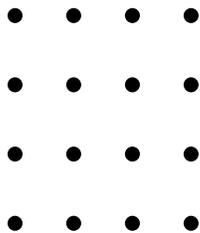


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Fostering a Love of Reading in the Community

By Caroline Bradley

“I-think-I-can! I-think-I-can! I-think-I-can!” *The Little Engine That Could*

Every child deserves to feel like they can do whatever they set their mind to or be whatever they want to be. Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library looks to introduce kids to the endless possibilities and benefits that come from the exciting world of reading.

The quote at the top is from the first book each child receives and sets the tone for the mission of this organization. As believers in this mission and finding themselves with lots of free time during the pandemic, Kevin and Noelle Baker decided to start an affiliate branch here in Waco.

“We both come from families where we were read to a lot,” said Noelle Baker. “And we both are just big readers and love it and really attribute to the fact that our parents read to us from the time that we were really little.”

Parents are encouraged to enroll their children in the program at birth, though they can enroll at any point up until two months before their fifth birthday. There is no cost to enroll a child and no limit on how many children can be enrolled from each family.

For each month that the child is a part of the program, they will be mailed an age-appropriate book. The hope is that by the time the child turns five, they will be excited and prepared to step into the new adventure of kindergarten with a little library of their own.

“So our responsibilities are to enroll kids, approve the registration, to make sure the kids are in a ZIP code that we are open in right now, and then we fund-raise,” said Noelle Baker.

To spread the word about Imagination Library, the Bakers have worked to be present at different community events, including the Waco Downtown Farmers Market,

different Pre-K Roundups, the Waco-McClennan County Library and even Ascension Providence Hospital. Parents and grandparents can enroll their children right then and there or on their website.

As a non-profit, the Bakers rely on donations and fundraising to provide books for these kids. On average, it costs \$25 to sponsor one child enrolled in the program.

Though they have only been enrolling kids in the community since December of 2020, they have already opened in six McClennan County ZIP codes and serve over 900 kids.

Looking forward, the Bakers are hoping to interact with the community more. While they will continue to be present at their usual spots, one event they are excited to put on is the Great Waco Duck Race, which will take place in the fall of 2023.

“Basically it’s a raffle type of fundraising event where people can purchase a duck,” said Kevin Baker. “Not to keep but to have their raffle number on the duck, and then we’ll be raffling off prizes. So that will be our big fundraising event. And we’re hoping to make it a community event too.”

For the future of this organization, the Bakers are looking to expand their program to every ZIP code in McClennan County. But another hope as the program grows is to be able to interact more with the families of children enrolled in the program. While the books sent to each child do come with tips and tricks to encourage parents to engage with their child and the book, the Bakers hope to be able to create a community of families who are excited about reading.

“If we can get out there and help them feel more confident about interacting with their kids and interacting with the books, I think it would make even more of a difference,” said Noelle Baker.



Co-founders, Noelle and Kevin Baker
Photo by Caroline Bradley



Dear (Donor Name),

My name is Kevin Baker. My wife Noelle and I started the Waco affiliate branch of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library during the height of the pandemic. As avid book lovers and parents ourselves, we believe in the mission of giving kids access to books in their early childhood.

Imagination Library is an organization that sends one book a month to children enrolled in the program up until they are five years old. The hope is that children who have been enrolled in the program since birth will have developed a love of reading and built their own little library of 60 books by the time they enter kindergarten.

Currently, we serve six Waco zip codes and have over 900 children enrolled in the program - with your help, we look to expand our program to all of McLennan County. As we continue to grow, we hope to see more children falling in love with reading..

How You Can Get Involved:

- **Donate:** We rely solely on the generosity of our donors to continue serving these children. It is \$25 to sponsor one child in the program. Our [website](#) details ways to donate.
- **Opportunities:** We are always looking for more ways and events that we can connect with our community. If you know of an event we could participate in, we would love for you to tell us on our [website](#).
- **Social Media:** Social media is a big way to interact with our community and see the impact of Imagination Library. We would love for you to share our social media and help us spread the word about our mission on both [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).
- **Corporate Sponsorship:** We would love to partner with your business to help us continue to serve the children enrolled in the program. [Sponsors](#) are highlighted at all events and in all materials related to our program.

