

PULASKI COUNTY IMAGINATION LIBRARY

JULY 2024 FINAL IMPACT REPORT



Prepared and submitted to the City of Little Rock by Ali
Noland, PCIL Executive Director

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD

Pulaski County Imagination Library is proud to partner with the City of Little Rock to help local children gain important early literacy skills before entering kindergarten.

Since 2018, Pulaski County Imagination Library (PCIL) has provided free monthly books to children from birth to age five. As of July 2024, **we have mailed 664,386 books!** These high-quality, age-appropriate books, which are delivered each month addressed to the child, provide the building blocks for early literacy and kindergarten readiness.

While these books are free to the families who register for the program, PCIL must raise the money to pay for each monthly book order. Thanks to the support of the City of Little Rock, PCIL is able to serve more children each month.

SINCERELY,



ALI NOLAND
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



PCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Clarke Tucker, President
Sarah Argue, Vice President
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About the Imagination Library

Dolly Parton began the Imagination Library in 1995.

Today, the program gives more than 2.4 million free books per month.



1995

IMAGINATION LIBRARY FOUNDED

Inspired by her own father's inability to read and write, Dolly Parton founded the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program in Sevier County, Tennessee. The first book order served 1,760 children.

2003

THE PROGRAM EXPANDS: ONE MILLIONTH BOOK MAILED

DIPL expanded as communities established their own local affiliates. As of today, there are DPIL affiliates in all 50 states and 5 countries, and DPIL serves more than 2 million children per month.

2015

PULASKI COUNTY IMAGINATION LIBRARY FOUNDED

The Pulaski County affiliate of the DPIL program was officially founded in 2015 by Senator Clarke Tucker, who serves as the President of the PCIL Board of Directors.

2023

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY OF LITTLE ROCK

In October 2023, the City of Little Rock and PCIL signed an MOU pursuant to which the City provides \$70,000 in financial support to PCIL and PCIL provides free monthly books to Little Rock children from birth to age five.

Pulaski County Imagination Library has mailed **664,386 free books** to local children since 2018.

The Books



Dolly Parton Imagination Library carefully selects high-quality, age-appropriate books for each child. The books are personalized with the child's name and mailed to the child's home to create a unique gifting experience that encourages a love of reading.

Title-Specific Reading Tips
Blue Ribbon Selection Seal
Spanish / English Bilingual Titles
Progressive Format



Each title is specially selected by a panel of leading childhood literacy experts.



Each title has Reading Tips that extend the engagement and interaction between the child and caregiver.



From the first book, "The Little Engine That Could" to the last book, "Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!", every book is selected with a special purpose.



Two Spanish/English bilingual titles are selected per age group each year.



Award-winning books are available in progressive formats.



Through a partnership with the American Printing House for the Blind, we are able to help provide books for blind and visually impaired children.



