

DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY HAS ARRIVED

Imagination Library Gives Free Books To Children Up To 5 Years Of Age



Dolly Parton believes that if you can read, you can do anything, dream anything, and be anything. Through her Imagination Library program, she wants to ensure all children have books at home, regardless of the environment in which they grow up. The United Way of Whitman County is proud to bring Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) to families in Whitman County. DPIL helps children become kindergarten ready by mailing one book

a month to enrolled children, at absolutely no cost to the family. This program is now available to all children from birth to age five in Whitman County.

"Having books available to young children improves their academic, social, and emotional development," says Eric Fejeran, Executive Director at United Way of Whitman County. "By providing free books to children under the age of five, we hope to increase the amount of time families spend reading together and further support our community's efforts to ensure all children are well prepared to succeed in school." Children cherish the personalized books they receive each month through DPIL. When parents and caregivers read to their children, it also exposes them to a larger, more diverse vocabulary and greater variety of sentence structures than just talking to them. Children develop concepts of print, alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness and improved memory--all essential skills leading to school readiness and future academic success.

Reading together is the single most important way to help children get ready to read. Parents can support their child's education and cognitive development by sharing books as part of

their everyday routine. Establishing these critical connections and communication pathways helps families prepare young children prior to entering school. Simple tasks such as looking at pictures in the books and reading aloud together not only supports the literacy growth, but also builds a special bond and supports a child's social and emotional development. According to the National Research Council, Most of the reading problems faced by today's adolescents and adults result from problems that might have been avoided or resolved in their early childhood years. The cost of providing this program is roughly \$25 per year per child. With support from Washington's Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), however, that \$25 will now be able to support two children for a year in the program.

To celebrate the launch of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Whitman County and Read Across America Day, UWWC held an in-person registration event at The Whitman County Library in Colfax on March 2nd. United Way staff and board members were available to answer questions about DPIL and enroll families in the program.

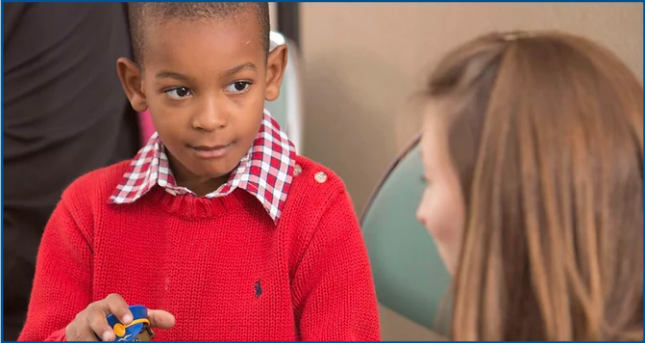
Families can register their children online at whitmanunited.org or by completing a paper registration form that can be found at Neill Public Library, Whitman County Libraries, or any of our additional enrollment champions

Meet Our New 2021-2022 Partners



Last June the United Way of Whitman County awarded Community Fund grants to five new partner agencies as part of our support of 16 local organizations. Highlights from two of our new partners – The Montessori School of Pullman and Hear our Stories – were featured in our Fall 2021 newsletter. Please read about our additional new partners, that represent our core areas of impact: Health, Education and Financial Stability.

When we think about health as being the state of physical, mental and social well-being, we may not see a humane society as a health-promoting organization. However, the Whitman County Humane Society (WCHS) represents those attributes perfectly. WCHS is not only dedicated to the welfare of animals, but to those of us for whom animals are an integral part of our own physical,



mental and social well-being. Also serving a significant public health role, WCHS offers an affordable Spay Neuter Assistance Program, as well as providing a Trap/Neuter/Return program to control feral cat colonies throughout the county.

Cultural enrichment and theatre arts education offered by the Regional Theatre of the Palouse (RTOP) reaches over 6,000 Whitman County residents. RTOP's performance and educational opportunities create a supportive environment for intercultural and intergenerational cooperation, and are designed with diversity and inclusivity in mind. Youth engaged in RTOP's programs also gain self-confidence and an enhanced sense self-worth. UWWC says BRAVO to our partnership with RTOP!



Financial stability is a basic principle that guides the work of Family Promise of the Palouse. Its services "empower homeless families with children to achieve sustainable independence leading to a more promising future." Last year they provided four Whitman County families with shelter, individualized case management, food, and love through their innovative rotational shelter model hosted by local congregations.

