



Sioux Empire United Way

DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.” Wise, and accurate, words from Dr. Seuss. Children who are read to frequently are more likely to count to 20 or higher, write their own names, and read or pretend to read. Unfortunately, not everyone has equal access to books and reading materials. **Children living below poverty are less likely to be read to aloud everyday than children in families above the poverty line.**

Seeing the statistics surrounding the impact of reading on a child’s development, Sioux Empire United Way began funding Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, which provides a free book by mail each month to children ages birth to five years, regardless of income. **The program currently serves 10,900 children in our four county area.**

“It is important that all children are given the tools to succeed in life,” said Jay Powell, President of Sioux Empire United Way. “By United Way providing books through Imagination Library, we are working to accomplish just that, and make sure that every child in the Sioux Empire enters school with the same opportunity to achieve.”

Students who do more reading at home are better readers and have higher math scores. However, because children tend to read for fun less as they get older, it is important to enforce the practice of reading when children are young. Both Sanford and Avera hospitals in Sioux Falls work with United Way to promote Imagination Library to new parents.

“Reading to newborns has been shown to have many benefits that encourage a child’s growth and development,” said Kim Overby, Director of Sanford Children’s CHILD Services. “To support parents in reading with their children, Sanford Health partners with the Sioux Empire United Way to help new parents enroll in the Imagination Library when babies are born.”

March 2nd is Read Across America Day, an annual reading and awareness program that calls for every child in every community to read in honor of children’s author, Dr. Seuss’s, birthday. Sioux Empire United Way encourages children and parents to celebrate reading daily by picking up their favorite Imagination Library book. As Dr. Seuss would say, “you’re never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child.”

To sign your child up to receive Imagination Library books, contact julia@seuw.org or call 336-2095. Visit seuw.org for more information about United Way funded programs.