

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 23 August 2023

A CHANCE TO MEET DOLLY PARTON: GOLDEN TICKET GIVEAWAY TO CELEBRATE 200 MILLIONTH BOOK MILESTONE

To celebrate its 200 million-book milestone, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is taking a page out of the classic book "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" and hiding special prize-winning bookmarks in books for seven lucky children enrolled in the program, including one family from Australia.

The special Dolly bookmarks will be randomly hidden in Imagination Library books sent to children during September, which is also International Literacy Month.

What do you win if you find a bookmark?

The lucky family receiving a bookmark will receive:

- A video chat with Dolly Parton.
- A personalised signed letter and an autographed photo from Dolly.
- Four Dollywood tickets.

The Dollywood Foundation will also donate \$2000 AUD on behalf of the child to their Local Imagination Library Partner in their community as a thank you to who Dolly calls the true heroes of her program.

Inspired by her father's inability to read and write, Dolly started the Imagination Library in 1995 to serve the children of her hometown in Sevier County, Tennessee. Today, her program spans five countries and gifts over 2.4 million free, high-quality, age-appropriate books each month to children around the world. There is never a charge to families who participate in the program, and it is open to all children under the age of five in geographic areas with operating programs. In Australia, the program operates in 500 locations, and is about to celebrate its own 1 million book milestone.

"I know there are children in communities around the world with big dreams and the seeds of these dreams are often found in books," said Dolly.

"It's been one of my greatest gifts in life to help instill a love of reading through my Imagination Library. Reaching 200 million books worldwide is a major milestone that I'm so very proud of, and I want to thank all of our local program partners, funders and supporters from the bottom of my heart. But we're just getting warmed up, we have so much more to do! Together, we can inspire even more children to dream more, learn more, care more and be more."

Nicole Carr, the Executive Officer of United Way Glenelg and the local coordinator for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is eagerly anticipating the possibility that a family from Glenelg Shire might just be among the fortunate victors.

"There are 35,000 children enrolled in Australia receiving books each month. Our chances are as promising as any for a local family to discover the coveted golden bookmark."

In the month of September, families are urged to attentively open their books and meticulously examine each page and be on the lookout for any hidden surprises.

The remarkable achievement of reaching the 200 million-book milestone aligns with a significant celebration for the local charity as well – a decade of delivering books within the Glenelg Shire.

"As we celebrate this significant milestone, we are reminded of the countless stories read, the imaginations ignited, and the bonds forged through the magic of books. With each passing year, our dedication to nurturing young readers and fostering a lifelong love for learning only grows stronger," said Ms Carr.

In 2013, the inception of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library took place with then Victoria Premier Dr. Dennis Naphine and Portland Aluminium's former Plant Manager, Peter Chellis. Since that time, a significant tally of nearly 44,000 books has been distributed to children residing in the Glenelg Shire.

"Portland Aluminium's unwavering commitment in partnering with United Way Glenelg to sponsor Dolly Parton's Imagination Library exemplifies a remarkable dedication to nurturing the boundless potential of young minds within our community," concluded Ms Carr.

Britt Butler, Portland Aluminium Smelter Manager is looking forward to celebrating with United Way Glenelg.

"Our partnership with United Way Glenelg to support Dolly Parton's Imagination Library reflects our deep-rooted belief in fostering educational opportunities for the children of our community, igniting a brighter future through the magic of reading."

To mark this achievement and guarantee the ongoing success of the initiative, United Way Glenelg is set to unveil the Imagination Library Sub-Fund this coming September. This dedicated fund is intended to provide perpetual support to the Imagination Library program. By establishing this fund, the aim is to ensure the program's enduring viability, enabling it to continue benefiting future generations of children.

For more information about enrolling your child in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library or making a donation contact United Way Glenelg on 0410513305 or email mail@unitedwayglenelg.com.au

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