

HISD PRESS RELEASE

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to provide books to homes of thousands of HISD children

"Book a Month" program will provide books to nearly 5,000 families in eight HISD zip codes

Sept. 30, 2020 — The Houston Independent School District (HISD) is working with Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia, Books Between Kids, PNC Bank, St. James Place, and the Waltrip Family Foundation to bring Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to thousands of children in Houston.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book gifting program that provides free books to children from birth to age 5 in participating communities within the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and Ireland. Dolly Parton launched Imagination Library in 1995 to foster a love of reading among her home county's preschool children. Today, the program gifts over a million books to children around the world each month.

Part of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, the "Book a Month" program will provide young Houstonians with access to books by mailing one directly to their home each month until the child turns 5. Families who either reside or attend a school in the following zip codes can sign up to participate in the program: 77009, 77011, 77012, 77017, 77020, 77022, 77029, and 77087. The first book each child will receive via mail will be Dolly Parton's favorite—*The Little Engine That Could*.

"By delivering books to the homes of thousands of HISD families of each month, this program will provide children with a strong foundation of reading and literacy at an early age," HISD Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan said. "I want to thank each of our partners for their work to bring this tremendous program to our families."

Last year, Commissioner Garcia launched the Book a Month program in Baytown as part of his goal to improve education in Precinct 2. By introducing the Book a Month program to more locations across Greater Houston, hopefully more and more parents will prioritize reading to their kids to ensure they develop a lifelong love of reading from a very young age.

"My precinct has amongst the lowest education attainment rates in Harris County and I want to change that, which is why it was important for me to bring this program to Precinct 2 families and their children," Commissioner Garcia said. "Studies show the first five years of life are most crucial to a child's development, and from my own experience growing up, I know that establishing a lifetime love of reading helps in more ways than anyone can imagine."

The Book a Month program launched in Houston on Sept. 30, at Sherman Elementary School with a drive-through sign-up event for families. Families who attended the event and registered for the program received giveaway items, including learning resources provided by PNC Grow Up Great® and age-appropriate books from Books Between Kids.

“Books Between Kids is thrilled to be the local affiliate administering this program,” Books Between Kids Executive Director Jamie Grissom said. “The collaboration with our partners, along with funding support from PNC Bank, will allow us to reach some of the youngest learners in our community.”

“We know that children’s long-term success depends on their earliest learning experiences, most of which happen in the home with their caregivers,” PNC regional president for Houston Julie Sudduth said. “As a longtime champion of early childhood education, we are thrilled to be bringing the resources and network of the Book a Month program to more families and children in Greater Houston.”

Families residing or attending school in any of the eligible zip codes can sign up for the program at any time by visiting www.booksbetweenkids.org/bookamonth/ or calling 832-831-1402 ext. 806.

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About Books Between Kids

Books Between Kids is a non-profit agency established in Houston, Texas, in 2012 with a mission to provide books to economically disadvantaged children in Houston. It currently operates three programs to distribute books: book celebrations on the campuses of partner schools, community partner program distributions, and the Book A Month program. Books Between Kids has distributed over 1.7 million books to children since it was founded.

About PNC Bank

PNC Bank, National Association, is a member of The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. (NYSE: PNC). PNC is one of the largest diversified financial services institutions in the United States, organized around its customers and communities for strong relationships and local delivery of retail and business banking including a full range of lending products; specialized services for corporations and government entities, including corporate banking, real estate finance and asset-based lending; wealth management and asset management. For information about PNC, visit www.pnc.com.

About Harris County Commissioner for Precinct 2 Adrian Garcia

Commissioner Adrian Garcia leads Harris County Precinct 2, which encompasses nearly 560 square miles of east Harris County spanning from the back roads of Huffman to the bustling shops in Webster, the lucrative petrochemical plants in Baytown, and the unique small businesses of East Aldine.

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The Houston Independent School District is the largest school district in Texas and the seventh-largest in the United States, with 280 schools and more than 209,772 students. The 333-square-mile district is one of the largest employers in the Houston metropolitan area, with more than 27,000 employees.

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