Board Books

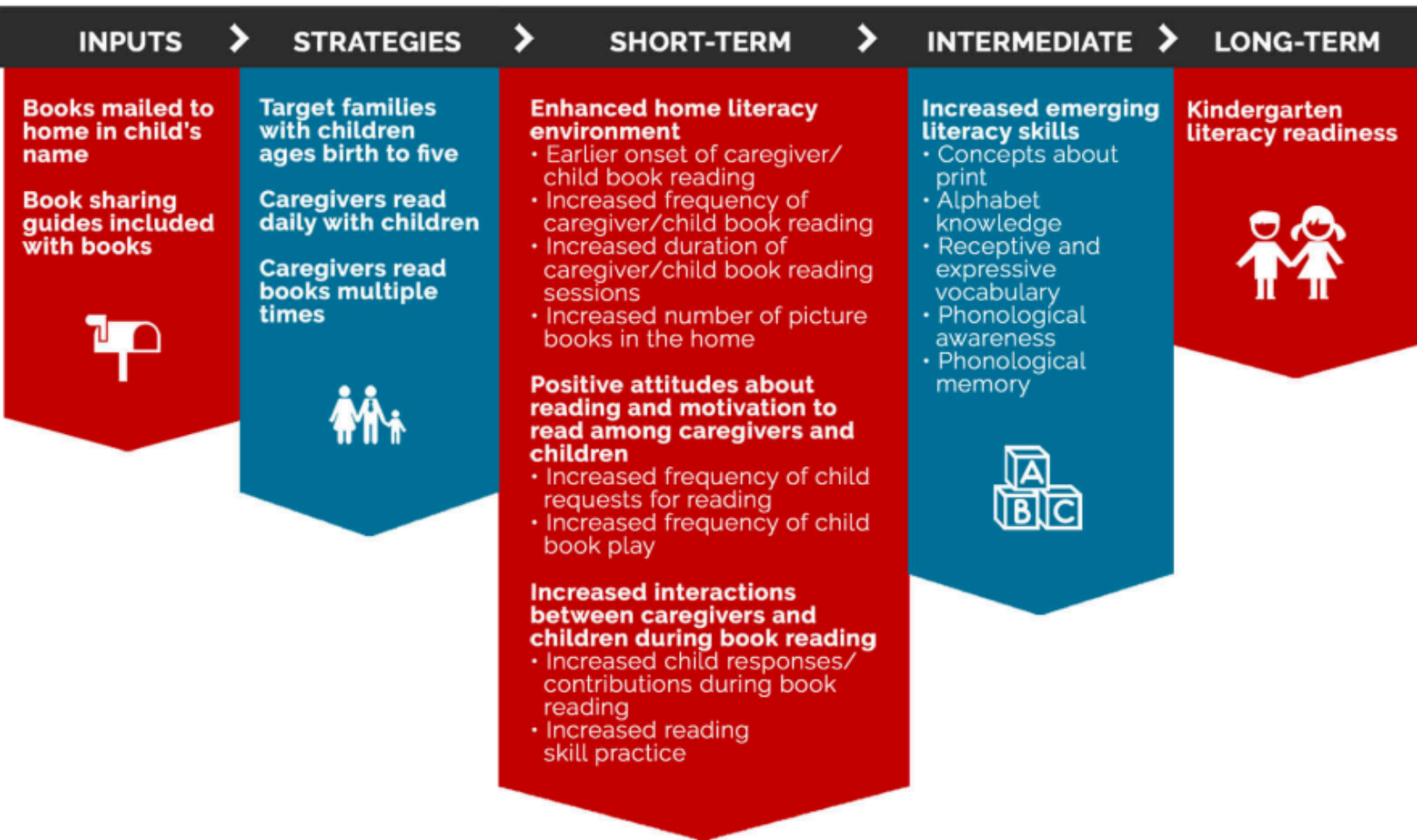
Case Bound

Soft Cover

Research Supports the Imagination Library Program

For over 20 years, the Dolly Parton Imagination Library has conducted extensive research demonstrating that receiving these books boosts children's attitudes about reading and helps them become ready for kindergarten.

Based on Imagination Library Research Findings and Literature Review



Families receiving books through DPIL, parents increased their reading time with children by 38%



75% of teachers believed that DPIL graduates performed better in school than their peers



97% of parents believed that their child will be better prepared for school after having participated in the Imagination Library

The Imagination Library Fosters A Love of Reading

For the past two decades, the Dolly Parton Imagination Library has collected data on the effectiveness and impact of the free-book program. Consistently, parents and educators report that participation in the Imagination Library boosts positive attitudes about reading and helps children master early literacy skills that prepare them for elementary school.



Parents whose children are enrolled in the program report reading aloud to their children more and feeling more comfortable reading.



Parents whose children are enrolled in the program report that their children are more excited about reading and look forward to receiving their books in the mail every month.



Some studies have shown that children enrolled in the Imagination Library have more advanced literacy skills once they start school than classmates who did not participate in the free-book program.

The Dollywood Foundation is committed to continuing extensive and long-ranging research to track the impact of the DPIL free-book program. All such research is available at <https://imaginationlibrary.com/news-resources/research/>.

“YOU CAN NEVER GET ENOUGH
BOOKS
INTO THE HANDS
OF ENOUGH
CHILDREN”

A red cursive signature of the word "Dolly".

By the Numbers

While books are always free to families who register for the Imagination Library, local affiliates like PCIL must raise the money to pay for the books and the costs of program administration.

\$2.20

Cost of each book

The average retail cost of each book is \$14.50. However, because DPIL has established partnerships with book publishers, our program is able to obtain each book at a discounted rate of approximately \$2.20 per book.

\$130

Cost of serving one child from birth to age five

While some children are registered later, many participants are registered at or near birth. It costs PCIL approximately \$130 to provide each child with books for the full five years of eligibility.

11,757

Number of children served each month

As of July 2024, PCIL provides books to approximately 11,485 children per month. This number fluctuates as new children are enrolled in the program and older children graduate or families move away.