The United Way of Whitman County is proud to grant your generously donated gifts to support the work of not only our newest partners, but our entire family of 16 local organizations whose hard work and commitment helps to meet the needs of residents county-wide.

ALICE Needs Your Help!



This year we set our Community Fund goal quite high knowing that the need in our county is greater than ever. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the skyrocketing costs of paying for basic needs have been profoundly felt by folks throughout the county. Before 2020, 52% of Whitman County households were either unable to pay for their basic needs, or were literally just one paycheck away from having to choose to heat their home, buy groceries for the week, pick up a prescription for a sick child, or fill their tank

with gas. Over half of these families have at least one member who is working. The United Way uses the ALICE acronym to describe these families: Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed. Although the data for 2021 are not out yet, we know that the number of ALICE families in dire need in Whitman County has increased.

We are excited to report that we are more than half way to meeting our donation goal. We are reaching out to you to help us achieve our goal and make a lasting impact to ALICE families in Whitman County. Please give now using one of these easy donation pathways: (1) Mail a check using the pre-addressed envelope in this newsletter, (2) Go to www.whitmanunited.org now and donate online, or (3) Contribute through Washington Gives from April 19 – May 4 (be sure to search for United Way of Whitman County so that your gift comes to us)!

Thank YOU. We couldn't do this without you!

UWWC Gives \$110,000 In Grants To Our PARTNER AGENCIES In 2021

- Boost Collaborative
- Circles of Caring
- Community Childcare Center
- Council on Aging and Human Services
- Family Promise of the Palouse*
- Girl Scouts of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho
- Hear Our Stories*
- Palouse Habitat for Humanity
- Palouse River Counseling - Mental Health
- Palouse River Counseling - Substance Abuse
- Pullman Community Gardens at Koppel Farm
- Radio Free Moscow
- Regional Theatre of the Palouse*
- The Montessori School of Pullman*
- Whitman County Humane Society*
- YMCA of the Palouse

*First time partner



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- Wanda Terry
- Sandra Woodrow

Staff:

Eric Fejeran, Executive Director



EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENT:
Look inside and see who is
helping bring free books to
Whitman County!

BOARD MEMBER
SPOTLIGHT



Karissa Schlosser

Meet UWWC Board Member Karissa Schlosser. Karissa is going into her third year serving on the board. She works as an Executive Assistant at Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories. Karissa resides in Pullman, WA with her husband and 2-year-old son. She enjoys cooking, hiking Kamiak Butte and spending time with her family on the river. Karissa brings her project expertise to the board and serves on the wildfire relief committee, allocations committee, and as the Board Secretary.

MESSAGE from the PRESIDENT



Let’s Get This Done!

Two thousand twenty-two has been a fabulous year thus far—and it’s only April! I offer a heartfelt THANK YOU to our extraordinary Board of Directors, our dedicated community partners, and of course to you! I’m proud to report that we have raised \$108,000 toward our annual campaign goal of \$210,000. Your ongoing commitment to the United Way enables us to make a difference in the lives of Whitman County children, families and seniors by working to ensure that all Whitman County children 0-5 years old are ready for and able to succeed in school; bringing the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to Whitman County to put a book a month in the hands of every child from birth to 5 years old; granting funds to support the work of local organizations that provide meals to the food insecure, housing folks that need permanent and temporary shelter, educating children and youth, and counseling residents in crisis; and advocating for our ALICE families whose working in-

We Love Our Libraries! Thank You!



Whitman County Library Staff and United Way register children to the Imagination Library on March 2nd.

come is not sufficient to cover their rent, pay for safe childcare, or put nutritious meals on the table. Only together are we able to help our neighbors whose health, education and financial stability have been significantly affected by COVID, wildfire, and economic

hardship. I’ve made my pledge early this year. Please make yours today. On behalf of the Board of Directors, THANK YOU!
—Christine Oakley, President

MAKE YOUR PLEDGE TODAY

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Email _____
Phone _____
Pledge Amount \$ _____

- ☐ I’d like to make this a monthly pledge
- ☐ I am interested in volunteering with the United Way
- ☐ I am interested in becoming a Board Member

Build a better community by donating online and becoming a monthly donor. Visit whitmanunited.org or scan our QR code to get started.

Please return this pledge slip in a postage paid envelope to:
United Way of Whitman County
PO Box 426
Pullman, WA 99163

Give online at whitmanunited.org.

If you would prefer to receive this newsletter electronically please send a message to director@whitmanunited.org or give us a call at 509-339-4962.

