



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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County-Wide Launch of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Lorain County Imagination Library promotes kindergarten readiness through participation in a free book program for all children, birth to age five.

Lorain County Imagination Library (LCIL) joins the national Dolly Parton's Imagination Library initiative, promoting kindergarten readiness and a love of reading for all children from birth to age five. Approximately 18,025 children in Lorain County are eligible to participate in the program that mails one free book to each child's home monthly. The first book each child receives is *The Little Engine that Could* and the month a child turns five, s/he receives *Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!*

The Stocker Foundation enthusiastically supports LCIL because reading books aloud to young children provides the deepest exposure to words and language. By age three, children born into lower-income families have heard roughly 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers. The promotion of books in the home and reading aloud holds great promise for strengthening school readiness and building a strong foundation for future academic success. For every dollar contributed, The Stocker Foundation will match it dollar-for-dollar up to \$75,000 each year for the next four years.

- WHAT:** Lorain County Imagination Library Launch Event
- WHERE:** Norton Culinary Center, Lorain County Community College
- WHEN:** Thursday, June 29 from 5:00pm to 7:00pm

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library was established in 1995 by the Dollywood Foundation to benefit young children living in eastern Tennessee. Within five years, the program was successful enough locally to be scaled nationally. This free book program now serves communities in all 50 states, Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia. With more than 85 million

books distributed, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library achieved several milestones in 2016 including: mailing one million books per month; topping 700,000 social media followers; and having Matt de la Peña's book, *Last Stop on Market Street*," one of the many great titles included in the Imagination Library lineup, win the Newbery Medal, the highest honor in children's literature. More information about Dolly Parton's Imagination Library can be found at <https://imaginationlibrary.com/>

Beth K. Stocker established The Stocker Foundation in 1979. Over time, the Foundation has evolved into a mature grantmaking organization with current approximate assets of \$47 million. Annually, The Stocker Foundation awards an average of \$3.0 million to tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations across the United States. Competitive grantmaking focuses upon lessening the reading literacy achievement gap, helping all students read at or above grade-level by the end of third grade. More information about The Stocker Foundation can be found at <https://stockerfoundation.org/>

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