



Year In Review 2007

The Dollywood Foundation

On December 4, 2007 Dolly Parton was introduced to the crowd gathered at the Savoy Hotel in London, England by a group of school children who sang Dolly's song "I Believe in You." This wonderful moment captured both the success of 2007 and the exciting promise of 2008.

Dolly had ventured to London to announce that her Imagination Library would now be available to communities throughout the United Kingdom. Joining her for the announcement were the leaders and children of the United Kingdom's very first community – the borough of Rotherham. In a very real sense, every leader and every child in every community that has launched the Imagination Library, stood with her that day. Obviously, any success of today is built upon all of the achievements which have come before it.

The launching of Dolly's Imagination Library in the United Kingdom capped another year of exciting growth. Take a look at the following highlights:

- At the close of the year, 732 communities in 43 states, the District of Columbia, 6 Canadian provinces, and 1 Canadian territory participated in the program.
- Currently 420,000 children receive a book each and every month.
- In 2007, just under 4.5 million books were mailed, a 37% increase over 2006.
- In 2006 and in 2007, a total of 7.7 million books were mailed.
- A new feature to allow families to register via the website produced almost 24,000 registrations via on-line access.
- Through the cooperation of the Governor's Books from Birth Foundation, fully 50% of all children under 5 in Tennessee are now in the program. GBBF also worked with Tennessee Tech University to produce a DVD that can serve as a recipe for other states to provide a statewide, universal program.
- The state of West Virginia announced plans to provide Dolly's Imagination Library to 6 of its counties.
- Over 250 folks from the U.S. and Canada participated in The Dollywood Foundation's bi-annual Homecomin' gathering.
- Dolly's Imagination Playhouse, featuring the Penguin Players, not only performed daily at Dollywood through the summer, it also brought the show on the road, performing over 70 times to over 4,000 kids.
- The much feared postal increase levied by the USPS was kept to a manageable amount (3-5 cents per child per month) and it triggered a process to reformat all of the books to retain their quality but meet the new flexibility standards.
- A new partnership with national United Way produced reading tips for families in four of the books. The tips are designed to follow the development of the child, beginning with general reading tips in the first book and then moving to tips for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.
- The Dollywood Foundation of Canada and The Dollywood Foundation of the United Kingdom were founded in their respective countries.
- The Dollywood Foundation of Canada and Invest in Kids finalized an official partnership to staff and promote their mutual interests throughout Canada.

These are all grand achievements, but in the end there is no better way to communicate the many endeavors of 2007 than through the words of a mother. These daily expressions of gratitude and commendation pour into the hearts of the thousands of individuals who work diligently to initiate and sustain the Imagination Library.

Here is such an expression of joy from a letter sent by a parent to a local sponsor:

"I just want to thank you so very much for making this fantastic program possible for us Hawaii residents. Just the other day our younger son received his monthly book and today another book arrived for my older son. I don't know who gets more excited when the books arrive, me or the boys!"