



GREAT START COLLABORATIVE

MIDLAND COUNTY

Midland County Parent Coalition Newsletter

January - March 2013

Agency Spotlight: Imagination Library

In January 2006 the Imagination Library was introduced in Midland County as a result of a partnering with Success by Six, the Midland County ESA and the United Way. It quickly became the primary major early childhood literacy initiative in Midland County and by the end of its first year over a quarter of all eligible children were enrolled. The program delivers an age appropriate new book to each enrolled child every month until their fifth birthday at no cost to the participant.

The program was created in Tennessee by famous actor/ musician Dolly Parton. It was Dolly's vision to put books in the hands of all children, regardless of income, eliminating any barriers that would bring books into the home. In order to be eligible the child must be between the ages of zero and five and be a resident of the county in which the program exists. Although Dolly created and funds the program in her own hometown in Tennessee, she does not fund programs in other counties. She does however, conduct the book mailings, pro-

vides a database for all participating counties, and offers technical assistance and support to counties launching their own program.

A panel of literary experts selects the books that are mailed each month. Children are broken into groups according to age and each book selection is appropriate for that age group. Babies under a year will receive board books, with bright colors and pictures, whereas children in the last age group will receive books with plot, setting, characters and teachable topics.

The program has been well-received in Midland County with many parents agreeing that the books have increased their child's interest in books, helped with vocabulary and speech development.

For more information or to enroll your child in the Imagination Library please call 989-631-5832x131 or visit us online at www.greatstartmidland.org

Family Friendly Business Award

Barnes & Noble has been awarded the Family Friendly Business Award by the Midland County Great Start Collaborative Parent Coalition. This award is given in recognition of Barnes & Noble's ongoing support of the community and specifically for being a business that is supportive of young families.

Barnes & Noble offers a story time for children on Wednesday at 11am and Monday at 7pm. Story times include a snack and often a craft. This exposure to books helps to instill a love of reading in our community's young children.

Barnes & Noble supports the Imagination Library, a program that provides free books to children under five, by hosting fundraisers and allowing promotion of the program during story times. When this nomination was brought forward to the Parent Coalition, other parents commented on Barnes & Noble's family friendly environment and support of young readers.

The Parent Coalition initiated this award as a means of recognizing businesses within Midland County that demonstrate dedication to service, quality and compassion for Midland County families as well as their support of the community as a whole. If you have a Midland County business that you would like to nominate for future recognition please send an email with your nomination to Amy Hovey, Midland County Great Start Parent Coalition, Parent Liaison at ahovey@mcesa.k12.mi.us or call 989-289-3286.



Why Should You Come to a *Great Start Parent Coalition Meeting*

- Opportunity to meet with other parents with similar concerns about the children of our community.
- Avenue to provide feedback to service providers regarding services needed by our families and children.
- Learn more about resources in the community and topics of interest to families.
- Opportunity to recognize businesses supportive of young families.

Join us at a Parent Coalition meeting and meet other parents in the community wanting to make a positive change for our children. Meetings include **free dinner and childcare**. Call Amy Hovey, Parent Liaison at 989-289-3286 for more information or to RSVP for a meeting.

2013 Meeting Dates

February 19th	March 19th	April 16th	May 21st
June 18th	August 20th	Sept 17th	October 15th



Like the Midland County Parent Coalition on Facebook and connect with important information and events for children in Midland County.

Ready for Kindergarten?

Recent legislation has changed the entry age for kindergarten. The entry age will be gradually changed to require children to be 5 years old by September 1st rather than the current cutoff date of December 1st. For the 2013 –14 school year a child must be at least 5 years of age on November 1, 2013. For the 2014-15 school year a child must be 5 years of age on October 1, 2014. For the 2015-16 school year a child must be 5 years of age by September 1, 2015.

If a child is not age eligible for kindergarten enrollment per the guidelines specified above, but will be five years old by December 1st, the child's parent or legal guardian can apply for a waiver to enroll their student in school. Parent or legal guardian retains the sole discretion to enroll their child in kindergarten through use of a waiver that must be submitted to the local school district. If you wish to sign a waiver it is imperative that you contact your local school district for waiver deadlines and more information on kindergarten enrollment.

Start Planning for Preschool Now!

February is time to plan for preschool. We are fortunate in that our community has many high quality preschools. Midland County's Quality Preschool Partnership consist of many area preschools providing state and federally funded preschool services. There are also many exceptional private, public, and faith based providers. For assistance in finding a preschool program that best meets the needs of your family please visit www.greatstarttoquality.org or call the Midland County Resource Center at 989-631-5890 ext. 232.

Family Friendly Snow Ideas

Build a snowman or an upside down snowman.

Cut large monster foot shapes out of cardboard and strap to your feet and make tracks in the snow.

Fill a spray bottle with water and food coloring. Use to paint the snow.

To cold for your children to play outside? Bring the snow in. Put snow in a shallow tub and let the kids build miniature snowmen in the warmth of your home



You can find a wealth of parent resources, a community calendar and register your child for Imagination Library at www.greatstartmidland.org.

Great Start Playgroups for Children ages birth thru six

*Come join us for Play-
group!
All families are welcome
any time.*

For Children 0-3 years old

**Mid Michigan Community
Action Agency**
West Midland Family Center
84 S. Alamando Rd. Midland
1st & 3rd Thursday
10:00am – 11:30 am

Contact: Kelly Miller 837-6659

Sanford Early Head Start
71 E. Saginaw Rd., Sanford
2nd & 4th Thursday
9:30 am – 11:00 am

Contact: Stefanie Shook 687-7055

Midland County ESA
3917 Jefferson Ave., Midland
Tuesdays
11:30 pm – 12:30 pm

For Children 0-6 years old

Midland County ESA
3917 Jefferson Ave. Midland
Wednesdays 6pm – 7:30 pm
Contact: Holly Karbowski
631-5892 ext. 131 or
Cindy Smerdon at
smerdone@gmail.com

Mondays 11:30 am – 12:30 pm
Contact:
Shawna Helminiak 687-7055

North Midland Family Center
2601 E. Shearer Rd. Midland
Fridays 10:00 am – 11:30 am
Contact: Becky Coker, 689-7770

Railway Family Center
991 E. Railway, Coleman
Tuesdays 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm
Contact:
Tracy Messing, 465-465-2079

For questions about
Great Start Playgroups
please contact Laurie Anderson
at 631-5892, ext 127