25,148

Total number of eligible children living in Pulaski County

According to recent census data, 25,148 children of eligible age reside in Pulaski County, meaning that PCIL is currently serving 45% of the eligible population. PCIL is actively recruiting enrollees, but one of the biggest factors limiting the growth of our program is the need to secure sufficient reliable funding to pay for books.

Outreach

A look at our efforts to enroll more children in the Pulaski County Imagination Library program.



Drop Boxes

PCIL has physical registration boxes at dozens of local libraries, schools, health clinics, hospitals, community centers, and pediatricians' offices.



Online Registration

More than 73% of current PCIL participants registered online. Online registration is fast and easy and is available at www.pcaril.org. PCIL creates and distributes flyers, posters, and social-media content that advertises the ease of online registration.



In-Person Events

PCIL staff and volunteers routinely set up tables and register children at school and community events. Pictured here: a recent registration event at Our House shelter in Little Rock.



Hospital Partnerships

Babies born at Baptist Hospital are automatically enrolled, and PCIL is currently exploring a similar partnership with UAMS. PCIL hopes to register more children at birth, giving them the benefits of participating in the program for the full five years.



Spanish-Language Outreach

Our efforts to reach Spanish-speaking families and encourage them to register for the free book program.

Formulario oficial de registro para la BIBLIOTECA DE LA IMAGINACIÓN de Dolly Parton

Nombre y apellido del 1er niño en edad preescolar _____

Fecha de nacimiento del niño ____/____/____ Sexo: H M No. de teléfono: _____

Nombre y apellido del 2do niño en edad preescolar _____

Fecha de nacimiento del niño ____/____/____ Sexo: H M No. de teléfono: _____

Nombre y apellido de uno de los padres/del tutor _____

Dirección del niño: _____

DIRECCIÓN _____

CIUDAD _____ ESTADO _____ CÓDIGO POSTAL _____

Dirección postal (si es distinta): _____

DIRECCIÓN _____

CIUDAD _____ ESTADO _____ CÓDIGO POSTAL _____

Correo electrónico _____

Por el presente, doy mi consentimiento expreso para permitir que la Dollywood Foundation, Inc. utilice la información proporcionada en el presente documento para efectos de la participación en el programa de regalías de libros de la Biblioteca de la Imaginación de Dolly Parton. Para acceder a los beneficios de este programa, podremos crear bases de datos con la información proporcionada en el presente documento y compartirlas con terceros para fines de investigación y generación educativa. Usted se compromete a mantener en su totalidad confiables los datos y condiciones y nuestra política de privacidad en www.imaginationlibrary.com. Al firmar y presentar este formulario, usted acepta expresamente las políticas establecidas en este documento.

"Este niño es residente del condado de Pulaski" _____

PÁGINA DEL FIN DE LOS PADRES/DEL TUTOR _____

SÓLO PARA USO DE LA OFICINA: Fecha de recepción: _____ Código de grupo: _____

Simplymente llene el formulario que se encuentra más arriba y envíelo a:

**Pulaski County
Imagination Library**
P.O. Box 1821
Little Rock, AR 72203
info@pcitl.org



This is an example of the Spanish-language registration forms that PCIL offers at every registration site and online. Families who register in Spanish will then receive all emails from PCIL in Spanish and will receive at least two bilingual books each year.



