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May 9, 2023

For Immediate Release

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PeaceHealth helps families enroll their newborns in free book program

SPRINGFIELD, Ore. – It’s never too early to inspire a child’s love of reading.

That is why PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend is partnering with the Eugene Public Library Foundation to offer parents the opportunity to enroll their newborns in the Imagination Library program.

Founded by Dolly Parton, the [Imagination Library](https://imaginationlibrary.com/) is a worldwide program that promotes early literacy. Enrolled children receive a book in the mail each month until age 5. The books are for the child to keep at no cost to the family. The program is funded by generous donations from local businesses and individuals.

PeaceHealth volunteer Karen Galloway enjoys visiting with new parents and their babies at the hospital and offering this amazing gift. She helped sign up 45 children in April and looks forward to enrolling many more families.

“As a retired elementary teacher, I know how being exposed to books and being read to can help prepare a child to succeed in school,” Galloway said. “Happily, these new parents understand the benefits and are eager to enroll.”

Parents welcome Galloway into their rooms and are enthusiastic about the Imagination Library, she said. But some simply can’t believe this is a free program.

“One father asked if the family needed to return the 60 books when his son turned 5,” Galloway said. “It took a minute or two for me to convince him that the books were theirs to keep. He was astounded!”

The Imagination Library of Eugene was started by Eugene Public Library Foundation in 2014.

“To date, 340,216 books have been mailed, at no cost to the families who participate,” said Dana Fleming, executive director of the Eugene Public Library Foundation. “We were pleased to see enrollments rise significantly after announcing the program was going county-wide: a 48 percent increase from 2021 to 2022. Currently, 3,600 children are enrolled.”

Former Eugene City Manager Jon Ruiz supports the Imagination Library and serves on PeaceHealth Oregon’s Community Health Board. He asked if PeaceHealth would be interested in helping to enroll newborns at the hospital.

“We immediately saw the program’s benefits for children and were eager to be able to offer it to families just hours after their babies are born,” said Josie Hall, Community Health coordinator for PeaceHealth Oregon network.

All children in Lane County newborn to age 5 can participate in Imagination Library. Eugene Public Library Foundation supports the program in Eugene, and other affiliates support the program in other parts of Lane County. Imagination Library also may be available to families who live in other counties.

More information about how to enroll in or donate to Imagination Library of Eugene is available at [www.eplfoundation.org/aboutimaginationlibrary](http://www.eplfoundation.org/aboutimaginationlibrary). Families who live outside of Eugene can check if the program is available in their area at [www.imaginationlibrary.com](http://www.imaginationlibrary.com).

About PeaceHealth: PeaceHealth, based in Vancouver, Wash., is a not-for-profit Catholic health system offering care to communities in Washington, Oregon and Alaska. PeaceHealth has approximately 16,000 caregivers, a group practice with more than 1,200 providers and 10 medical centers serving both urban and rural communities throughout the Northwest. In 1890, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace founded what has become PeaceHealth. The Sisters shared expertise and transferred wisdom from one medical center to another, always finding the best way to serve the unmet need for healthcare in their communities. Today, PeaceHealth is the legacy of the founding Sisters and continues with a spirit of respect, stewardship, collaboration and social justice in fulfilling its Mission. Visit us online at [peacehealth.org](http://www.peacehealth.org).

About Eugene Public Library Foundation: Eugene Public Library Foundation supports Eugene Public Library in its efforts to inspire lifelong learning and to enrich the entire community. We secure and responsibly manage contributions from individuals, businesses, and foundations to build community support for our Eugene Public Library. Eugene Public Library Foundation was established in 1984 to work with members of the Eugene community to enhance programs and materials at Eugene Public Library. As the philanthropic partner of Eugene Public Library, we are truly honored to serve the public and Eugene Public Library by providing resources that are open and free to all.

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