



Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Louisville

2025 Annual Report

imaginationlibrarylouisville.org



Letter from the Director

Thanks to the generosity of this community, 2025 was our greatest year yet. We served 24,510 children, celebrated half a million books mailed, and enrolled 7,758 new children. Of the more than 47,000 children under five in Louisville, 44% are currently enrolled in Imagination Library. This report takes a moment to pause and celebrate our growth and our impact.

We are proud of the new Kentucky kindergarten readiness data that shows Kentucky children enrolled in Imagination Library had higher rates of kindergarten readiness than their peers not in the program, even in the absence of preschool. We know this program is delivering smiles to children when they open their mailboxes and find a new book from Dolly, and we are thrilled to share this program is also delivering undeniable results.

Looking back at 2025, it is apparent that 2026 brings new challenges. So far, we have already weathered the storms of proposed state budget cuts, a more challenging fundraising climate, and are currently fighting hard to be included in the next city budget. But as we continue to meet new challenges, we are fortified by the way our community has shown up for us. From the families who advocate for us, to the funders who invest in us, and the volunteers who show up for us, we couldn't have accomplished everything we accomplished without our Imagination Library community.

Thanks to supporters like you, Imagination Library of Louisville is still delivering on our mission to provide free, age appropriate, high quality books to thousands of Louisville kids every month and improve literacy in our community. Your partnership sustains us, and we believe this community will continue to invest in literacy, learning, and the power of a book. Thank you for your support and we look forward to writing our next chapter together.

Happy Reading,

Maria Gurren

Executive Director





20 25



BY THE NUMBERS

we served



24,510
children

we enrolled

7,758

new program
participants

we gifted



223,515
books

Since the beginning



579,945
total books gifted



11,127
Total Graduates

We now serve

44%

of all
Jefferson County
children
under five



YEAR IN REVIEW



20 25

January

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Celebrated

30 YEARS

of book gifting.



May



Imagination Library of Louisville went to **Churchill Downs** to participate in the Community Foundation of Louisville's inaugural

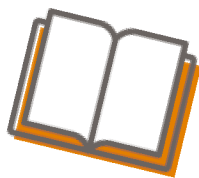
WINDAY

June

Kentucky expanded our book language options to include a fully English/Spanish

BILINGUAL LIBRARY

collection



July



Imagination Library of Louisville launched our

LUNCH AND LEARN

series

August



ILL staff grew to two as we welcomed our very first program manager, **Emily Ravenscraft**, thanks to support from the **C. E. & S. Foundation**

ILL reached the milestone of

20,000+ CHILDREN ENROLLED



September

Imagination Library of Louisville reached

HALF A MILLION

BOOKS MAILED

to Louisville children!



We raised

\$18,280

during Give for Good

October



ILL hosted our very first event

BOOKS & BOURBON

to celebrate half a million books mailed

November

We expanded our partnership with

NORTON HEALTHCARE

Parents at **Norton Women's & Children's Hospital** can now enroll their newborns and go home with their baby's first book. This partnership was made possible through the generous support of the **PNC Foundation** and the **Norton Children's Hospital Foundation**



December

ILL started a new holiday tradition with our very first

GIVING TREE

hosted by our friends at

Nook & Nowhere



We celebrated donating

900+ RETURNED BOOKS

back into our community



Family Stories

Amberly Simpson found "worry-free access to books" for her two children, ages 3 and 1. As the Founder & Artistic Director of Ambo Dance Theatre and School, Simpson is one busy mom. But she hasn't let that stop her from working to pass down her love of reading,

Like many families, Simpson and her two little ones love the library, "but with schedules, it can be hard to get down there." But then she found Imagination Library, and now her family receives age-appropriate book deliveries to their home every month.



Simpson says she not only loves reading the new books to her children each month - but also watching them choose new favorites. From stories about farm life, dragons in Chinese culture, and different kinds of families, these little ones are growing their very own libraries right at home.



"[My daughter] is starting to make sense of and contextualize images and actions in a way that I don't think she would have done if we hadn't exposed her to books really early." - **Amberly Simpson, Parent**

What other parents are saying ...

"Both my 4-year-old and 1-year-old love it, and some of our favorite and most beloved books have come from Imagination Library! We wouldn't have discovered many of these books otherwise! We so look forward to our new book each month." - **Tess M, Parent**

"The books that are sent to the child are SO AMAZING because they include suggestions and guidelines to aid parents in the teaching and learning process - what a boon!" - **Astrid F, Grandparent**

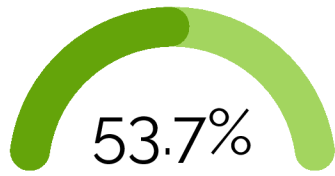
"I have 2 (soon to be 3) little boys and we love the books so much! All of them are curated well for the age of each child and are very creative and teach the boys lots of different things from emotional strength/intelligence to just being silly!" - **Rose H, Parent**

Impact Data

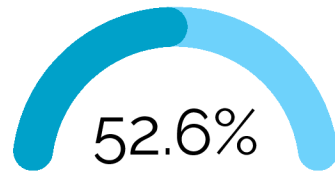


KINDERGARTEN READINESS

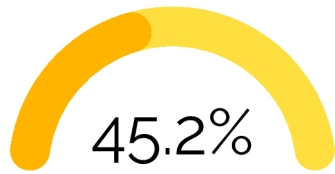
Data from 2024 found that Kentucky children enrolled in **Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL)** had higher rates of kindergarten readiness, even in the absence of preschool.



