



FEBRUARY Newsletter



Legislature loves Dolly as much as we do!

If you've been reading our newsletters, you know we love Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. We love that kids ages birth to 5 get an age-appropriate book in the mail every month for just \$25 a year. We love that kids and parents have books to read together. We love the brain growth and language learning that come from those book-reading sessions. We love that kids who read from birth are much more successful in school.

Apparently, the Legislature agrees. The House passed a bill, HB2068, that would expand Dolly Parton's Imagination Library across the state and cover half the cost. It was sponsored by Reps. Monica Stonier (D-Vancouver) and Peter Abbamo (R-Centralia), who introduced the bill on Dolly Parton's 76th birthday. Now it has gone to the Senate for approval.

The bill would develop, promote, and sustain local Imagination Libraries across all areas of Washington. The United Way of the Pacific Northwest has hired an Executive Director of Washington Imagination Library Expansion, Brooke Fisher-Clark, housed under the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Her goal is to get DPIL running in all 39 counties and increase enrollment by 104,000 by this June and 150,000 by June 2023.

If you'd like to make an investment that will have a lifelong impact, [click here to donate](#) to DPIL in Clark, Skamania and Klickitat counties. If you know a child who could benefit from the excitement of a new, high-quality book every month, [click here to register](#).

With Gratitude,

Debbie Ham
Executive Director

Model child care project targets Central Vancouver

If you want to make change, go where the need is greatest. That's what SELF has done with the Southwest Washington Child Care Partnership (SWCCP). It aims to raise the availability of quality child care in Central Vancouver so that families and employers can rely on this stable infrastructure to increase livability, prosperity and economic vitality.

Why the Fourth Plain neighborhoods?

35% of children in Clark County and 51% of children in the Fourth Plain neighborhoods live in poverty.

35% of children in Clark County and 53-56% of children in the Fourth Plain neighborhoods are children of color.

Licensed child care availability in the 98661 zip code only meets 28% of the need. In 98663 it's only 52% of the need.

The Department of Commerce states that child care should be no more than 7% of a family's income. The average cost of child care in Clark County is \$9,293 a year.

Of the 34,841 children in Clark County, 5,158 live in the Fourth Plain corridor.

The project uses a community-led neighborhood organizing strategy to recruit and train future child care providers and support them in attaining their child care license and building a sustainable child care business.

How's it working? Ask participant Lucero. "They have taken me by the hand and guided me from the beginning, step by step, to get my child care license. They have connected me with people and organizations and resources, and they have given me the support and motivation that I need to complete the process. I am going to stop being an employee and become an employer."

Or ask Noemi. "I was part of SELF's project. Now I am working in an Early Learning Center as an assistant teacher. I am very grateful to SELF because they helped me get my ECE certificate so I could work as an assistant teacher."

The program has joined forces with 10 community partners to support the project and leverage resources. Vancouver Housing Authority conducted recruiting outreach. RiverMark Credit Union gave financial education. The SW Washington Contractors Association will help with small construction projects required to become licensed.

A shared services model will spread the costs of the business end of child care and deliver services more efficiently. Similar models in Spokane and Bellingham have provided the voice of experience.

And now SWCCP is a model program for other areas where a child care desert needs to become a child care oasis to help the neighborhood thrive.

Love working with kids? Make it a career!

If the perspective of a child brings joy to your heart, SELF can help you know that joy every day. We have a wide variety of job openings — early childhood education specialist, assistant cook, lead teacher, assistant teacher, bilingual, school age, Head Start, and many more.

Check out the entire list [at this link](#). That link also leads to an application.

**"Only where children gather is there
any real chance of fun."**

- Mignon McLaughlin, Journalist and Author

**Don't miss out on the fun!
Join the SELF team today!**

DONATE