2016-2017 Annual Report

Promoting **EARLY LITERACY** for Tennessee’s Children

GovernorsFoundation.org
Our vision is a Tennessee where all preschool children have books in their homes, develop a love of reading and learning, and begin school prepared to succeed, from kindergarten throughout their educational journeys.

Promoting early childhood literacy in Tennessee’s birth to age five population.

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30 million books in 13 years—what an accomplishment! We are truly honored to celebrate the remarkable growth of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library in Tennessee, supported by Governor’s Books from Birth Foundation through our mission of promoting early literacy for Tennessee’s children. Tennessee’s Imagination Library offers all of Tennessee’s children the opportunity for lifelong educational success, development of a deep love of learning, and long-term health and well-being. It takes all of us to make this collective impact on our children. Thank you for the many ways that you are telling our state’s story for the benefit of those who will lead us in the future!

Theresa Carl
President
Governor’s Books from Birth Foundation
**THOSE WHO KNOW WE CAN**

“Through Tennessee’s Imagination Library, the Governor’s Books from Birth Foundation is helping our children develop a love of learning early that will ensure their success in school and throughout their lives—from the cradle to career.”

*Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam*

“Parents are their child’s first and most important teacher, and reading is one of the best activities to promote early brain development. Tennessee’s Imagination Library plays an important role in increasing access to books and promoting early literacy for Tennessee children, starting at birth throughout their lives.”

*First Lady Crissy Haslam*

“We are not sending children the right message if we start telling them at an early age that they are different. Everyone deserves books in their homes. Everyone deserves to be ready for kindergarten.”

*Former Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen*
Governor’s Books from Birth Foundation (GBBF), in partnership with Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library and our statewide county affiliate programs, builds a foundation for reading and learning through books for Tennessee’s children. All children from birth to age five are eligible to receive books at no cost to families. Providing books in the home is a unique opportunity for family engagement, vocabulary and reading skills development.

**How this works**

Each local affiliate program enrolls children, promotes the program in its community and raises funds for half of the cost of books and mailing.

Through an annual state grant, the GBBF funds the other half of the cost of books and mailing and supports local affiliate programs through fundraising, volunteer training and public relations.

The Dollywood Foundation manages selection, pricing and distribution of the books.

This is a dynamic public-private partnership unlike any other in the U.S. today.
Since July 2016, there are 23,133 more children receiving books each month.

One represents 1,000 children.
Graphic rounded to the nearest thousand.

Reaching More Tennessee Children Each Month

46.3% of TN counties have enrollment percentages at or above the statewide average of 68.2%

29.7 Million books and counting have been delivered since October 2004.

More than 555,000 five-year-olds have graduated from the Imagination Library.

All of Tennessee’s 407,813 children under the age of five have access to the Imagination Library.

More than 278,000 Tennessee children are receiving books currently.

68.2% of Tennessee’s preschoolers are enrolled in the Imagination Library.

Data in this report as of July 2017
"My oldest daughter just finished her first year of high school and received the school award for the best performance in English. She received Imagination Library books until she turned five and ever since then never wanted toys but only wanted books. I have a two-year-old as well and she loves the books that come every month just as much as her sister did. She reads them every single day and we have so much fun bonding together with each new book that comes in the mail."

Elizabeth, Hamilton County parent
2017 TENNESSEE RESEARCH: FINDINGS CONFIRM PROGRAM IMPACTS

Knox County

An Analysis of Early Literacy Assessment Performance Among Knox County Imagination Library Participants: 2014-15 Knox County Kindergarten Class

<table>
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<tr>
<th>IL Alumni</th>
<th>Not IL Alumni</th>
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<td>% of students not reading “on Grade Level”</td>
<td>% of students reading “on Grade Level”</td>
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Imagination Library alumni were **1.2 times** more likely to read on grade level in the fall of their kindergarten year than students who did not participate in the program.

Imagination Library (IL) alumni **significantly outperformed** non-Imagination Library alumni on all measured skills of the fall administration of Knox County Schools’ Early Assessment.

Data was collected through Knox County Schools’ testing to determine how Imagination Library participants performed relative to non-participants on a nationally normed early literacy assessment (STAR Renaissance). All data used in this study was generated during the 2014 fall benchmark testing window in Knox County.

Shelby County

An analysis of academic and non-academic variables was conducted for approx. 19,000 children enrolled for some length in IL, and later enrolled in Shelby County Schools.

Children who were enrolled longer in IL had statistically significantly higher academic scores on the SAT10 assessment areas given in first and second grade.

Children who are enrolled for longer periods of time are **more likely to score higher** on academic assessments through early grades. Further, this research indicates that students are more likely to have increased school attendance and less likely to be suspended.

Lexile scores, across all grades, had a statistically significant positive relationship with duration of enrollment.

