the program and reach more children, including Spanish speaking families living in Mahoning County. Imagination Library is also sponsored by Covelli Enterprises and the Ohio Children's Foundation.

Since 2014, 2,637 children graduated from the program. Once a child turns 5 they receive their last book, "Kindergarten Here I Come", and are considered graduated from Imagination Library.

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For more information on upcoming "Imagine with Us" Literacy Events or to sign up your child for Imagination Library, you can go to www.ymvunitedway.org/imaginationlibrary or call the United Way office at 330-746-8494.