

## **Comments about the Effectiveness of the Imagination Library from Sedona Public Library Youth Services Librarian, Karen Mack**

Imagination Library in our Community:

The heart and soul of Youth Services at Sedona Public Library is in providing local families with easy and free access to children's books. As in all communities there are challenges. Many young families lack transportation or are not able to visit the public library during open hours. Many non-library users are worried about fines, many can't afford to buy books for their home or afford internet service and devices for eBooks. Some families are not comfortable in a public library setting for various reasons, and there are many young parents that are not aware of the research based benefits that are gained by reading to their children early and often.

The challenges are many, but because of Imagination Library our community is now more successful than ever in providing the early literacy skill building tools to all families and especially those families that can most benefit. The Imagination Library program gives every single child, regardless of circumstance, the epitome of easy and free access to children's books; they now are building their own mini home libraries with 24/7 access to books that have been expertly selected for being developmentally age appropriate, be they a newborn child, toddler or preschooler. The Imagination Library title selection is excellent and Sedona Public Library often has a copy of the same title available to borrow. But for a child to have their own collection of the very best books, always on hand ready to be read by their favorite person in the whole world? This is life changing.

Imagination Library has also empowered young parents. I see them embrace the Imagination Library concept and when that book arrives in the mail they immediately read it with zeal and are reminded that they are their child's first and best teacher. I have also seen strangers strike up meaningful conversations when Imagination Library is mentioned at a community event or after a Sedona Library story time. "Oh! We do that too. Our library is growing! What's your zip code? She's turning pages all by herself! Which book is her favorite? Can I sign up? Simon's last book was in English and Spanish!". And often I hear words of gratitude from young parents, thankful for living in a community that is caring and supportive. Thank you Rotary Club of Sedona for all that you have done for our community, and for your commitment to continue, and do more.

Following are five comments from Imagination Library participants written within the last few days. The first three responses from three Latino families have been translated to English.

- Parent - Ariana Millar Currero: "It's good to get a book once a month. It helps Arianna to read."
- Parent - Hector Flores: "Thanks for the books. They are happy and learning a lot."
- Parent - Alison Hernandez: "It is nice to receive your books every month for my daughter Ali. We are very happy because she learns a lot. Many thanks to all of you at Imagination Library."

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- Parent - Sarah Richardson: “My three year old loves getting his ‘present’ in the mail each month. When he sees the new book he says, “Mommy, take the paper off se we can read it.” Our favorite is *Sleep, Baby, Sleep*.
- Parent - Julia Marsh: “We really appreciate the free books that come to our home every month. My son opens the mail box in anticipation for the books. We read them nightly. As we read the books repeatedly, he identifies the words. This relationship that we build with the books in our home enriches his love for his books and love for words. We feel so grateful to be a part of the Imagination Library program. Thank you all for making a difference in the lives of so many young children.”