



FOR RELEASE
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Yukon Imagination Library to receive additional funding

WHITEHORSE—The Yukon government and the Rendezvous Rotary Club of Whitehorse are partnering to promote early reading and increase enrolment in the Yukon Imagination Library.

The Health and Social Services department will provide up to \$50,000 per year for five years to match funds raised by the Rendezvous Rotary Club for the Yukon Imagination Library, a family literacy initiative focusing on Yukon children from birth to five years of age. It provides a free, high-quality, age-appropriate book each month to children enrolled in the program.

"A child's development, from the prenatal period through the first few years of life, is strongly influenced by their experience within the family and the community—literacy is a strong pillar of this development," Health and Social Services Minister Doug Graham said. "The early years of a child's life have a profound impact on their future development, health and well-being. Our investment in the Yukon Imagination Library is a concrete example of our commitment to promoting child and family wellness."

The funding provided by the Department of Health and Social Services will allow for an expansion of enrolment in the program. Previously, enrolment was required before a child reached the age of twelve months. This change means that any child under the age of five years can now be enrolled.

"Literacy is a fundamental building block for learning. This program gives parents the tools to instill a love of reading in their children," said Rendezvous Rotary Club of Whitehorse member Claire Derome, who has been the driving force behind the Yukon Imagination Library. "Not only does the program help to increase children's interest in books, children enrolled enter kindergarten better prepared and ready to learn compared to those who do not receive books."

The Imagination Library originated in 1996, when singer and actor Dolly Parton began her efforts to address low literacy rates in her home state of Tennessee. Since then, the program has mailed nearly 40 million books to young children across the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

The Yukon Imagination Library has been operating in the territory since 2007. Currently, nearly 2,000 children across Yukon are enrolled in the program and 125 have graduated from the program. Yukon Imagination Library will distribute more than 14,000 books in 2013.

To learn more about how to get the most out of time spent reading with children, visit www.yukonwellness.ca/readingrocks.php. For more information about the Yukon Imagination Library, visit the Yukon Imagination Library Facebook page or www.yukonliteracy.ca/library.htm.

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