



*** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ***

Virginia to Fund 50% of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Charlottesville, Virginia (7/1/2022) – It's official! Virginia's budget, effective today, includes funding for 50% of the costs of [Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#). This support will encourage the establishment of Imagination Library affiliates statewide and make it possible for current affiliates to expand their reach immediately. The Imagination Library is a free book-gifting program of the Dollywood Foundation, established 27 years ago by entertainment icon Dolly Parton. Enrolled kids receive an age-appropriate book mailed to their home each month from birth until they turn five at no cost to their families.



QuickStart Tennis of Central Virginia (QCV) was an active proponent of childhood literacy before COVID hit and heightened efforts after COVID curtailed school tennis activities in early 2020. Lynda Harrill, QCV Founder and QuickStart Coordinator, researched the one county in the state with reading scores above 90% and learned that county had a chapter of the Imagination Library. She started calling and emailing the Department of Education in late 2020 and found an opportunity after the November 2021 election of current Governor Glenn Youngkin with his emphasis on education.

Harrill says, "It's hard to find the words to describe how I feel about the Virginia's stepping up to promote early childhood literacy. First, a big thank you goes to House of Delegates member Matt Fariss (59th District). I approached him last November about statewide funding and what it could mean for early childhood literacy in Virginia. He is very supportive of education, so he offered to help. He said he'd submit a Budget Amendment in January to have Virginia provide 50% funding. I sent him a draft Amendment containing facts and figures about the Imagination Library. He did a yeoman's job in championing the Amendment through the budget process.

"After almost six months of 'worrying' the Amendment, it became reality a few days ago when Governor Youngkin signed Virginia's biennial budget. It didn't seem real until I

received a phone call from the Budget Office in the Department of Education to discuss implementation and payment logistics. No time wasted by the state on this!

“The idea to get Virginia to fund part of the costs arose when I helped Jed Davies of the Heights Family Foundation start an Imagination Library chapter for Culpeper and Madison counties in early 2021. He had supported a chapter in the Cleveland, OH area for six years. The state of Ohio had approved 50% funding statewide, so he had freed up funds he wanted to redirect to the area where he grew up. I thought if Ohio can do it, why not Virginia?

“The Imagination Library and our [Racquets for Reading!!!](#) initiative together create a ‘reading pathway’ for kids from birth through kindergarten. Our goal is to build ‘home libraries’ for kids, improve school readiness, get all kindergartners to read at grade level by the end of kindergarten, foster a love of reading and ultimately improve the crucial third-grade reading scores in the state.

“We’ve helped start Imagination Library chapters in seven of the 14 counties in our service area that currently have established chapters, and we have two more in process. After that . . . only 12 more to go! Having statewide funding will be a game changer for kids in the rural, under-resourced communities we serve and for kids all over the state. Many thanks to Delegate Fariss and Governor Youngkin for making the Imagination Library a statewide reality in Virginia for 500,000+ kids under the age of five!”

Please visit our [website](#) to learn more about what QCV is doing to promote physical activity, healthy eating and early childhood literacy for kids in our service area.

***Want to be a great adult?
Play tennis! Read books! Eat healthy! Have FUN!!!
Be a QuickStart kid!***

QuickStart Tennis of Central Virginia is an all-volunteer, grassroots Community Tennis Association established in 2009 as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization to promote, develop and grow QuickStart Tennis in the heart of Virginia for all beginners, especially underserved youth, using the kid-sized QuickStart Tennis format. QCV’s service area includes, Amelia, Appomattox, Brunswick, Buckingham, Campbell, Charlotte, Culpeper, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Fluvanna, Franklin, Greene, Greensville, Halifax, Henry, Louisa, Lunenburg, Madison, Mecklenburg, Nelson, Nottoway, Orange, Patrick Pittsylvania, Prince Edward, Powhatan and Rappahannock counties and the cities of Charlottesville, Danville and Martinsville, plus under a special arrangement, King George County. We currently serve 214 schools with 101,000 kids, 15 parks & recreation departments, three Boys & Girls Clubs and two YMCAs, in 31 Virginia counties and independent cities. We have also gotten tennis into PE classes in 37 additional schools with 16,000 students in Virginia communities outside our service area.

Visit QCV at www.quickstartcentral.org and on [Facebook](#).

For additional information, contact quickstartcentral@comcast.net.



A racquet in every hand! A smile on every face!

