

250,000 Free Books Delivered Through St. Charles Imagination Library

Community partnership continues expanding access to free books for children from birth through age five.

LULING, LA, UNITED STATES, July 7, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A major early literacy milestone has been reached in St. Charles Parish with the delivery of 250,000 free, high-quality books to local children through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. Since United Way of St. Charles launched the program in 2009, thousands of children from birth to age 5 have built home libraries and discovered the joy of reading.

“

If we can help more children enter kindergarten with a love of books and excitement for learning, that's an investment that benefits our entire community for generations.”

Loyd Bourgeois

Today, more than 1,200 children across St. Charles Parish receive a free, age-appropriate book each month, helping United Way of St. Charles reach the 250,000-book milestone. Approximately 43% of eligible children in the

parish are currently enrolled. In 2025, Loyd J. Bourgeois Injury & Accident Lawyer committed to fully funding the local program, helping ensure every eligible child can continue receiving books as United Way works toward enrolling more than half of all eligible children.

Building a Foundation for Early Literacy

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a partnership between The Dollywood Foundation and local program partners worldwide. The Dollywood Foundation oversees book selection, publisher relationships, printing, and monthly book delivery, while local partners fund participation, enroll families, and build community support.

For more than 16 years, United Way of St. Charles has worked with local donors and volunteers to ensure every eligible child in St. Charles Parish has access to books during the critical early years of development.

Community Investment Expands Opportunity

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library relies on local partners to cover the cost of books and mailing

expenses for every enrolled child. In many communities, limited funding forces programs to cap enrollment or create waiting lists for eligible children.

United Way of St. Charles has never capped enrollment, ensuring every eligible child in the parish has been able to participate since the program began. Loyd J. Bourgeois Injury & Accident Lawyer's commitment helps preserve that promise for years to come while supporting United Way's goal of growing participation beyond 50% of eligible children.

"Our law firm has always believed that strong communities begin with strong families," said Loyd Bourgeois, attorney and United Way of St. Charles board member. "Reading to a child is one of the simplest and most powerful investments we can make. If we can help more children enter kindergarten with a love of books and excitement for learning, that's an investment that benefits our entire community for generations."

Research Demonstrates Lasting Impact

Founded by Dolly Parton in 1995, the Imagination Library was created to foster early childhood literacy and a lifelong love of reading.

A 2025 international study involving more than 86,000 families across five countries found that children enrolled in the program demonstrated stronger early literacy skills and more positive family reading habits than children who were not enrolled.

Among U.S. participants, children were:

- Eleven times more likely to show interest in books.
- Fifteen times more likely to actively participate during shared reading.
- Nearly three times more likely to demonstrate early concepts about print.

Researchers also found caregivers were significantly more likely to engage children through interactive reading practices, including discussing pictures and encouraging children to hold the

250,000 Books Gifted and counting!

Dolly Parton's IMAGINATION LIBRARY
United Way of St. Charles

LJB DB
LOYD J BOURGEOIS
INJURY & ACCIDENT LAWYER

Dolly Parton I Am a RAINBOW

250,000 Free Books Sent Through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

book during story time.

More Than a Number

For Kacy Kernan, Director of Community Impact for United Way of St. Charles, the milestone represents far more than the number of books delivered.

"We're proud of what this milestone represents, but there's still more work to do," Kernan said. "About 43% of eligible children in St. Charles Parish are enrolled today, and our goal is to surpass 50% so even more children can experience the excitement of receiving a new book every month."

Eligibility

Every child living in St. Charles Parish from birth until their fifth birthday is eligible to enroll in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, regardless of household income. Families can learn more and enroll at <https://ljb.legal/Library>

About Loyd J. Bourgeois Injury & Accident Lawyer

Loyd J. Bourgeois Injury & Accident Lawyer (LJBlegal) is a personal injury law firm serving clients throughout Louisiana while investing in programs that strengthen local communities. The firm's support of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in St. Charles Parish reflects its commitment to helping children and families thrive through education, literacy, and opportunity. To learn more about legal services or request a consultation, visit <https://www.ljblegal.com>

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