

# BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES THROUGH BOOKS

## Why Sheboygan County's Children Need Help Building Early Literacy Skills

### A Crisis in Early Literacy: The Need is Urgent

#### When You Can't Afford the Essentials, Books are a Luxury

- In Sheboygan's 53081 ZIP code, 39% of households are "below the ALICE threshold"\* and struggling to afford basic needs like food, housing, child care and medicine. For these families, purchasing books simply isn't possible.

39%  
CAN'T AFFORD  
ESSENTIALS

#### Sheboygan is a Book Desert

- Research shows that children need access to at least 100 books in the home in their early years to set the foundation for school success. Yet for many families in Sheboygan County, that milestone is far out of reach. Our community has "below average" access to affordable books, making it a "book desert"\*\*\* where too many children grow up without a home library.

LESS THAN  
100  
BOOKS

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders Struggle to Read

- Within the 53081 ZIP code, 60% of 3rd graders read below grade level, compared to 47% statewide.\*\*\* Third grade reading proficiency is a critical predictor of high school graduation rates. Without intervention, these gaps compound over time, limiting future opportunities.

60%  
BELOW  
GRADE LEVEL

\*Source: [unitedforalice.org/wisconsin](https://unitedforalice.org/wisconsin)

\*\*Source: [unitebooks.com/book-deserts](https://unitebooks.com/book-deserts)

\*\*\*Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Public Instruction Report Cards for Sheboygan Area School Districts 2023-24 School Year. Data has been aggregated to show just the elementary schools that reside within the 53081 zip code.

\$32  
PER CHILD  
PER YEAR

### The Solution: Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

The Imagination Library provides children with a high-quality, age-appropriate book every month from birth to age five, mailed directly to their home. This program is offered at no charge to the parents or caregivers.

- Cost-Effective & Scalable:** For less than \$3 per child per month, the program ensures equitable access to books at a scale that no single family or school district could achieve alone.
- Focusing on Greatest Need:** By first launching this program in Sheboygan's 53081 ZIP code, the area with the highest rates of ALICE households and struggling readers, United Way of Sheboygan County will be addressing the most urgent need first. The direct mailing model helps eliminate transportation and scheduling barriers.
- Proven Impact:** Studies show the program improves early literacy, strengthens family reading habits and helps children enter kindergarten better prepared. 97% of parents believe that their child will be better prepared for school after having participated in the Imagination Library.

#### More Info:



[uwofsc.org/DPIL](https://uwofsc.org/DPIL)

2,444  
ELIGIBLE  
CHILDREN

97%  
BETTER  
PREPARED

## WHY THIS PROGRAM NEEDS UNITED WAY & HOW YOUR SUPPORT IS ESSENTIAL

Contrary to popular belief, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library doesn't send books everywhere on its own – the program depends on **local partners** to make it happen. While The Dollywood Foundation handles book selection, purchasing and mailing, someone must step up to coordinate the program locally, enroll families and cover the cost of books and postage.

United Way of Sheboygan County is stepping up to lead this effort, but we can't do it alone. With your support, we can bring Imagination Library to Sheboygan County in early 2026. **Help us ensure our children start their early years with the opportunity to develop a love of reading and enter school ready to succeed, regardless of their background!**



**UNITED WAY**  
Sheboygan County

United Way of Sheboygan County  
2020 Erie Avenue Sheboygan WI 53081

920-458-3425 | [give@uwofsc.org](mailto:give@uwofsc.org) | EIN: 39-0808471

# IMAGINATION LIBRARY IS COMING!

## Be a part of writing the first chapter!

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library makes it possible for children to receive high-quality books each month, but it is only through the support of local businesses, organizations and donors that these books are funded and delivered to families in our community. Join us in launching this incredible program in Sheboygan County!



### BOOK BUDDY

**\$500**

- Donors at this level will receive recognition via
  - Our Annual Report
  - Imagination Library window cling for your business



### STORYTIME SUPPORTER

**\$1,000**

- Donors at this level will receive recognition via:
  - Our Annual Report
  - Social media
  - UWOFSC.org
  - Imagination Library window cling for your business



### CHAPTER CHAMPION

**\$2,500**

- Donors at this level will receive recognition via:
  - Name on the inside cover of all books for 1 month
  - Our Annual Report
  - Social media shoutout
  - Name or logo prominently featured on DPIL signup page on UWOFSC.org
  - Program promotional materials
  - DPIL window cling & yard sign for your organization



### LEGACY OF LITERACY

**\$5,000**

- Donors at this level will receive recognition via all of the above as well as:
  - Name on the inside cover of all books for a second month
  - A Dolly Parton cutout to display in your business for up to 2 months
  - Elevated recognition in our annual Campaign Celebration event program
  - Name or logo prominently featured in top-level header on DPIL signup page on UWOFSC.org



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## Your support is vital to starting this FREE program!

Access to early literacy is crucial for young children, as it forms the cornerstone of their educational journey. Investing in early literacy is an investment in a brighter future, where every child can thrive and reach their full potential.

We would like to sponsor Imagination Library, administered through United Way of Sheboygan County, at the following level:

☐ BOOK BUDDY \$500

☐ STORYTIME SUPPORTER \$1,000

☐ CHAPTER CHAMPION \$2,500

☐ LEGACY OF LITERACY \$5,000

☐ OTHER DONATION AMOUNT: \$

☐ I WOULD LIKE TO FUND A YEAR OF IMAGINATION LIBRARY FOR CHILDREN, A TOTAL DONATION OF \$

ABOVE NUMBER X \$32

ORGANIZATION NAME (IF APPLICABLE)

CONTACT NAME

ADDRESS

CONTACT PHONE

CONTACT EMAIL

NOTES

☐ Enclosed is my check, made payable to United Way of Sheboygan County.  
Prefer to give another way? Visit [uwofsc.org/giveDPIL](http://uwofsc.org/giveDPIL) to pay by card or ACH.

☐ I would like my gift to remain anonymous.

☐ I would like to receive monthly emails from United Way of Sheboygan County about the impact of my gift and more news on needs in the community.

Thank you for your commitment to providing high-quality books and a love of reading to Sheboygan County's children!



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