

First Steps Thanks Sponsors of Imagination Library Program

Albert Einstein said "If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales." Research shows that young children whose parents read to them daily have been exposed to at least 290,000 more words by the time they enter kindergarten than kids who aren't read to regularly. And depending on how much daily reading time kids get, that number can go up to over a million words. All that exposure makes it easier for kids to expand their vocabularies and understand the variety of texts they'll need to read as they get older, both inside school and out.

Since 2005, Edgefield County First Steps has partnered with the Dollywood Foundation to get books into the homes of young children. Candi Lalonde, Executive Director of Edgefield County First Steps, states "By putting quality books in the homes of our youngest children, we are helping them start on their way to school readiness and success. We can continue to provide this program in our community through the tremendous support of many businesses, groups, organizations, and individuals." Since January 2005, over 43,000 books have been mailed to Edgefield County children.

The Imagination Library is the creation of country music star Dolly Parton and was started in her home town of Sevier County, Tennessee in 1996. The Dollywood Foundation provides free books to all preschoolers in Sevier County. In 1999, Dolly announced she would extend the opportunity to communities nationally to replicate the Imagination Library in their own area. Each community must financially support the effort, but the foundation provides technical assistance, assists with public relations and marketing materials, and coordinates the ordering and mailing of the books.

The program itself is quite simple. Children who are registered for the program are Edgefield County residents and receive a book a month until their 5th birthday. There is no cost to the family, and the books are mailed directly to the children at their homes. Edgefield County First Steps actively raises money through donations from individuals, groups, organizations, and businesses (these are referred to as "sponsors"). Over \$4,500 was raised last year.

This year's goal is set at \$3,500, and the fundraising campaign has begun. All money raised goes directly for books. If you would like to sponsor a child this year, it only costs \$30 for one child to receive 12 books. Donations are accepted throughout the year. All donations are tax deductible, and checks should be made payable to Edgefield County First Steps. The mailing address is P.O. Box 295, Edgefield, SC, 29824. To sponsor a child, or for more information, please contact Candi Lalonde at candi@edgefieldfirststeps.org or 803-275-0800. You can also go to our website (www.edgefieldfirststeps.org) to donate directly.

Edgefield County First Steps wants to thank the generous sponsors in this edition of the Edgefield Advertiser for their commitment to the education of the children of Edgefield County in 2025.

Edgefield County First Steps Imagination Library Sponsors 2025

1 Child

Kay and Dean Campbell
 Leonard Lalonde
 Mary S. Ryans
 Doug and Connie Sutton
 Pendarvis Chevrolet Company Inc.
 Dr. Sharon Wall
 Reel Insurance Agency, Inc. Lily H. Watson
 In Memory of Jeff Lalonde by Candi and Peyton
 Lynn Melton
 In Memory of Jeff Lalonde by Bridget Clark
 Albert Talbert
 Jenny Banner
 Debra Aston
 Jim and Connie Harling
 Sandi Padgett
 Philip and Gayle Dorn
 Sandra and Tommy Grandy
 In Memory of Michelle Smith by Reece Lowe
 In Memory of Linda Smith by Gail Jackson
 In Memory of Michelle Smith by Bridget Clark

3 Children

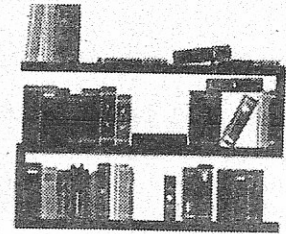
Town of Trenton
 Pastor Wendie Burton
 Dr. Gosney for Abby, Hannah, and Laura
 Jack and Sandra Reece
 Chris and Linda Clancy
 Ruth A. Day
 Sam and Faye Speight
 Andy and Becky Turner
 In Memory of Jeff Lalonde by Doug and Betsy Painter
 In Honor of Mary Faith Watson by the Friends of the Edgefield County Library

Other

United Way of Edgefield
 Anonymous
 Becky Turner - In Honor of my Six Great-Grandsons
 Debby Triplett - In Honor of my Six Grandchildren
 Evelyn B. Wainscott
 Lynn Bowie - In Honor and Memory of cherished friends
 Moorecraft Cabinet Co., Inc.

2 Children

Roger Lamb and Betty Rhoden
 Leisa and Tom Long
 Sandy and Jen Backensto
 Jayne and George Rainsford
 Bobby and Carla Dorn
 Rob and Susan Keck
 Jean M. Walker
 Helen and Lovick Mims
 Danny and Tina Knight in Honor of our Grandchildren Helen
 and Billy Padgett
 In Memory of Jeff Lalonde by Thomas and Gaye Holmes
 Dean and Margaret Childress
 In Memory of Jeff Lalonde by David and Heather Trotter
 Betsy and Jim Martin
 In honor of my grandchildren Mavis Reeves and Annie Kay
 Seigler by Honey
 In Memory of Bobby Burton by Denny and Bridget Clark
 In Memory of Linda Smith by Jill Jolly
 In Memory of Gue Keenan by Bridget and Denny Clark



4 Children

Ed and Liz Posey
 Jill Jolly
 Mary Allison and John Pettigrew
 Bobby and Millicent Peeler
 Richard B. Alexander in Honor of my
 4 children - Fred C. Alexander III,
 Elizabeth A. Spencer, Richard B. Alex-
 ander, Jr., and Louise B.A. Vaughn



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 \$180.00
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 \$350.00

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