



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ohio Governor's Imagination Library Becomes Reality in Crawford County

BUCYRUS, OH –The Bucyrus Public Library and the Crawford Partnership have teamed up to launch the Crawford County chapter of the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library (OGIL) program. The Ohio Governor's Imagination Library was inspired by First Lady Fran DeWine's passion to improve the lives of Ohio's children. First Lady DeWine learned of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library through her grandchildren's participation in the program at their local library in Greene County.

In July 2019, the Ohio legislature included \$5 million over the course of the next two years to jump start the OGIL which is now working with existing affiliates and new partners to bring Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to each of Ohio's 88 counties.

"We are so excited to announce that the OGIL will be implemented in Crawford County," said Barbara Scott of the Bucyrus Public Library, who also serves as the Crawford OGIL administrator and local champion.

Crawford County's OGIL program is made possible through the generosity and support of the Avita Health Foundation, Ohio Mutual Insurance Group, United Way of Crawford County, and the Crawford Partnership, who collectively have pledged more than \$20,000 over the next five years. These local funds will be matched by the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library, totaling more than \$40,000 in impact for the community.

"The Avita Health Foundation is excited to support Crawford County's Imagination Library Program which compliments the wonderful work of Avita's Pediatric Primary Care Physicians who are committed to reading literacy and early child cognitive development. The fact that children who register for the program will now be able to receive a free, new book every month in the mail, as a result of the program and one from their Avita Physician is really special," said Chuck Cangelosi, Director of the Avita Health Foundation, which pledged \$8,500 over the next five years.

"As many as one-third of children enter kindergarten without the early literacy foundation that is key to future academic success, and Ohio Mutual wants to help close this gap for children in Crawford County with our support of this fantastic program," said Ohio Mutual President and CEO Mark C. Russell. "We applaud the vision of Governor and Fran DeWine for championing the Imagination Library, the leadership of the Crawford Partnership, support from our local library and health systems, and each parent who is willing to invest in their child's success through reading. This is yet another wonderful example of how innovative thinking and collaborative effort can accomplish much good for our community." Ohio Mutual is contributing \$10,000 over the next six years.



The Crawford Partnership and the United Way of Crawford County are also contributing \$1,000 each for the next two years to help launch the Ohio Governor’s Imagination Library in Crawford County, which will complement the existing programs from Avita Health System and Crawford Reads 20. These programs provide complimentary books at community functions, school registrations, festivals, hospitals, and many more with the goal of positively impacting the culture of Crawford County and the way it values reading and academic success.

“The most exciting part about launching this program is that Crawford County now has a multi-faceted, comprehensive literacy strategy that spans from birth until our children are school-aged. Avita’s Pediatric Primary Care Physicians and Crawford Reads 20 programs have already been laying a foundation of literacy in our county, and can now reinforce the Ohio Governor’s Imagination Library from our very youngest kids, and follow them all the way through school,” said Erin Stine, Crawford Partnership Community Development Director.

The official start date for Crawford County’s Ohio Governor’s Imagination Library is Monday, September 28th.

Crawford County families can visit www.OhioImaginationLibrary.org/Enroll to register their children. In 8-12 weeks, families can expect to receive their first book, *The Little Engine That Could*, in the mail at no cost. Each month thereafter, the child will receive a new book in the mail until age five, thanks to the support of community partners. When the child turns five, they will receive their final book, *Look out Kindergarten, Here I Come!*, and will officially become an Imagination Library graduate.

For those interested in donating to the program, \$25 is enough to fund one child for an entire year’s worth of books. Local individuals or businesses that want to support Crawford County’s Imagination Library, please visit: www.crawfordpartnership.org/OGIL OR visit <https://ohioimaginationlibrary.org/donate>.

About Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library

Since launching in 1995, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library has become the preeminent early childhood book gifting program in the world. The flagship program of The Dollywood Foundation has mailed well over 100 million free books in Australia, Canada, The Republic of Ireland, United Kingdom and the United States. The Imagination Library mails more than 1.4 million high-quality, age-appropriate books each month to registered children from birth to age five. Dolly envisioned creating a lifelong love of reading, inspiring them to dream. The impact of the program has been widely researched and results suggest positive increases in key early childhood literacy metrics. Penguin Random House is the exclusive publisher for Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library. For more information, please visit imaginationlibrary.com.

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ABOUT THE CRAWFORD PARTNERSHIP: The Crawford Partnership is leading the charge to make Crawford County a place where people seek to live and work. A catalyst for change in Crawford County, the Partnership is committed to enhancing the livelihood of families and businesses in Crawford County through strategic community development and economic development. Learn more at www.crawfordpartnership.org.