



## STATE OF INDIANA

Eric J. Holcomb, Governor

Jacob Speer, State Librarian

### INDIANA STATE LIBRARY

140 N. Senate Avenue

Indianapolis, IN 46204

Phone: 317-232-3675

Fax: 317-232-0002

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Indiana announces new State Director and Engagement Coordinator**

INDIANAPOLIS - Dec. 13, 2023 - The Indiana State Library and The Dollywood Foundation are pleased to announce the hiring of Melinda Brown as State Director of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Indiana and Katie Mullins as its Community Engagement Coordinator.

Brown has an extensive history working in the nonprofit sector, most notably with Stayin' Alive, a Franklin County community organization that addresses substance abuse. Brown helped launch a local Imagination Library program in Franklin County in 2007 and continues to serve as a member of the Board of Directors. With the Imagination Library of Indiana, Brown will manage all aspects of the statewide program, staffing, budget management and developing strategies for fostering and sustaining statewide Imagination Library efforts.

"Working with the Indiana State Library to implement Governor Holcomb's Next Level Agenda to reach children birth to 5 years of age, by gifting books through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is an invigorating honor!" Brown said.

Mullins has a comprehensive background in public libraries, including ten years of experience as an executive director, most recently with the Eckhart Public Library. During her time as an executive director, Mullins honed her leadership, librarianship and strategic planning skills, while instilling a love of reading in children. In her new role, Mullins will develop and maintain strong relationships with local and community partners, volunteers, and supporters statewide.

"This opportunity allows me to fulfill many of my passions - early literacy, philanthropy and building community partnerships in the best possible way, with books," Mullins said.

In August, Governor Eric J. Holcomb announced the expansion of the Imagination Library of Indiana's statewide book-gifting program. The goal of the expansion is to make books available to children ages 0-5 in every zip code in Indiana. Since the statewide launch, 16 new programs have been established bringing the total to 70 counties. The program is serving 89,278 children. The program will soon be available to more children in Indiana



at no cost to families. The Indiana State Library is the State Program Sponsor and assists in the coordination of the statewide program and governs the state match.

To learn more about becoming a community partner, contact Katie Mullins at [kmullins@in.imaginationlibrary.com](mailto:kmullins@in.imaginationlibrary.com).

To enroll in this program and learn more as it expands across the state, visit [www.imaginationlibrary.com](http://www.imaginationlibrary.com).

### **About Dolly Parton's Imagination Library**

Since launching in 1995, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has become the preeminent early childhood book-gifting program in the world. The flagship program of The Dollywood Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has gifted over 200 million free books in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and The Republic of Ireland. This is achieved through funding shared by The Dollywood Foundation and Local Community and [State/Provincial/National] Partners. The Imagination Library mails more than 2.8 million high-quality, age-appropriate books directly to children's homes each month. Each child enrolled in the program receives one book per month from birth to age five - at no cost to families. Dolly envisioned creating a lifelong love of reading and inspiring children to Dream More, Learn More, Care More and Be More.

The program's impact has been widely researched, and results demonstrate its positive impact on early childhood development and literacy skills. Penguin Random House is the exclusive publisher of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

###

**Contact:** John Wekluk, communications director, Indiana State Library; 317-753-9766 or [jwekluk@library.in.gov](mailto:jwekluk@library.in.gov)