



Signal Centers Partners with The Dollywood Foundation and Governor's Early Literacy Foundation to Continue Giving the Gift of Books in Hamilton County

Signal Centers partners to continue Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program in Hamilton County, providing monthly books to birth to age five children, at no cost to families

Chattanooga, Tenn. — The Dollywood Foundation is pleased to announce that it is partnering with Signal Centers on January 1, 2021 to continue providing one book a month to Hamilton County children from birth to age five with engaging, high-quality books, delivered directly to their home, at no cost to families.

"Signal Centers is incredibly excited about helping young families thrive, especially during these challenging times, by prompting parents to gather a child into their laps and read a book together. Reading supports early literacy, emotional bonding and opens a child to a world of possibilities," said Donna McConnico, CEO of Signal Centers.

Created in 1995, The Dollywood Foundation launched Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to inspire a love of reading and learning in children. Dolly wanted to share her life and legacy as an inspiration to all children to "Dream More, Learn More, Care More and Be More."

Signal Centers is grateful to the United Way of Greater Chattanooga for sustaining the Imagination Library for the last 17 years and is delighted to continue this legacy of helping every family in the county have access to engaging books for young children. To date, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and United Way of Greater Chattanooga have provided over 3 million books to children throughout Southeast Tennessee. "We are excited that Signal Centers is taking lead with the program to complement their various early childhood initiatives that serve children and families," stated Lesley Searce, CEO of United Way of Greater Chattanooga, "This will ensure that United Way can continue to deploy resources to projects, programs and efforts where they are most needed as our community responds to short and long-term effects of the pandemic." Signal Centers will begin local fundraising efforts now to help sustain the program and ensure a seamless transition to families as they take the lead.

With over 12,000 children in Hamilton County enrolled in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, it costs \$25 to provide one child with Imagination Library books for one year and \$125 to provide the entire Imagination Library—60 books—to one child for five years. The Governor's Early Literacy Foundation (GELF) provides 50% of the cost of providing the books, therefore donations will be doubled!

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is available to all age-eligible Tennessee children through a unique public-private partnership with GELF and affiliate programs in each of Tennessee's 95 counties. "We are grateful for our local partners, like Signal Centers, for understanding the importance of early literacy and for helping us build lifelong learners in Tennessee by giving the gift of books to children in the community," said James Pond, President of the Governor's Early Literacy Foundation.

About Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Since launching in 1995, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has become the preeminent early childhood book gifting program in the world. The flagship program of The Dollywood Foundation has mailed well over 100 million free books in Australia, Canada, The Republic of Ireland, United Kingdom and the United States. The Imagination Library mails more than 1.4 million high-quality, age-appropriate books each month to registered children from birth to age five. Dolly envisioned creating a lifelong love of reading, inspiring them to dream. The impact of the program has been widely researched and results suggest positive increases in key early childhood literacy metrics. Penguin Random House is the exclusive publisher for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. For more information, please visit imaginationlibrary.com.

About Signal Centers

Signal Centers is a nonprofit that has provided services to the Chattanooga community for over 60 years. Signal Centers now serves 200 children through a Children's Program and home-based services and has created programs like Adult Day Services and Assistive Technology Services to help meet needs in the community and further the mission of helping all individuals with disabilities, regardless of age, strive for a life of independence.

About Governor's Early Literacy Foundation (GELF)

The mission of Governor's Early Literacy Foundation (GELF) is to strengthen early literacy in Tennessee by acting as a thought leader, advisor and catalyst to support and sustain early literacy programs for children statewide. These programs include Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Storybook Trails, Book Buses, K-3rd Grade Book Delivery and Caregiver Engagement. GELF was founded in 2004 by former Gov. Phil Bredesen as a public-private partnership to sustain Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Tennessee, giving all birth to age five children the opportunity to receive books in the mail at no cost to families. GELF has grown from solely a book-gifting program to an early literacy organization driven by a vision where all Tennessee children have access to the resources, guidance and support they need to become lifelong learners. For more information, visit www.GovernorsFoundation.org or www.facebook.com/GovEarlyLiteracyTN, or call toll-free at (877) 99-BOOKS.

About United Way of Greater Chattanooga

Since 1922, United Way of Greater Chattanooga has fought to make sure every person in the community is educated, healthy and stable. We win that fight by Living United; by forging unlikely partnerships, by finding new solutions to old problems, and by mobilizing the best resources. We ignite social change through a powerful network of partners, donors and volunteers who share a common passion: making our community a better place for all.

For additional information on Dolly Parton's Imagination Library or how to enroll, please visit <https://imaginationlibrary.com/usa/affiliate/TNHAMILTON/> or contact Christy Crouse, Regional Director of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library at ccrouse@imaginationlibrary.com or 865.368.2786.

For additional information or to schedule an interview, please contact: Christy Murphy, Signal Centers Marketing Director, christy_murphy@signalcenters.org or 423.667.1052 or Tracy Long, The Dollywood Foundation Director of Marketing, tlong@dollywoodfoundation.com or 706.816.0335.