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State partners with Dollywood Foundation on reading program

CHICAGO—Governor JB Pritzker on Tuesday was joined by Dollywood Foundation Executive Director Nora Briggs, United Way of McLean County President and CEO David Taylor, local officials, parents, and community members at the Bloomington Public Library for the statewide launch of Illinois' partnership with The Dollywood Foundation to provide Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

This book gifting program mails free, high-quality, and age-appropriate books to children from birth to age five, regardless of the family's income. Governor Pritzker's FY24 budget allocates \$1.6 million to the program to support early childhood learning in Illinois and instill lifelong reading practice.

"Today, I couldn't be prouder to announce that Illinois is beginning its journey to provide every child under the age of five an opportunity to sign up and have a free book delivered to their house every month," Pritzker said. "Research shows that early literacy makes a big difference for our youngest learners when it comes to developing language and social skills. It's one of the many reasons my administration allocated funding in FY24's historic budget to make this partnership possible—furthering our transformative early childhood education goals."

"I am so excited to announce that Illinois is expanding my Imagination Library statewide," said Dolly Parton. "Thank you to Governor JB Pritzker and all our local program partners across Illinois who worked so hard to make this dream a reality."

The Imagination Library Program is supported by The Dollywood Foundation, a nonprofit organization founded by Dolly Parton in 1988. Since launching in 1995, the Imagination Library has become the preeminent early



childhood book-gifting program in the world, with the mission of inspiring a love of reading in children from birth to age five.

Inspired by Dolly's father's inability to read, the Imagination Library Program was launched in her home county of Sevier County, Tennessee. The program's significant impact led to its international expansion and has gifted more than 220 million free books in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and The Republic of Ireland. On a monthly basis, the Imagination Library mails over 2.8 million books.

The program is currently active in areas across 40 counties in Illinois with more than 30,000 children currently receiving books and with this expansion, is expected to fully cover the entire state.

To ensure that all children can participate, new local program partners are needed, and existing Imagination Library programs are encouraged to grow capacity to register additional children.

Research has shown that the first five years of life are critical for young children, with around 90% of brain development occurring during those years. Daily readings by parents or caregivers provide the greatest opportunity to prepare their child for school, and literacy is a long term major social determinant of health and economic impact. Children receiving books through the Imagination Library see increased readiness for kindergarten and higher academic achievement.

To learn about becoming a local partner, contact Pam Hunsaker at Phunsaker@imaginationlibrary.com. To check if a program is available in your area, visit the 'find my program' page on www.imaginationlibrary.com. You can enroll your child or sign up to be notified when a program comes to your community.

Buy a chance to win \$500 Christmas Cash now!
Winning ticket will be drawn at the
CrossRoads "Taste of Chocolate" Fundraiser
December 10 - 2-4 p.m.
at Imagine, 102 N. Axtel St., Milford
Please support our program activities and our new building fund
Call 815-471-8757 for more info


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Obituaries

YATES - Timothy Yates, 65, of Hoopeston, passed away on Friday, December 1, 2023, in Hoopeston. Born on March 25, 1958, to Fred and Barbara Yates, Tim was the youngest of three siblings. He was a native of Chrisman, and graduated from Chrisman High School in the Class of 1976.



TIM YATES

Tim was a patriot and proud United States Army veteran. He earned his Green Beret in November 1982 and was assigned to the 5th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, NC. After his decorated military service concluded, he attended Southern Illinois University in Carbondale before joining the Vermilion County Probation and Court Services Department. He later transitioned to the Social Security Administration in Danville.

Tim was a fiercely devoted family man. He married Cyndi Christine on July 14, 1989. They made their home in Hoopeston with sons, Aaron, Elijah, and Silas. In retirement, he remained active in the veteran's community, regularly attended University of Illinois football games, and proudly supported his boys' diverse endeavors. He was a member of St. Anthony Catholic Church in Hoopeston.

Tim was preceded in death by his father, mother, and sister, Debbie Yates.

He leaves behind his wife, three sons, and sister, Andrea (Dana) Russett of Richmond Hill, GA. He will also be dearly missed by his father- and mother-in-law, Dave and Julie Christine, sisters-in-law, Rosellen Cornelius and Mary Tselepis, and his nephews and nieces, Wade and Craig Scrogham, Luke Russett, Katie and Will Tselepis, and David and Maya Cornelius.