**Bilingual
English/Spanish
Book Language Option
Now Available!**

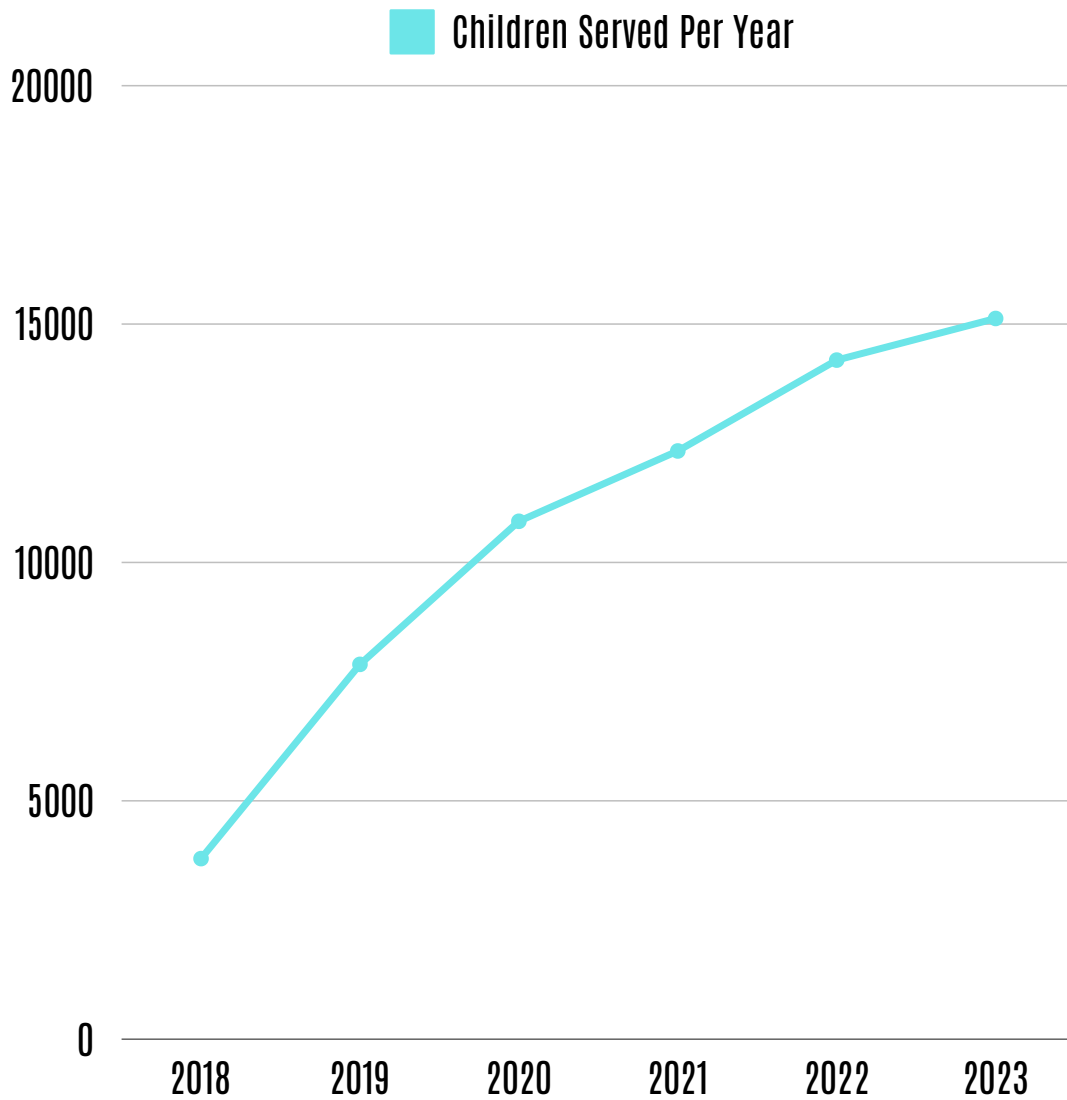
Opción disponible de libros
bilingües Inglés/Español

Pulaski County Imagination Library has had significant success registering Spanish-speaking children by partnering with the Arkansas Children's Hospital Southwest Clinic as well as other community health clinics, local libraries, hospitals, and preschool programs.

The Dollywood Foundation is currently conducting research on the benefits of providing bilingual books.

Our Book Program Is Growing

Pulaski County Imagination Library has steadily increased the number of children it serves.



The biggest factor limiting enrollment growth is lack of funding. It costs PCIL approximately \$130 to provide books for each child. As we explore new registration opportunities, such as partnering with local labor and delivery units to register all babies born in Little Rock hospitals, we must first ensure that we have the funding to provide books to all of those children.

