



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IMAGINATION LIBRARY PROMOTES LITERACY IN FAYETTE

Uniontown, PA – When Mason Swenglish starts kindergarten at Menallen Elementary later this month, he'll feel right at home in the school's library.

Mason, 5, has been surrounded by books since before he was born, thanks to a special gift his mother, Courtney Swenglish, 29, of Uniontown received at her baby shower. The gift, given by her former teacher and lifelong friend, Nancy Dawson, was a subscription to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

Founded in 1995 in Parton's home state of Tennessee, the program sends new, age-appropriate books to children monthly, from birth through age 5.

Parton was inspired by her father's inability to read and write when creating Imagination Library. It's goal is to promote literacy early in life, as a way to foster a love of reading through adulthood.

An avid reader herself, Swenglish was able to add 60 unique books to Mason's ever-growing library over the years.

"Imagination Library made him love to read," Swenglish said. "We wait for those books to arrive every month, and when a new one gets here, he's so excited about it. It's something we look forward to, because we can read them together."

Communities in North America and the United Kingdom can sponsor children's program participation. In Fayette County, the Uniontown Public Library accepts donations and conducts fundraising efforts to sponsor all eligible children in the Uniontown Area School District, regardless of family income.

Founded by Nancy Decker and her late husband, Christopher Decker, several years ago, the Fayette County chapter has provided thousands of books for children since its inception.

"Each month has a different theme that fits the book," Swenglish said. "They're really good quality. Some are Caldecott Medal-winning books."

Swenglish and her husband, Zach, also have a 2-year-old daughter, Karleigh. What has become a family tradition of reading together is now being passed onto her.

"Imagination Library let them build their own little library at home, and now Karleigh loves reading just as much as Mason," she said. "Sometimes they read together, but she's still young, so the books she likes are different than his. We're moving through the collection one book at a time."

While Mason has read through all his Imagination Library books many times, he continues to reach for his favorite - "King Jack and the Dragon" by Peter Bently - over and over again.

“The program is perfect for kids, especially if you’re a parent who likes to read,” Swenglish said. “I subscribe as a gift for every baby shower I go to. It’s just great for quality time with your family.”

For more information on Imagination Library, call the Uniontown Library at 724-437-1165.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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