



NEWS RELEASE

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Imagination Library set to reach all in Lane County starting Jan. 1

Northwest Community Credit Union gives \$250,000 to fund the expansion for five years

Northwest Community Credit Union has committed to donate \$250,000 over five years to expand Dolly Parton's Imagination Library service to cover all of Lane County.

Starting Jan. 1, 2022, all Lane County parents can sign up young children to receive a new book in the mail every month, free of charge.

Designed to promote reading and learning, the Imagination Library program serves children from birth through age four. Children "graduate" when they turn five and enter kindergarten. Currently, local families can participate if they live within certain areas, such as the City of Eugene and the Springfield school district. This new partnership among Eugene Public Library, Eugene Public Library Foundation, Northwest Community Credit Union and United Way of Lane County will cover all Lane County addresses that aren't already included in a service area.

"When it comes to financial literacy, managing money and being able to create your own financial story as a young adult, you have to have a strong ability to read to 'open the next chapter' of your life," Northwest Community Credit Union President and CEO John Iglesias said. "That's why NWCU and our Board of Directors wanted to make a major gift to support early reading."

"Northwest Community Credit Union's leadership in supporting local literacy is a wonderful gift to families across Eugene," Eugene Public Library Foundation Executive Director Reed Davaz McGowan said. "Through this generous gift, the impact on early literacy will be tremendous."

Eugene Public Library Foundation and Eugene Public Library started Eugene's local affiliate of Imagination Library in 2014. It currently serves 3,300 preschoolers. Each month, approximately 100 new participants are enrolled and an average of 80 graduate. Hundreds of local donors have contributed to support the Imagination Library of Eugene.

Imagination Library was started in 1995 by Dolly Parton to serve her home county in Tennessee. In response to her father's inability to read and write, she hoped to bring opportunity and a love of reading to young children by gifting books free of charge. Today, Imagination Library spans five countries and gifts over 1 million free books each month to children around the world.

In order to make the program financially possible, the central organization uses economies of scale to print and mail all the books, as well as to administer an expert committee who select books to match the learning needs of each age group. Because of this structure, the cost to print and mail a brand-new,

high-quality book is only about \$2.10 per child each month. Each local nonprofit affiliate raises funds for and administers the program for a particular geographic area.

To search to see if an address is already covered, visit imaginationlibrary.com. If a Lane County address is not yet covered, it will be starting Jan. 1.

For more information about the Imagination Library of Eugene, contact Eugene Public Library at 541-682-5450 or eugene-or.gov/library.

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