



MEDIA RELEASE

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library is celebrating a major milestone with the distribution of its 10,000th book to children in the Glenelg Shire.

Now United Way Glenelg, which coordinates the local program along with major partner Portland Aluminium, is calling for support so it can expand to more children.

There are 527 children registered in the program with another 70 on the waiting list.

United Way Glenelg Executive Officer Nicole Angelino said the Dolly Parton Imagination Library (DPIL) was building a life-long love of books among local children and she hoped all those wanting to share the joy of reading would have the opportunity.

“We encourage families who have benefited from the program, and who are in a financial position to do so, to pay it forward by considering sponsoring another child to join,” Ms Angelino said.

“We will be writing to every family currently receiving books to consider this as an option,” she said.

“It only costs \$6.50 per month to sponsor a child so we can get more books into the community and to the children who are waiting.”

The program started in September 2013 and delivers age-appropriate books for free to local families. The DPIL has a partnership with Penguin Books and can access titles normally worth \$18-\$25 and deliver them to homes every month for \$6.50.

The books are available from birth to five years.

Ms Angelino said the community had embraced the program which would have long-term literacy benefits for the area.

“To get to 10,000 books is a significant milestone for the community which has been achieved with the assistance of our major partner Portland Aluminium; PA took a chance on us and believed in the benefits of the program. Other supporters include the Andrew Jack Charitable Trust, Rotary Club of Portland, Portland Bay and Casterton, Portland North Primary School, Heywood and District Secondary College, Brian & Jan Linker Leather, Portland Girl Guides, Kathleen Milliken Centre and individuals who are supporting the DPIL through the Workplace Giving Program,” she said.

Peter Chellis, Plant Manager of Portland Aluminium, the major sponsor of the program, said both personally and professionally he has a passion for seeing educational opportunities provided to the younger generation.

“Portland Aluminium has been instrumental in partnering with community groups to develop and deliver programs to children and students aged from birth to 17 in the Glenelg Shire to enhance their learning abilities”, he said.

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library is one partnership he and his team at the smelter are very proud of and very passionate about, however, it is one that he worries about in terms of its sustainability.

“The Dolly Parton Imagination Library is fundamental to the future of our youngest generation, the statistics don’t lie. However this program needs to be embraced by the community in order for it to be sustainable, I urge every corporation, every business, every organisation and every individual to become a sponsor to this program so it can continue well into the future.”

The program is targeted at vulnerable families but is open to everyone.

Ms Angelino said there was overwhelmingly positive feedback from parents and children about the program.

“It’s very heartening to hear how children look forward to receiving their monthly book and the enjoyment and benefits they receive,” she said.

“The *Dolly Parton Imagination Library* works to improve early literacy by empowering parents and ensuring the entire community works together to support and encourage our youngest residents to foster a lifetime love of learning,” she said.

Businesses, clubs and community members can contact Ms Angelino on 0410513305, email mail@unitedwayglenelg.com.au or go to our website unitedwayglenelg.com.au to donate.

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