The analysis matched kindergarten through fourth grade students who were enrolled in Shelby County Schools between the academic years 2013/14 and 2015/16.
WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SHARED GOAL:
75% of Tennessee’s third-graders proficient in reading by 2025.

As a contributing partner of Governor’s Children’s Cabinet Childhood Poverty Initiative, GBBF partners with the TN Departments of Children’s Services, Human Services, Health, and Education to expand statewide enrollment in Tennessee’s Imagination Library and to promote adult engagement in reading with children from birth as the first step to increasing literacy rates.

Our partnerships with the TN Department of Children’s Services and the Verizon Foundation allow every age-eligible child in foster care to be enrolled into Tennessee’s Imagination Library. This collaboration helps children in foster care find comfort in the consistent gift of books to call their own.

Our partnership with the TN Department of Human Services gives parents the opportunity to enroll their child into Tennessee’s Imagination Library at more than 130 offices across the state.

Every child in foster care in TN is enrolled.

During FY17, 13,212 children were enrolled through the DHS partnership.
Working Together for a Shared Goal:
75% of Tennessee’s third-graders proficient in reading by 2025.

TN Department of Health, Welcome Baby Initiative

Through our partnership with the TN Department of Health’s Welcome Baby program, each newborn family is mailed a welcome letter signed by Governor and First Lady Haslam that includes our enrollment brochure.

During FY17
7,245 children were enrolled through the Welcome Baby partnership.

“Recognizing the foundational connections between early language exposure, brain development and subsequent neurodevelopmental outcomes, TN Department of Health is pleased to continue partnering with Governor’s Books from Birth Foundation...to assure that all families in Tennessee have access to books and the support needed to provide crucial early language exposure to their infants.”

Dr. Michael Warren, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Health & Wellness, Tennessee Department of Health

Birthing Hospital Initiative

The Birthing Hospital Initiative is a partnership between GBBF, county Imagination Library programs, and local birthing hospitals, giving parents the opportunity to enroll their newborn into Tennessee’s Imagination Library and receive the first book before ever leaving the hospital. Twelve birthing hospitals are currently participating, potentially reaching more than 17,000 newborns per year with this program.
Not only does Haywood County Reading Railroad supply Imagination Library books, we also help parents, grandparents, and the entire community understand the incredible value of early read-aloud efforts in the home. What excites me is...the potential to stimulate family literacy behaviors, thus influencing lives throughout future generations.

Jerilyn, Haywood County IL Coordinator
ENGAGING THE STATEWIDE COMMUNITY

Imagination Library Week
#GotCaughtReading Sept. 18-24, 2016

GBBF launched the #GotCaughtReading statewide social media challenge, encouraging every Tennessean to “Get Caught Reading” an Imagination Library book on social media, raising awareness of early literacy and the joy of sharing books with children. Governor Bill Haslam and First Lady Crissy Haslam launched the challenge by posting photos of themselves reading to their grandchildren.
During the week of Valentine’s Day, Feb. 13-17, GBBF asked social media friends to help spread the love of reading by sharing photos of their favorite books. Participants raised awareness of the joy of reading and books with both childhood stories and more recent favorites, using the hashtags #LoveLiteracyLearn #TNImaginationLibrary #TNImaginationLove.

GBBF partnered with KidCentralTN and the TN Department of Education to release a reading engagement video for adults and families. This video highlights the importance of reading with children of all ages and provides easy tips for family engagement with books. Resources like this can be accessed at governorsfoundation.org.

#LoveLiteracyLearn

GBBF

Building Thinkers:
The 4 E’s for Excellent Reading

654
users engaged with, clicked through or shared something associated with our Facebook page (average is around 200 engaged users per week).

200
likes on our Instagram post!

58,383
unique users reached on Facebook (average is 8,000-10,000)

GBBF partnered with KidCentralTN and the TN Department of Education to release a reading engagement video for adults and families. This video highlights the importance of reading with children of all ages and provides easy tips for family engagement with books. Resources like this can be accessed at governorsfoundation.org.
Nissan North America extended its commitment to early childhood literacy with a grant to GBBF, supporting Imagination Library programs in Middle Tennessee. Nissan has invested over $1 million in GBBF's efforts since 2005.

Nissan presented this check to GBBF during a reading event with First Lady Crissy Haslam at Casa Azafran Early Learning Center in Nashville, Tenn.

To honor Verizon's continued commitment to this enrollment initiative, Governor and First Lady Haslam read to a group of foster children at the Nashville Public Library downtown.

