



Item:

Dolly Parton Imagination Library – Evaluation Results (Bonnie Wagner)

Requested Action:

The Board is asked to receive information.

Background:

The Children's Trust began funding the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program in FY2022 to support early childhood literacy in Alachua County. The program encourages shared book reading between children and caregivers by mailing an age-appropriate book to the home monthly along with book sharing tips until the child reaches their 5th birthday. The program, operated locally by Gainesville Thrives, enrolls children ages 0-4 residing in the following Alachua County zip codes: 32601, 32607, 32608, 32609, 32618, 32640, 32641, and 32667. Gainesville Thrives also does literacy outreach events in the community to recruit eligible families and support parents in building literacy in their home.

Through FY2025, the Imagination Library has served more than three thousand Alachua County children and mailed more than 68 thousand books. Each year Gainesville Thrives administers a survey with Imagination Library parents. In the fall 2025 survey, parents reported that they read more frequently and feel encouraged to read with their child. Parents report high levels of satisfaction with the program and that their child enjoys the books received.

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library is a worldwide evidence-based program with substantial research that demonstrates positive impacts on participating children. Some of the noteworthy program impacts include enhanced family reading routines, home literacy environments, interest in books, emerging literacy skills, and kindergarten readiness. The Children's Trust is currently in the process of partnering with the Alachua County Public Schools, Gainesville Thrives and the Dollywood Foundation to complete research to explore kindergarten readiness among children engaged locally.

Attachments:

Board Presentation – Imagination Library – Evaluation Results on 05-11-2026

Groundbreaking International Study of Dolly Parton Imagination Library – One Pager

Dolly Parton Imagination Library Book-List - 2026

Programmatic Impact:

Dolly Parton Imagination Library supports the following Trust goal:

Goal 2: All children and youth learn what they need to be successful.

Fiscal Impact:

FY2026 Budget:

Dolly Parton Imagination Library – \$63,000

Recommendation:

Receive the information.