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May 21, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

It is my pleasure to introduce you to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, the world's pre-eminent early childhood book-gifting program. As a physician, I believe that education is an important pathway for better health for individuals and the community. Also, I believe that literacy is an issue that healthcare providers should address. My partners at Monticello Medical Clinic and I are actively promoting childhood literacy in the Arkansas Delta through Southeast Arkansas Imagination Library (SAIL), a nonprofit organization we established that partners with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. SAIL serves as the local Imagination Library affiliate for a four-county area that includes Cleveland, Desha, Drew, and Lincoln Counties.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library provides free, high-quality, age-appropriate books to children from birth to age five. Books are mailed to the child's home every month until the child's fifth birthday. If a child is enrolled in the program at birth, he or she will receive 60 books for his or her home library. The data shows that this program helps foster a love of reading in children and decreases delays in reading, writing, and speech.

Children benefit more from Imagination Library when they are enrolled in the program at a young age. With this information, I partnered with our local hospital, which provides obstetrical services, to register children at birth. Our nurses have integrated a simple, half-page Imagination Library registration form into the hospital's newborn admission/dismissal process. As a result, our community has been able to enroll a high percentage of children since Imagination Library launched here in 2018. Also, I have enlisted the help of all local daycare programs, HIPPI and Head Start programs, and local preschools and school systems to register children. Every eligible child that comes through our clinics is encouraged to enroll. Both parents and children are extremely happy with the program and its benefits to families.

I strongly encourage other physicians, nurse practitioners, physician's assistants, clinics, and hospitals to participate in their local Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program. That partnership could include encouraging parents to enroll their children and/or financial support of the program. For only \$25 per child per year, each child receives 12 books of his own (one book per month). Each book is addressed to the child, which makes the books special.

If you wish to learn more about Imagination Library, please contact me at (870) 723-4513. For additional information, you can also visit arkansasimaginationlibrary.org and contact your local Imagination Library affiliate. Thank you for your interest in this valuable program.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Simon, M.D.
Founder, Southeast Arkansas Imagination Library

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