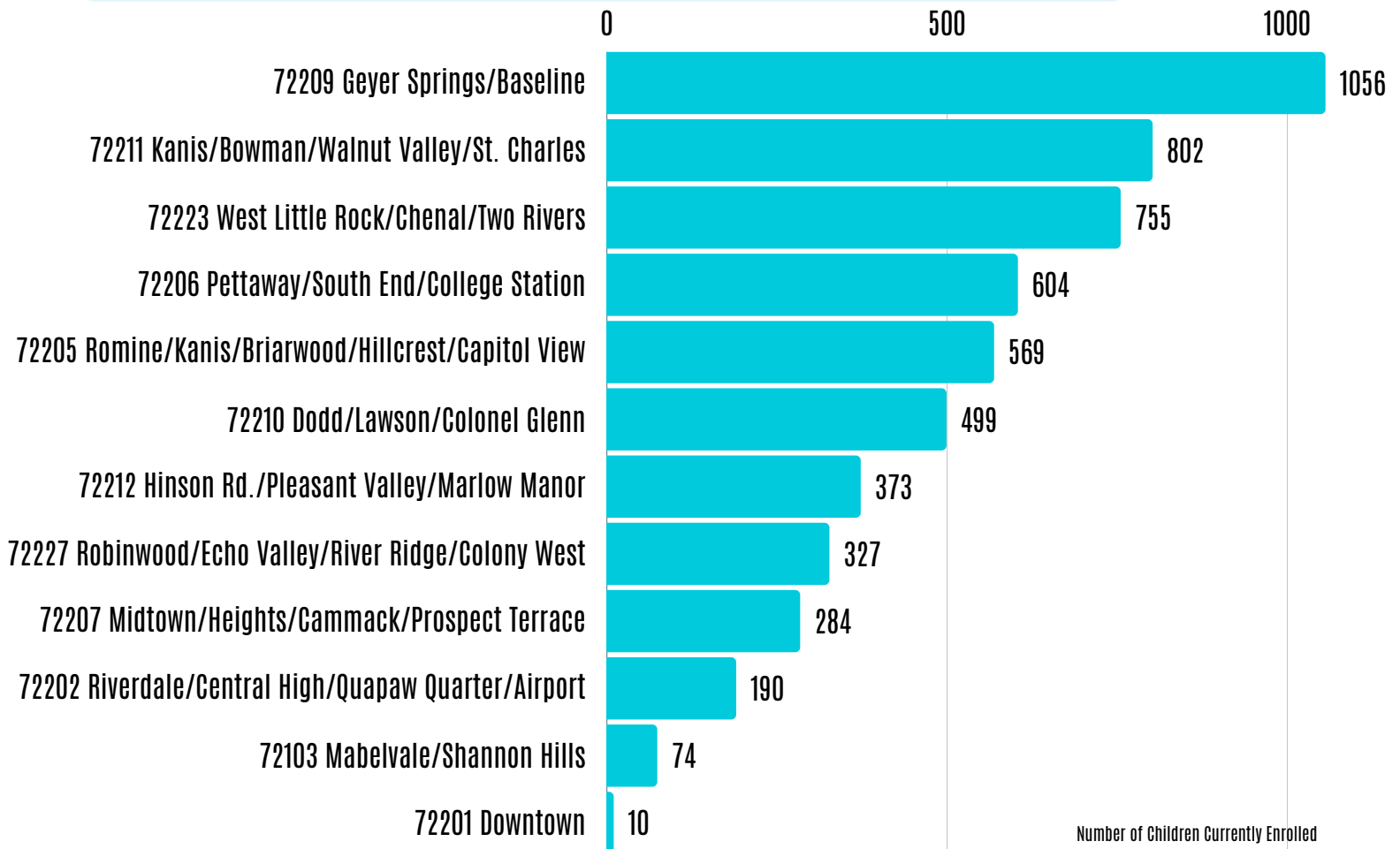
Who We Serve

Approximately 45% of the children enrolled in the Pulaski County Imagination Library free-book program reside in Little Rock.



The Imagination Library is open to all children from birth to age five regardless of income. Dolly Parton wanted to ensure that there was no stigma associated with receiving free books, so the program aims to reach all eligible children. Through targeted registration programs, such as partnerships with hospitals, health clinics, public school districts, and local libraries, PCIL has worked to reach low-income families throughout Pulaski County.

Breakdown of Little Rock Enrollees by Zip Code:



Number of Children Currently Enrolled

Crediting the City

Since signing our MOU in October, PCIL has taken steps to add the City of Little Rock in all outreach materials.



