

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

SANILAC IMAGINATION LIBRARY ANNOUNCES PROGRAM PAUSE, CELEBRATES IMPACT

The Sanilac County Community Foundation is announcing that the Sanilac Imagination Library will be placed on an indefinite pause. This decision was not made lightly. Since 2020, the Community Foundation has served as the local affiliate of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and worked alongside many partners to bring this program to families across Sanilac County. At current funding levels, and with the continued and greatly appreciated support from our local schools, we were fortunate to be able to provide this program through the April 2026 book delivery, which will be the final mailing families receive under the current program.

The annual cost to operate this program locally is nearly \$30,000, all of which must be raised and supported here in our community. While local schools and partners have contributed meaningfully each year, it is not sustainable for that responsibility to rest solely on those institutions. Long-term continuation would require a significantly funded endowment, likely in the range of several hundred thousand dollars, to ensure stability and long-term viability.

Since the start of the program here, the Sanilac County Community Foundation has been proud to serve as the local affiliate of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, delivering thousands of books each year to children across our county and helping foster a lifelong love of reading. The program came to life locally during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that children in Sanilac County had access to books even at a time when much of the world was shut down. Through this initiative, children from birth to age five received a free book each month at no cost to their families.

This effort has been made possible through strong community partnerships, including the financial support of the Great Start Collaborative, our local school districts, and many generous donors. Together, these partners have helped sustain and grow the program throughout Sanilac County.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to The Dollywood Foundation, which administers Dolly Parton's Imagination Library at the national level. Their work behind the scenes, including managing the program's software, coordinating book selection, and facilitating shipping, has been essential to making this program accessible and successful in communities like ours. While these national supports make the program possible, the cost of providing books to children in Sanilac County is funded locally through partners, donors, and the Community Foundation.

In recent years, the Community Foundation has relied more heavily on non-endowed fund reserves to continue operating the program locally. Built through past contributions from donors, these reserves allowed us to extend the program even as funding sources changed. We are truly grateful for the support that made this possible and for the opportunity it created for local children.

Since its launch in Sanilac County, the program has delivered **61,280 free books to local children**, placing physical books directly into the homes of families across our community. Those books remain on shelves, in bedrooms, and in living rooms throughout Sanilac County. Even as the program enters an indefinite pause, those stories will continue to be read and shared for years to come. Together, these books represent thousands of moments of learning, curiosity, and connection for young readers across our county.

The Community Foundation remains open to facilitating a future relaunch of the Imagination Library in Sanilac County if a sustainable funding partner or group of partners steps forward. We believe strongly in the value of this program and would welcome the opportunity to bring it back under the right conditions. We recognize that programs like this often evolve over time, and we remain encouraged by the possibility that future community interest or leadership could help shape a path forward.

In the meantime, we extend our sincere thanks to every donor, partner, school, and advocate who helped make this program possible. Because of your support, tens of thousands of books have reached children across our community, and that impact will continue well into the future.

For more information about the work of the Sanilac County Community Foundation, please visit www.SanilacFoundation.org or call (810) 648-3634.

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