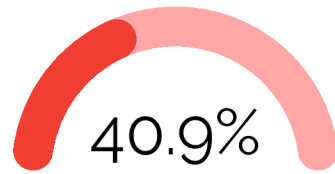
DPIL + Preschool



DPIL + NO Preschool



NO DPIL + Preschool



NO DPIL + NO Preschool

What Our Families Are Saying

We partnered with the University of Louisville's Early Childhood Research Center to collect data from our participating families. Of the over 1,300 parents who responded:

83% believe Imagination Library books help prepare their child for kindergarten

81% read more frequently

77% have noticed their children asking for more storytimes

42% report that Imagination Library books make up half to all of their child's library

96% have referred us to other parents

Community Partners

We couldn't do this important work without the support of our community partners. From helping us enroll children to spreading the word - these partners help us get more books into the hands of more children in Louisville!

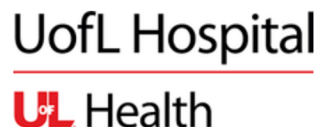


Americana Community Center
Backside Learning Center
Black Birth Justice
Blackacre Conservancy
Blueprint 502
Center for Accesible Living
Change Today Change Tomorrow
Childcare Aware of Kentucky
Cornerstone Child Development Center
Family & Children's Place
Family Scholar House
Georgia's Sweet Potato Pie Company
Goodwill of Kentucky
Greater Louisville Head Start

Habitat for Humanity
HANDS Program
Healthy Start
Jefferson County Public Schools
Kentucky Humanities Council
Kentucky Science Center
La Casita Center
Locals Pizza Pub and Food Hub
Louisville Free Public Library
Metro United Way
Neighborhood House
Nook & Nowhere
Orchid House
OVEC Head Start

Passport by Molina Healthcare
Quinn Chapel
Ready for K Alliance
Resolve
Shelby Park Neighborhood Association
Simmons College
St. Nicholas Academy
St. Stephen's Family Life Center
Thrive by Five
WIC
YMCA of Louisville
And more!

**Special thanks to our health care partners
for helping to enroll our youngest future readers!**



**Volunteer
Spotlight**
**Schneider
Electric**



Every quarter, employees at the Louisville office of Schneider Electric join us during their lunch hour to get undelivered books ready to go back into our community - from unwrapping to relabeling, these generous helpers get it done.

**THANK YOU,
Schneider Electric!**



Books and Bourbon

In October, we celebrated half a million books mailed to Louisville kids! The evening was full of fun with mini distillery tours, a bourbon pull, engaging children's book activations, and, of course, delicious food and cocktails. We loved celebrating this incredible milestone with all of our amazing supporters - here's to many more books and memories!



2025 Funding Partners

C. E. and S. Foundation, Inc.



Annual Report Sponsor



In-Kind Donors



Exhibits • Engagements • Experiences



Individual Donors

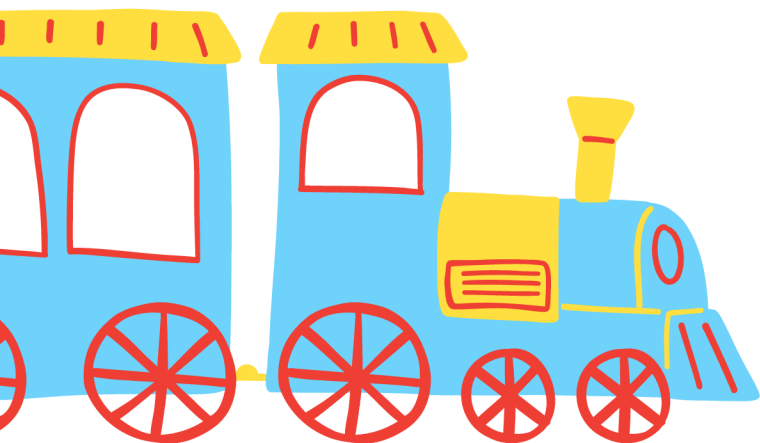
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Casey Adams
Kate & Tony
Aviles-Bishop
Mary Bass
Annie Bavis
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Evelyn Beckman
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Sheena Blanton
Mary Elizabeth Boley
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Thanks to generous support from
donors like you, we raised over

\$452,000

in 2025

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Emily Ravenscraft
Program Manager

Want to get involved?

Join us for our next
Lunch and Learn



July 22nd
12-1pm

Local's Pizza Pub
822 E Broadway
Louisville, KY 40204

Our Lunch and Learn series provides an opportunity for folks to learn more about our program, how we've grown, and the impact we are making on child literacy in Louisville. These are free events and no donation is expected. You can learn more and register for the next Lunch and Learn by scanning the QR code or visiting imaginationlibrarylouisville.org/events





725 S. Floyd St.
Louisville, KY 40203



Learn more about
Imagination Library of
Louisville and how you
can get involved!