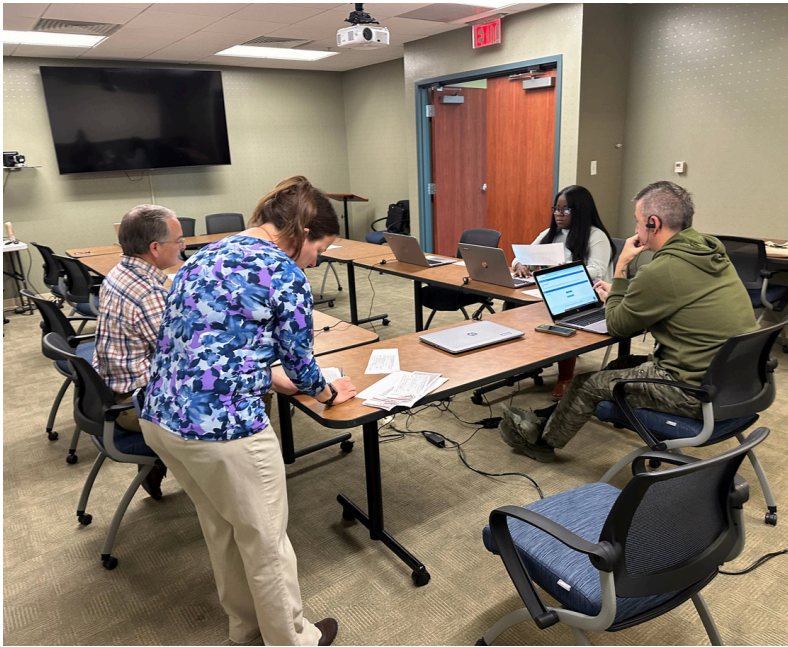
Example of a flyer that has been distributed and displayed at local Little Rock businesses, such as The Painted Pig Pottery Studio and Popshelf West Little Rock.

Example of a social-media post made by PCIL to thank the City of Little Rock for its support of the Imagination Library.



Community Volunteers

Our program benefits from the work of dedicated volunteers throughout Central Arkansas.



Local businesses and organizations host lunch-time volunteer sessions where employees can spend an hour or two processing registration forms and completing other tasks to help keep PCIL running smoothly.

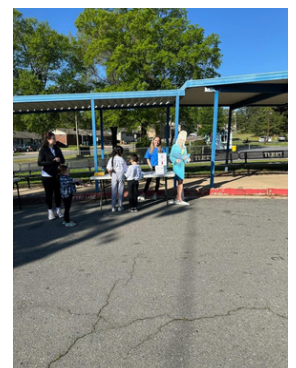
Shown here, employees of the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality spend their lunch break volunteering for the Imagination Library. Later this month, PopShelf West Little Rock is hosting a similar volunteer event.

Last fall, Bloom Salon in Hillcrest hosted a Dolly Parton Trivia Night fundraiser to support PCIL. This weekend, August 2nd and 3rd, Cypress Social restaurant will host a Dolly Parton Weekend to promote the Imagination Library and encourage diners to donate by sharing a QR code on their menu.



Our program is also supported by the volunteer work of numerous individual volunteers, PTA groups, and rotary clubs.

Additionally, our organization is run by a volunteer board and officers who donate their time and effort to serve PCIL. **Shown here: PCIL Board Vice President Sarah Argue reads to an LRSD elementary class.**



A Wise Investment

The Imagination Library free-book program sets children up for success.



Ninety percent of brain development occurs in the first three years of life. Eighty-five percent of a person's intellect, personality, and social skills are developed by age five. Yet, ninety-five percent of all public spending aimed at education and child-development occurs after age five, when those important early learning years have passed. The Imagination Library serves children from birth to age five, reaching them at a time when access to books is critically important.

“The single most significant factor influencing a child’s early educational success is an introduction to books and being read to at home prior to beginning school.”

- National Commission on Reading



Children in middle- and high-income homes have an average of thirteen books per child. Children in low-income homes have an average of one age-appropriate book per 300 children. Studies show that children who grow up with at least twenty books in the home achieve an average of two additional years of education as compared to their peers who grow up in homes without books, regardless of their parents' education, occupation, or class.

Sources:

Schweinhart, L. J., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W. S., Belfield, C. R., & Nores, M. (2005). *Monographs of the HighScope Educational Research Foundation*, 14. Ypsilanti, MI: HighScope Press.

Neuman, S. B., & Dickinson, D. K. (2006). *The Handbook of Early Literacy Research*, Vol. II, Guilford Press.

Acknowledgements

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**We thank you
for your
continued
support of the
Pulaski County
Imagination
Library free-
book program.**

Pulaski County Imagination Library exists due to the tireless work of our board members, including Board President Clarke Tucker and Vice-President Sarah Argue, and the generous support of individual donors and community partners, including the City of Little Rock.



Contact

Ali Noland
Executive Director,
Pulaski County Imagination Library
P.O. Box 1821, Little Rock, AR 72203
501-258-6186

www.pcaril.org
Admin@pcaril.org
On social media as: Pulaski County,
AR Imagination Library