

9 to 5 Dolly Day

Southern Illinois to Shine Celebrating Dolly's Legacy



Southern Illinois communities will join others across the nation in celebrating **"9 to 5 Dolly Day" on September 25, 2026**, honoring the life, values, and legacy of the beloved Dolly Parton. Known worldwide for her music, philanthropy, and unwavering kindness, Dolly's impact extends far beyond the stage — especially through her Imagination Library, which has gifted millions of free books to children to spark a lifelong love of reading. In Southern Illinois, over 11,000 children have participated, receiving more than 160,000 books in just two years. Dolly encouraged us all to **"dream more, care more, learn more, and be more."**

This year's celebration will focus on Dolly's core values:

- Service to others
- Philanthropy and generosity
- Kindness and compassion
- The importance of early literacy



How to Celebrate Dolly Day in Southern Illinois

Individuals, libraries, schools, businesses, and community groups are encouraged to join in the celebration with activities that reflect Dolly's spirit and help raise funds for the Imagination Library. The goal is to raise enough funds to support enrollment in the library for 925 children at a cost of \$16 per child. Ideas include:

- Purchase specially designed Imagination Library T-shirts and wear them on Dolly Day- if ordered by September 14th, your business logo can be added on the back
- Dress Like Dolly: Wear your most colorful, sparkly, or country-inspired outfit to work or school.
- Read-a-Thon for a Cause: Host a reading challenge and collect pledges to support local Imagination Library programs.
- Library Story Hours: Feature Dolly's favorite children's books and songs for families.
- "Dine for Dolly" Nights: Restaurants can donate a portion of sales to the Imagination Library.
- Collect funds for the Imagination Library - collection boxes available from Read SI.
- Kindness Challenges: Encourage acts of kindness in workplaces, classrooms, and neighborhoods.
- Mayors can declare September 25th as Dolly Parton Appreciation Day in their communities

Celebrate Dolly in Your Own Way

Let Us Know how you are Celebrating so We Can Help Promote It!

Communities: Mayors can declare 9/25/26 “Dolly Parton Appreciation Day”.

Individuals: Read books with your children or family members, volunteer to read a story at the local library, school, or child care center, visit the local library or **sponsor children's enrollment in the Imagination Library, pledge \$9.25 per month for 12 months.**

Libraries: Host special reading celebrations or events, plan early childhood activities, show Dolly movies, play Dolly songs, plan crafts, organize games and activities, promote enrollment in the Imagination Library, and collect donations for sponsorship.

Restaurants: **Share 9.25% of gross proceeds for the day or collect donations** with a collection box throughout the week (Read SI can provide), promote enrollment, staff wears “Dolly approved” attire, Dolly themes, Dolly music, purchase Dolly t-shirts for staff. Launch a “round up for reading” campaign.

Chambers of Commerce: Make it a community event. Encourage member businesses to participate. **Challenge another Chamber** to raise more funds. Conduct a community-wide collection campaign the week before or officially launch it on September 25th for a specified number of days. Collection boxes available from Read SI.

Businesses: Donate or sponsor a fundraiser for the Imagination Library. Consider matching employee/customer contributions; this motivates more giving. Dress in Dolly's signature style – think rhinestone jewelry, floral patterns, or her iconic boots. Purchase Dolly Imagination Library shirts for their employees; **a \$925 donation brings Dolly to your business for pictures and participation in the “Where is Dolly” social media contest.**

Schools: Celebrate Dolly Day, talk/ plan activities about kindness and Dolly's sense of philanthropy and service, celebrate giving back to the community, conduct special reading/ literacy activities, conduct a fundraising activity for the Imagination Library. Play her songs, post her performances, or share her quotes and stories on social media. Many fans are posting tributes and memories in her honor. Staff can wear T-shirts.

Agencies/ Organizations: Come dressed in your best Dolly-inspired sparkle, and let's celebrate her the way she lived—with love, laughter, music, and a whole lot of heart. Sponsor a fundraising activity to support the Imagination Library.

[Register your event here](#)

Special Dolly Imagination Library T-shirts available!

<https://shopsilkworm.com/sicoalition>

Read SI can provide copies of enrollment forms, donation forms, and collection boxes. Email us at **readsi@sicf.org**