



United Way of Youngstown  
and the Mahoning Valley

Contact: Roxann Sebest, Director of Marketing and Communications  
330.746.8494 or rsebest@ymvunitedway.org

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Navarro Family Makes Major Gift to United Way's Imagination Library**

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(Youngstown, OH) – The Navarro Family and the United Way of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley are committed to helping children in Mahoning County learn how to read. To further that mission, Shorty and Elba Navarro are generously donating \$25,000 to the United Way's Imagination Library initiative.

"Imagination Library is a major investment for our United Way, and the only way we can reach more children is through great partnerships like this one with the Navarro Family," said Bob Hannon, President of the United Way of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley, "We are lucky to have Shorty and Elba Navarro in our Valley, and we are honored they want to help us grow this reading initiative."

Elba Navarro was on hand for an Imagine with Us event held at OCCHA to present the check to United Way. United Way partners with organizations like OCCHA to hold literacy related events to promote the love of reading to children and their families.

"Growing up, my sister and I were readers. We were always reading! And I truly believe children need books in their hands," said Elba Navarro, "I believe in Imagination Library. This is what these children need to see. They need to see people reading to them. They need to hold books in their hands. It will open up a whole new world to them."

In 2014, United Way launched Imagination Library, which provides a free age-appropriate book once a month to children from birth to age 5 living in Mahoning County. Since its start, more than 4,600 children have received 125,000 books sent directly to their homes.

United Way of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley  
255 Watt Street Youngstown, OH 44505  
[www.ymvunitedway.org](http://www.ymvunitedway.org)

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The Navarro Family's gift will help the United Way expand Imagination Library to reach even more children. They are encouraging Hispanic children and families living in Mahoning County and attend OCCHA's educational programming to sign up for Imagination Library. Several of the books sent to the children's homes are bilingual, and will help the families learn English.

"We wanted Imagination Library to be about more than free books, so we brought together the right partners to provide ways to encourage the entire family to read," said Kathy Mock, United Way's Director of Education and Initiatives, "We have Imagine with Us Events with the Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County, we have volunteers serve as Reading Buddies by going into pre-schools to read to the little ones, and local schools have even adopted their own Reading Buddy program by pairing up middle school children with kindergarten and first graders. It's all grown out of Imagination Library"

Imagination Library is also sponsored by Covelli Enterprises and the Ohio Children's Foundation.

To sign up your child for Imagination Library, you can go to [www.ymvunitedway.org/imaginationlibrary](http://www.ymvunitedway.org/imaginationlibrary) or call the United Way office at 330-746-8494.