



United Way of
Cumberland County

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT INFORMATION:

United Way of Cumberland County
Scott Embry
Executive Director
910-438-1179 x 222
director@unitedway-cc.org

**United Way of Cumberland County Announces New Partnership
with Cape Fear Valley Health**

Fayetteville, N.C. (July 1, 2024) – United Way of Cumberland County is delighted to announce an exciting new extended partnership with Cape Fear Valley Health, effective July 2024. This partnership will enhance our efforts to promote early childhood literacy through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, operated in collaboration with Smart Start and Partnership for Children.

Currently, the Dolly Parton Imagination Library provides over 10,000 children in Cumberland County, aged 0-5, with a monthly book. Our collaboration with Cape Fear Valley Health, which has been instrumental in spreading awareness of this program, is now expanding to ensure that every newborn leaves the hospital with their first book, "The Little Engine That Could."

Key Features of the New Partnership:

- **First Book for Every Newborn:** Starting July 2024, every newborn at Cape Fear Valley Health will receive "The Little Engine That Could" before leaving the hospital.
- **Guided Enrollment:** Cape Fear Valley Health staff will assist parents with the enrollment process for the Imagination Library.

- more -

This initiative has the potential to set the 300-350 babies delivered at Cape Fear Valley Health each month on a path to success by fostering early literacy and a love of reading.

The Impact of Early Childhood Reading

Research, such as the study “When Children Are Not Read to at Home: The Million Word Gap” from the College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University, highlights the critical role of early literacy. The study found that children who are read to daily hear an estimated 78,000 words per year. Over five years, this translates to a cumulative 1.4 million more words compared to children who are never read to. This exposure is vital in bridging the Word Gap and fostering better educational outcomes.

About the Dolly Parton Imagination Library

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library provides free, age-appropriate books to children from birth to age five. By receiving a new book each month, children can enjoy exciting reading adventures that boost their early education. This initiative, funded at a cost of \$2.20 per child for books and mailing in Cumberland County, ensures every child has access to books regardless of their family's financial situation.

We are excited about this extended partnership with Cape Fear Valley and the positive impact it will have on the lives of children in our community. Our goal is to continue this partnership with Cape Fear Valley for the coming years, making ongoing improvements to better serve our community. Together, we are committed to creating a brighter future for the children of Cumberland County.

For more information about the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, please visit <https://www.unitedway-cc.org/what-we-do/initiatives/dolly-partons-imagination-library.html>.

###

United Way of Cumberland County

Our mission is to improve lives across Cumberland County by strategically raising and investing resources that successfully impact prioritized human service and health needs while working in effective and innovative partnerships with direct provider agencies. To learn more visit <https://www.unitedway-cc.org/>

About Cape Fear Valley Health System

Cape Fear Valley is a 1,000+ bed, 8-hospital regional health system, with more than 1

million inpatient and outpatient visits annually. A private not-for-profit organization with 7,400 employees and 1,300 providers on our medical staff, it includes Cape Fear Valley Medical Center, Highsmith-Rainey Specialty Hospital, Cape Fear Valley Rehabilitation Center, Behavioral Health Care, Bladen County Hospital, Hoke Hospital, Health Pavilion North, Health Pavilion Hoke and Harnett Health. For more information, visit www.CapeFearValley.com.