

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Free Book Program Launches in Wood County, Expands in Lucas County

[TOLEDO, OH] – United Way of Greater Toledo (UWGT) is proud to announce the expansion of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL) to all Wood County zip codes, as well as any remaining unserved zip codes in Lucas County.

DPIL, a free, monthly, home-book delivery program for children ages zero to five years old is rapidly expanding across Ohio due to Governor DeWine and his wife, Fran DeWine’s commitment to increasing early childhood literacy in the state. The program was written in the Governor’s formal budget last year, (noted as the “Ohio Governor’s Imagination Library”), which is designed to match DPIL funds at current providers, in an attempt to expand to zip codes and counties not currently being served.

Specifically, Fran DeWine and the First Lady’s Office will be leading the Ohio Governor’s Imagination Library initiative, in partnership with DPIL, to work with local providers on the expansion.

"Today every child in Wood County can enroll in the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library," said First Lady Fran DeWine.

"The Imagination Library is such an important resource for new books right now, and I am so glad that kids throughout Wood County can now sign up to get new books delivered right to their home."

In Wood County, seven libraries / districts have committed to match funds from the state, allowing all children to be served. Those are: Wood Co. District Public Library, Way Public Library, Pemberville Public Library, Rossford Public Library, Weston Public Library, North Baltimore Public Library and Wayne Public Library.

"We all can agree that libraries play such a critical role in every community. Their services and dedication to education is unparalleled. I want to personally thank each district and branch that stepped forward, so children can begin to build their own libraries at home," said Wendy Pestrue, president and CEO of UWGT.

DPIL was first launched by *Women’s Initiative* of United Way, a philanthropic donor group in 2014 and, in a few short years, has delivered nearly 400,000 books to children across 16 zip codes in Lucas County. Now the program will be available to all zip codes in Lucas County.

"We are very proud of our strong partnership with the First Lady and commend her commitment to getting books into the hands of our community’s youngest learners. I know that our Women’s Initiative members, who brought this program to our region, have enjoyed seeing it grow and seeing new partners bring this wonderful program to their neighborhoods," said Pestrue.

If you have a child or children, ages zero to five, and live in Lucas or Wood County, you are eligible for the program. Simply visit [UnitedWayToledo.org/ImaginationLibrary](http://UnitedWayToledo.org/ImaginationLibrary) to sign up.

UWGT is proud to serve the residents of Lucas, Wood and Ottawa County. DPIL logistics for expansion to Ottawa County are still pending at this moment.

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