



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Jeremy A. Cooney

Senator Cooney Announces Funding for Imagination Library and Let's Get L.I.T.

JEREMY A. COONEY August 30, 2023

| ISSUE: **NYS SENATOR JEREMY COONEY, CHILDREN'S LITERACY, LITERACY; READING**



Senator Cooney poses with Dr. Mathew Present, Clianda Florence, and Jennifer Smathers

Senator Cooney Announces \$35,000 for Imagination Library and Let's Get L.I.T.

(ROCHESTER, NY) - Today, New York State Senator **Jeremy Cooney (D-Rochester)** announced state grant funding for two child literacy initiatives in the city.

The Rochester Imagination Library will receive \$10,000 in funding. A local chapter of “Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library,” the program mails a high quality, age appropriate book to all registered children at no cost to the child’s family until the child turns five. The grant will be used for a citywide marketing plan to educate the community about Imagination Library’s

free literacy programs, and how families can enroll a child. Families can enroll directly at RochesterImaginationLibrary.org.

Let's Get L.I.T. will receive \$25,000 in funding. The program looks to liberate the hearts and minds of children, parents, and stakeholders within the community through liberating texts that aid in reshaping their thinking, speaking, writing. Resources aid in the creation of home libraries to create "super readers," family reading time, and enhanced proficiency in math and reading while creating access to needed resources. The program also focuses on empowering parents by providing them with resources to help their children at home and teaching cursive writing, a skill that needs to be placed back within the New York State curriculum.

Funding was secured by Senator Cooney through the New York State budget process.

"Literacy is a deeply personal issue for me," said **Senator Jeremy Cooney**. "I was raised by an English Professor, with a special focus in children's literature, and I have not forgotten the importance of developing young readers for a future of academic success and lives enriched by reading. Both the Imagination Library and Let's Get L.I.T. are the "boots-on-the-ground" doing the critical work in our city. I am proud to have secured funding for each of them in the New York State budget, and look forward to the expansion of their positive impact in Rochester".

"The funding that Senator Cooney secured will help us expand dramatically, equipping more families in our community with the magic that a new book every month provides," said **Dr. Mathew Present**, Chapter Founder, Rochester Imagination Library. "Our outreach strategy includes a Spanish-language radio campaign on Poder 97 to drive enrollment among our Hispanic neighbors and a new set of tabling materials to sign families up at the many grassroots community events our volunteers attend each month. We're so grateful to have an elected representative who's championed our efforts from the very beginning."

"I am honored that Senator Cooney is investing in literacy and the Let's Get L.I.T.(Liberating Individuals Through Literary Texts) Program," said **Clianda Florence**, Founder & Executive Director. Let's Get L.I.T. Literacy is our greatest social justice issue of our time, 57% of Rochester residents over the age of 16 are only at the " Basic" level of literacy, which is equivalent to expectations for 6th graders (National Institute of Literacy, 2003)! When one is liberated through literacy they will have vast opportunities, learning will no longer be

difficult it will be fun and engaging. Together, we will work to reduce trepidation around literacy, the pipelines to poverty, criminality, dropout rates, prison, and disruptive behaviors within the halls of the schools and the community will be reduced. Let's Get L.I.T.

###