

MEDIA RELEASE

A local child to have a virtual visit with Dolly Parton thanks to a golden bookmark.

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Willow finds Golden Bookmark from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Willow, the youngest among seven siblings, was recently honoured with locating a rare golden bookmark in recognition of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program's extraordinary feat of distributing 200 million books.

This milestone not only brings joy to Willow but also presents a unique opportunity for her to meet Dolly herself. Additionally, in honour of this milestone, a generous donation of \$2,000 will be made to United Way Glenelg, which diligently coordinates the Imagination Library program in the Glenelg Shire community.

Willow's journey with the Imagination Library began a decade ago when her mum Shannon enrolled her son Locklan, now aged 13 in the program.

In recent times, Willow has faced health challenges which causes her to miss a significant portion of her kindergarten experience. The books from the Imagination Library have played a crucial role in keeping Willow connected and engaged with the world of stories and imagination.

Her father, who was diagnosed with dyslexia at an early age, has also benefited from the books in more ways than one. By reading them with Willow, he has witnessed significant improvements in his own reading and writing skills, making the Imagination Library an invaluable resource for the entire family.

"The importance of early literacy for all children cannot be overstated. It's not only about learning to read but also about fostering a lifelong love for books and knowledge," said Nicole Carr, Executive Officer of United Way Glenelg.

"Willow's story is a beautiful example of how access to books and the joy of reading can make a profound difference in a child's life."

The excitement generated by the monthly book deliveries is palpable in Willow's household. The local postie has gone above and beyond by personally delivering the books to Willow, eager to witness her infectious joy upon receiving the gift of a new book.

This golden bookmark, symbolising the delivery of 200 million books, marks a significant milestone in the Imagination Library's history. Willow's story is a testament to the positive impact of this program on children's lives and the remarkable commitment of United Way Glenelg to fostering a love of reading in the community.

Willow's grandmother is an avid Dolly Parton fan, so there is tremendous excitement in the household about the upcoming virtual visit!

"We can't believe we received the golden bookmark!" said Shannon Board, Willows mum.

"When the postie delivered the book via registered post, we found it a bit unusual. Even as we opened it, the realisation of what we had won still hadn't fully sunk in."

"When we shared the news with Willow that she was going to meet Dolly, she immediately went to her wardrobe to find an outfit that resembled Dolly's."

"The books have been incredible for our family. We enjoy sharing them with our extended family and friends as well."

Willow and her family will have a virtual visit with Dolly, a personalised signed letter from Dolly, an autographed photo from Dolly, and four Dollywood Theme Park tickets. The Dollywood Foundation will also donate \$2,000 on behalf of Willow to United Way Glenelg as a thank you to whom Dolly calls, the true heroes of her program.

The virtual visit is scheduled for November.

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 has gifted over 200 million free books in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and The Republic of Ireland. The Imagination Library mails more than 2.6 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 is active in the Glenelg shire, through a partnership with United Way Glenelg & Portland Aluminium.

About United Way Glenelg:

United Way Glenelg is a nonprofit organisation dedicated to improving health, education, and financial outcomes for all individuals in the Glenelg Shire area. They coordinate various programs, including Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, to make a positive impact on the community.

For media inquiries or more information about Dolly Parton's Imagination Library please contact:

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