— Briefly —

Addiction recovery group

Men's addiction recovery group meeting. 6 p.m. Sundays in Rossville. Call or text 217-304-4211 or 217-260-1361 for details.

Iroquois County Cantata to perform December 17, 22

Jessica Fehland, co-director of Iroquois County Christmas Cantata, is pleased to announce presentation dates for 2023 have been set.

There technically aren't any tickets: when you call 815-683-6381, you need to leave your name, number, choice of presentation time/date, and the number of seats you want to reserve. Presentation dates and times are 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 17; and 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 22. Presentations take place at First Christian Church, 546 N. Sixth, Watseka.

Though tickets/seating are free, it is asked a donation be made at the door. Seats are first-come, first-served. All monetary donations remaining after the costs of the presentations have been made will go to Prairie States Christmas Camp.

Fehland is also excited to announce Max Gooding is slated to play his saxophone as the cantata group sings "Silent Night."

Co-director of Iroquois County Christmas Cantata is Erik Parmenter.

The funeral mass will be held at 11:00 A.M. Friday December 15, 2023, at St. Anthony Catholic Church, 423 S. Third St. Hoopeston, IL, with Father Ignatius Mulenda officiating. Burial will follow in the Danville National Cemetery, 1900 E. Main St., Danville, IL. Military rites will be accorded by Danville American Legion Post 210.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Danville VA, Voluntary Service Office 135, 1900 E. Main St., Danville, IL 61832 or The Society of St. Vincent De Paul, 66 Progress Parkway, Maryland Heights MO, 63043-3706.

Please visit www.anderson-funeral-home.com to view Timothy's eternal tribute page and to send the family

Weather

Partly sunny today. High 56. Tonight, rain. Low 49. tomorrow, rain likely, mostly cloudy late. High 54, low 28. Sunday, partly sunny. High 35, low 21.

For real time Hoopeston weather, visit justthefacts.net/weather/.

Classifieds

HELP WANTED

Kitchen help needed at Fast Lanes. Some weekends. Apply in person at 719 W. Elm. No phone calls.

Full-Fill Industries in Henning is hiring for 2nd Production Machine Operators, \$18/hour. Apply at www.full-fill.com Applications available onsite. EOE

East Lynn Fertilizer is looking for a full-time custom applicator. Competitive Pay. Health Insurance & Retirement Plans. Apply in person at 41284 S Main St. East Lynn, IL.

Silgan Containers is hiring for Press Line Mechanics. Please apply online at silgancontainers.mua.hr department.com/hr/ats/Posting/view/13827

Silgan Containers is hiring an Electrician - Industrial/Maintenance Technician. Please apply online at: silgancontainers.mua.hr/ats/Posting/view/13392

Aquality Solutions is looking for men or women to deliver its products to area businesses and residential customers. This position offers benefits and incentive bonuses. Apply in person at 102 N 1st Street in Hoopeston or call us at 855-692-7824.

City of Hoopeston Police Department is taking applications for certified police officers/part time certification is recognized. Applications ongoing; no deadline applies for certified officers.

MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE

Hoopeston Awards has school jackets. 2 large and 1 XL men's jacket are on hand. Call 217-495-1037

condolences.

CAWTHON - Carol "Sue" (Longfellow) Cawthon, 89, of Hoopeston, died at 3:45 a.m. Tuesday, December 5, 2023, at Accolade Healthcare, Paxton. Visitation will be 10 a.m. until the 11 a.m. celebration of her life Monday at Blurton Funeral Home, Hoopeston. Burial will be in Rossville Cemetery. Memorials are suggested to HART, American Heart Association or American Diabetes Association. Condolences may be shared at www.blurotfnuneralhomes.com.

WHERE'S SANTA?

Look around our hometowns and sign up for a chance to

win gift cards or cash!

Drawing will be held

December 21!

10 lucky people will win!

Register in Rossville at

**Hometown Homespun
Rossville Family Restaurant**

and in Hoopeston at

**Treasured Roots
The Raining Moon Salon
Boxcar Books & Vinyl
Anna's Irish Teas & Gifts**

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