We hope that you will consider giving to Imagination Library in whatever way you can, and we look forward to partnering with you as we look to serve our community even better.

Best,

Kevin Baker, Co-founder
Waco affiliate of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Subject Line: Let's Read Together!



Hello Parents!

Thank you so much for enrolling your child in the Imagination Library program here in Waco! We are excited to partner with you as we open up a whole new world of exciting characters and stories to your child.

Tip of the Month:

As you receive your book each month, we encourage you to read the inside flaps of each book. These flaps have helpful tips on how to read and share the book with your child.

Encourage others to enroll:

Our community of little readers continues to grow, with over 900 children in Waco receiving a book each month! We want to continue to grow and serve more children in our area, so be sure to tell your friends and neighbors about Imagination Library. Here is the link to [enroll](#) or be sure to [visit](#) one of our community partners.

We want your feedback!

One of the best ways we can continue to grow and expand to more zip codes is for others to hear about your experience. If Imagination Library has had an impact on you and your child, we would love to hear your [feedback](#).

- What are your child's favorite books so far?
- What is their reaction when they receive a new book?
- Do you feel like Imagination Waco is a good program for Waco?
- Do you know of any community events where we could meet and enroll future families?

Follow us on social media!

Be sure to like and follow us on our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for all the latest updates and tag us in your pictures reading with your child!

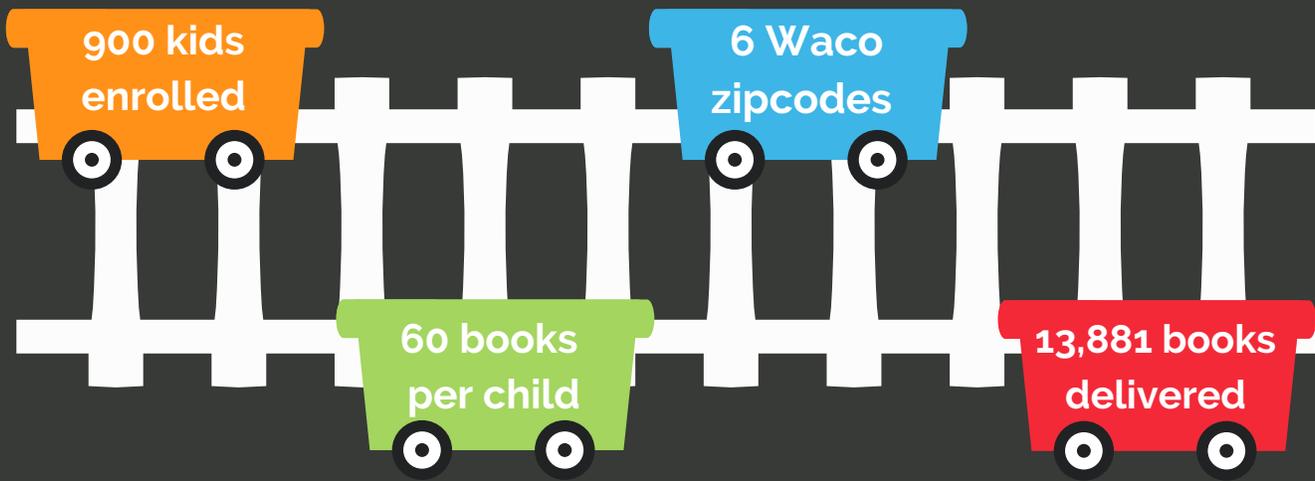
Thanks and keep reading!

New to Imagination Library? If you are new to our group and want to know more about the program, check out our Frequently Asked Questions on our [website](#).



"Our mission is to increase literacy and the love of reading in the community."

Kevin Baker, Co-Founder



How to Enroll:

1. Register online at imaginationlibrarywaco.org/registration/
2. Register through one of our community partners:
 - a. Waco McLennan County Library
 - b. Ascension Providence Labor and Delivery

Enrollment Growth:



Ways to Give



By Mail



Online



On Amazon Smile