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**United Way
of Missoula County**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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United Way gives nearly 1,000 children’s books to nonprofits across Missoula, just in time for the holidays

Missoula –This month, United Way of Missoula County has given almost 1,000 new books to nine local nonprofits serving children. The books, meant for children five years old and younger, are part of United Way’s work with Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library.

As the local affiliate for Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, United Way of Missoula County provides for the shipping of about 3,000 books each month to young children in Missoula and Mineral counties. Each month a portion of those books are undeliverable (families move or are unable to get their mail), and through a partnership with the local Postmaster General, those books are returned to United Way.

“We are so grateful that our postal workers bring us those books,” says United Way CEO Susan Hay Patrick. “In some communities, undeliverable books are thrown away. In Missoula, we work hard to connect the books with the child who should have received them, contacting parents and facilitating pickups whenever we can.”

Books that cannot be delivered to the intended recipient are donated to local nonprofits serving young children. (Volunteers first remove the name/address label.) United Way staff and volunteers have distributed books to these organizations in December:

Partnership Health Center	Western Montana Clinic (two locations:
All Nations Health Center	Community and Providence)
Empower Place at the Missoula Food Bank &	University Congregational Church Preschool
Community Center	Reach Out and Read (operated out of
Meadowlark &YWCA Missoula	Community Medical Center)
Mountain Home Montana	CASA of Missoula

“Being able to provide books to help children right at this holiday time is amazing for our team,” says Patrick. “Our goal is to help young children learn to love books and reading.”

United Way of Missoula County brings people together to identify problems and craft creative, lasting solutions that change lives and build a stronger community for everyone. Visit MissoulaUnitedWay.org for more information.

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library is a book-gifting program that mails free, high-quality books to children from birth to age five, no matter their family’s income. After launching in 1995 in Parton’s home state of Tennessee, the program grew quickly. By 2003, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library had

mailed one million books. United Way of Missoula County has administered Imagination Library for children in Missoula and Mineral counties since 2015, delivering nearly 230,000 books to area children.

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