



Year in Review 2012

In November of 2012, on the Monday after Thanksgiving, Dolly Parton boarded her bus in Nashville for the journey to New York City. Her mission was to promote the release of her new book, "Dream More", inspired by her unforgettable commencement address at the University of Tennessee several years earlier. The book retraced her commitment to the founding principles behind the creation of The Dollywood Foundation, to Dream More, Learn More, Care More and Be More. The book shares a few laughs, some tears and a thoughtful insight as to how her life has navigated both calm and treacherous waters. Obviously, the message resonated with her readers because the book soon found its place on the New York Times bestseller list.

She dedicated the book to her Imagination Library and donated all of the proceeds to The Dollywood Foundation. Her ongoing commitment to The Foundation and its signature program has become an integral part of the program's financial equation. The unique business model, which in large part is the reason the program has grown so rapidly, relies on the generosity of local sponsors, the frugality of managing the cost of the books and mailing expenses and Dolly's willingness to absorb all of the overhead.

The results continue to be impressive, especially in the light of the last 4 years of a global recession.

In 2012, the Imagination Library and all of its local sponsors distributed 7.65 million books and pushed the total given away since inception to over 45 million. Almost 300,000 new children were welcomed to the program and the current number of enrolled children surpassed 655,000 in 2012. No doubt, the rate of growth has slowed and sadly some local sponsors could not sustain the program. Yet a fascinating diversity of communities continued to join the ranks—United Ways of St. Louis, Kansas City and Springfield (the 3 largest cities in Missouri); Ft. McMurray in Alberta became the largest program in Canada; and in the UK, our special initiative for looked after children now covers 26 Local Authorities in Scotland.

Furthermore, we were thrilled that the research article based on DPIL (by the extraordinary team from Le Moyne College) has been accepted for publication in the journal, *Reading Psychology*. The article, "The Imagination Library Program: Increasing Parental Reading Through Book Distribution" by Ridzi, Sylvia, & Singh, marks the first publication of empirical research assessing the impact of this international program in an academic, peer-reviewed journal.

Other signs of growth and international exposure are reflected in our platforms for social media. We now have 40,000 fans on Facebook, 10,000 followers on Twitter and reach nearly 2.5 million people through Google +.

Our vast network across three countries remains strong and vibrant. Sure, we have experienced our share of the economic downturn, nature's catastrophes and a few man made punches as well. Nevertheless the commitment to positively impact the most important years of a child's life has withstood it all.

We are encouraged to reflect on the past but we must look forward to the future. What lies ahead for us—new countries, more states and provinces, employer based models, music and more resources on the website? Will we land on one of these ideas or perhaps on all of them? Time will tell, but for now the pursuit to improve and grow enthusiastically continues because we remain committed to one guiding principle—to always strive to Dream More.