

# Imagination Library Kippax Case Study

## Milestones in the last 6 months include:

- ✔ Success in bringing Imagination Library to the ACT for the first time and securing funding to deliver the program (Imagination Library Kippax and Imagination Library Evatt Primary School).
- ✔ Over 250 vulnerable families (children aged 0-3 years) able to participate in the program across 6 Belconnen suburbs for a minimum of 2 years.

In March this year, a member of the Connections Working Group identified the opportunity offered by being involved with Village to leverage the collaboration that existed within the Working Group to support the delivery of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in the ACT. What resulted from this was a decision to pilot two programs. One delivered by Evatt Primary School for the Evatt and McKellar communities, and one coordinated by a collaboration of interested stakeholders, for the suburbs of Holt, MacGregor, Higgins and Latham. These suburbs feed into Kippax which is a central hub for services including Kippax Library, the West Belconnen Child & Family Centre and UnitingCare Kippax. Through the inspiration and advocacy of the Collective Implementation Group, they were able to secure funding to deliver the program.

Imagination Library<sup>5</sup> is a free book gifting program with the goal to inspire a love of reading in children. Each month, enrolled children receive a high-quality, age-appropriate book in the mail, free of charge. Children receive books from birth to age five. This opportunity aligns with the Early Childhood Strategy and Best Start for Canberra's Children<sup>6</sup>. It directly responds to improving the school readiness of children in Belconnen through increasing exposure to literacy in the home.

The funding secured for Imagination Library Kippax will enable 146 children (0-3 years) to access the program for two years. The roll-out, commencing in July, will involve programs or services that have existing connections with vulnerable families, including HIPPY, The Smith Family, EACH, CYPS and CRCS. Libraries ACT will be the local affiliate and will manage administration. The Kippax project will run alongside the Evatt Primary School's Imagination Library project, which will target families in Evatt and McKellar. The Evatt Primary School project recently received three years of funding through philanthropic partners.

The process to get Imagination Library from idea to implementation in less than six months demonstrates the strong engagement of a diverse range of stakeholders in the Village network and the degree of confidence and trust that they have in Village to commit to the initiative. Village brought together practitioners and policy people from across government Directorates and non-government organisations with philanthropists to develop a proposal and access resources. An implementation group has developed a delivery plan that will see organisations coordinate activities and resources that will wrap around and link services and programs with the families engaged in the program. The project will have shared monitoring and reporting.

The function and role of the Village Backbone team to make this project possible involved:

- ✔ Providing secretariat services and holding responsibility through the Memorandum of Agreement with United Way.
- ✔ Hosting the website and managing communications.
- ✔ Connecting and facilitating involvement across diverse stakeholders.

The Backbone team will continue to support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project and will facilitate ongoing conversations with future partners to connect the program into other literacy efforts in the ACT, for example the Look Who's Talking community of practice.