



ROTARY NOTE NO. 2021/02

TOPIC: Dolly Parton Imagination Library

What is it? Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) is a program that provides children with free, age appropriate books each month from birth to their 5th birthday. The books are posted to each child's home, addressed to the child.

You may not associate books with Dolly Parton, but Dolly's father was illiterate, so she was well aware of the lifelong difficulties caused by poor literacy. It was for him that she developed the Imagination Library – initially a gift from her to the children in her disadvantaged community in East Tennessee.

What is its purpose? The program helps children, especially children from low socio-economic or disadvantaged backgrounds gain the language and literacy skills they need to start school ready to read and learn.

Why is this program needed? More than 20% of Australian children start school without the basics they need to learn to read. In disadvantaged communities the percentage is higher. Literacy skills do not develop automatically, and children who start behind their peers find it very difficult to catch up. Many never do. The DPIL program is a proven way of improving educational opportunities for children.

How does DPIL help? The Imagination Library books are colourful picture books and the children who receive them look forward to the arrival of each one. The books encourage the parents to read to their children and by doing so, they assist their children's development in many ways. Reading the books together expands the child's vocabulary and experiences, encourages their imagination, and develops their language & early literacy skill. It is also an enjoyable activity which builds stronger family relationships and impacts the child's overall development including the ability to communicate effectively. The result is a more confident child who is ready to learn when he or she starts school.

How can your club get involved? The program costs \$7.80 /book for the book and postage. Less than \$1000 will give 10 disadvantaged children the joy of each receiving 12 new books to keep. These are likely to be the first books they have ever owned. The impact of your gift will soon be apparent.

This program is currently provided in the Illawarra, Campbelltown and Wollondilly areas, projects of the combined Rotary clubs of the Illawarra and of the Rotary club of Macarthur Sunrise, assisted at times by grants including Rotary District Grants.

If you would like more information or would to find out how to start a DPIL project, contact Cathy Richardson or Sue Clark. Contact details are below.

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KEY POINT(S)

- The DPIL program helps young children, especially children from low socio-economic or disadvantaged backgrounds, gain the language and literacy skills they need to start school ready to read and learn.
- Not all children get an equal start in life. Children who start behind their peers find it very difficult to catch up. The DPIL addresses and counters disadvantage.
- Talk to your club about including this wonderful program in your community projects. Less than \$1000 will provide 10 disadvantaged children with the program for 12 months.
- For details on implementing the DPIL contact Cathie Richardson or Sue Clark – details below.

For more
information contact: Cathie Richardson richoc@bigpond.com 0407 783 277

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