



Year In Review 2011

The Dollywood Foundation

The end of the year is always about counting: how much money did we spend, how much money did we raise, how much did it cost, and how much did we do. This year, we had a lot to count.

At year's end, the Imagination Library was operating in 1,642 communities in 3 countries. In December of 2011 675,637 children were participating in the program and for the year 7,999,673 books were mailed. This brings us to a lifetime total of 38,492,164 books.

In 2011, more children graduated than ever before: 153,011 children received their very last book in 2011. Yet there were still more children entering the program than exiting. Almost 275,000 new children were enrolled, a 10% increase over the previous year.

Social media is now part of most everyone's life whether they know it or not. Our emphasis on social media this year really paid off. Facebook, Twitter, Blog and Google + provided the Imagination Library with just over 15.2 million total views (up 240% over 2010). Our current daily Facebook network reach (fans & friends of fans) is 7,033,930. This social media presence was further enhanced by the introduction in November of our brand new web site. This, too, generated increased traffic as the number of visitors to the site increased by over 72%.

These numbers are fantastic but we know full well that numbers are not people. The real story of the Imagination Library continues to be told in communities and in families. The incredible network of United Way, Rotary, Junior League, Kiwanis, school districts, Chambers of Commerce, national government, provincial and state government, local government, local foundations, national foundations, libraries, non-profits, businesses, and individuals have all joined forces to allow these stories to be told. Dolly Parton said, "I may lead this effort but local people are the effort."

One of our proudest moments in 2011 was the announcement of a partnership with The American Printing House for the Blind. Audio versions of many of the Imagination Library books were created for children with visual impairments, and in 2012 some books will be made available in Braille.

Today's achievements always lead to tomorrow's goals. Dolly is fond of the saying "Don't confuse dreams for wishes," and as the Imagination Library peers into the future some astounding dreams are now clearly within reach. Down the road, there will be 1,000,000 children per month enrolled in the program, and one day in the not so distant future the 100,000,000th book will be delivered. More entire states, provinces and boroughs will make the program universally available to their children and more countries will come on board. More evidence will emerge that the Imagination Library inspires more reading in the home and as a result, more children will be better prepared for a life of learning.

Finally, 2011 ended with the most important count of all, counting our blessings. The Imagination Library family is thousands of caring souls who strive every day to nurture and inspire its children. This effort will continue to be sustained—you can count on that!