GBBF celebrated its partnership with the Verizon Foundation and the TN Department of Children’s Services, enrolling every age-eligible child in Tennessee’s foster care program into Tennessee’s Imagination Library. Since 2011, this initiative has provided over 162,000 books to children in foster care.
First Lady Crissy Haslam and GBBF President Theresa Carl participated in a Rhea County gala event chaired by GBBF Advisory Council member Laura Travis and the “Strong Women of Rhea County” on the Rhea County Courthouse lawn.

GBBF was given the opportunity to tell the story of Tennessee’s Imagination Library in a 30 minute episode of the Our Nashville television series. The series was launched by NECAT in 2016 to honor local nonprofits and inform the public on community services. NECAT’s Super Crew of high school students filmed interviews with First Lady Crissy Haslam, local volunteers, and GBBF staff at the Executive Residence Easter Egg Roll to create the final episode.


**Grassroots Work of the Volunteer State**

- **3** county programs are sponsored by Human Resource Agencies.
- **9** county programs are sponsored by United Ways.
- **4** county programs are sponsored by Rotary Clubs.
- **12** county programs are sponsored by TN libraries or Friends of the Library groups.
- **5** Tennessee state departments currently partner with GBBF to enroll and/or raise awareness of TN’s Imagination Library.
- **13** county programs are sponsored by Education Foundations.
- **99** county visits were made across TN during FY17.
- **60** counties were visited during FY17.
- **2,830** phone calls were made assisting TN families and volunteers.
- **708** volunteers are helping TN’s Imagination Library.
- **46** teenagers are serving as GBBF’s League of Extraordinary Teens to volunteer in their community.
- **$** 49.5% of programs receive some sort of city or county funding.
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*If we want to open doorways to the world of opportunity, all children should have access to quality books in their homes. The Governor’s Books from Birth Foundation is helping create beautiful home libraries for children across the state.*

Denine Torr, Senior Director of Community Initiatives, Dollar General

**21** county programs were awarded GBBF Assistance Grants through support from Dollar General Literacy Foundation to further assist with growing book bill costs and/or to host a community event or special fundraising project. Dollar General Literacy Foundation has invested over $1 million in Tennessee’s Imagination Library to provide assistance to county programs.
Thank you statewide partners!

BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation
Delta Dental of Tennessee
Dollar General Literacy Foundation
Nissan North America, Inc.

Amazon
Verizon Foundation

Supporting early childhood education helps children develop skills for future success, which in turn correlates with better health in adulthood, so we’re proud to help bring books to every Tennessee child.”

Roy Vaughn, Senior Vice President and Chief Communications Officer, BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation

Enterprise Holdings of Tennessee received the 2016 Jack Taylor Founding Values Award from its corporate headquarters, selecting GBBF as the nonprofit beneficiary of the gift.
Amazon is proud to partner with GBBF to provide books for Tennessee’s children. Books are the groundwork for early literacy and educational success for the communities where our employees live and work, building a stronger workforce and economy for the future.”
Sanjay Shah, Amazon Vice President, North America Customer Fulfillment

19 county IL programs were awarded Delta Dental of Tennessee “Bigger Smiles Awards” to assist with rapidly growing book bill costs due to high-volume enrollment. Delta Dental of Tennessee has invested in Tennessee’s Imagination Library since the statewide program began in 2004.

Governor’s Books from Birth Foundation is about more than simply giving books away. It has a proven track record of making an impact on the literacy level of young Tennesseans and helping them be ready for school by kindergarten as well as helping them excel in school. Children across the state have a stronger foundation and are ready for reading and learning thanks to the great efforts of the GBBF.

Dr. Philip A. Wenk, President and CEO, Delta Dental of Tennessee
ADVISORY COUNCIL

Calvin Anderson, Former Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs and Chief of Staff, BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation

Mayor Jake Bynum, Weakley County

Mark Cate, President and Principal, Stones River Group

Dr. Nancy Dishner, President and CEO, Niswonger Foundation

Rachel Lundeen Gatlin, Chief of Staff, Office of the First Lady

Judge Brandon O. Gibson, Judge, Tennessee Court of Appeals

Donna Noland, First Lady, East Tennessee State University

Dr. Shirley Raines, President Emeritus, University of Memphis

Vicki Smith, Senior Manager of Corporate Social Responsibility, Nissan North America Inc

Denine Torr, Senior Director of Community Initiatives, Dollar General

Byron Trauger, Partner, Trauger & Tuke

Laura Travis, Associate Agent, Ron Travis Agency

Dr. Michael D. Warren, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Health & Wellness at Tennessee Department of Health

Dr. Phil Wenk, President and CEO, Delta Dental of Tennessee

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My son, Chase, had impaired hearing as a baby. Because he couldn’t hear, he didn’t learn to talk. Using Sassy Baby’s First Words, we worked on words by sounding them out while pointing at the pictures. Chase learned how to ask for milk! He still reads his Sassy book every night.”

Seba, Knox County parent