



# Year In Review 2006

## The Dollywood Foundation

Every year now seems like the best year ever for The Dollywood Foundation and thankfully 2006 has been.... well, the best year ever!

It's been a year filled with "firsts."

In November, Dolly bounced on a stage in Toronto to announce that the Imagination Library will now be available to children in Canadian communities. For the first time, the program crossed an international border with the goal to make the program Canada's own unique attempt to instill a love for reading in all of her children. Although The Dollywood Foundation of Canada will coordinate the program, an agreement was reached with the Canadian-based organization, Invest in Kids, to help bring the Imagination Library to as many Canadian preschoolers as possible. The press coverage for the event was superb and the level of excitement was downright inspiring so we look forward to working with our Canadian family.

During the summer, the 95th, and last, county in Tennessee came on board with the Imagination Library. Thanks to the special assistance of the Governor's Books from Birth Foundation, local leaders from all across the state brought universal coverage to Tennessee's under 5 population. For the first time, a family could move from one end of a state to another and still have access to the Imagination Library. By the end of the year, almost 40% of all of Tennessee's preschool children were participating in the program.

Other states showed interest in the program. The Michigan legislature, due to the push from many of the communities providing the Imagination Library, appropriated \$500,000 for school districts to match in order to provide a "book a month" program. This \$1,000,000 will be largely devoted to Imagination Library programs and significantly expand the effort across the state.

On the operational front, there were several notable accomplishments. In January, for the first time, each and every book was protected by a polybag covering. In addition, some 35 books were re-sized so they would all fit easily into a standard mailbox. These new formats will begin arriving in homes in early 2007.

Also arriving in 2007 will be four books that contain reading tips for families. Written by United Way's Born Learning/Success By 6 national staff, these reading tips will be a part of a larger partnership that will bring the Imagination Library to the attention of hundreds of new United Ways and bring the message of the importance of reading to millions of children.

This message was strengthened through the continuation of Dolly's Imagination Playhouse at Dollywood. Three of the books were brought to life as theatrical productions. One of them, Keiko Kasza's *My Lucky Day*, was produced as a road show and, in a partnership with Knox County public libraries, played to over 10,000 children in the east Tennessee area.

Dolly proudly released her new cookbook, *Dolly's Dixie Fixins*, and donated all of the proceeds to the Foundation. It marked the first time we have collaborated with her to sell a product online and given the response, it will not be the last time either!

Lastly, it is time to bring up a few more "firsts." For the first time, over 330,000 children each month are receiving the Imagination Library. And for the first time, the total number of books distributed soared over three million for 2006. Since the inception of the program, now over seven million books have been mailed to children. To put these numbers in perspective, in 2006 over 45% of all books ever mailed were mailed in this one year alone!

Success is never achieved alone. The success of this year is solely dependent upon the hundreds of local organizations and thousands of people who want the same thing for their children. So, be it a United Way, a civic organization, a library, a school, a school system or one of the many educationally oriented non-profits that enrich our lives, our success is your success... and for that we remain eternally thankful.