



Report to the Board of Trustees

April 10, 2024

From the Director

Read Across America day takes place on March 2, Dr. Seuss's birthday. And each year, the United Way of Greater New Haven coordinates volunteer readers at schools over the course of the following week. This year, both Nicolette and I volunteered to read to students at Murphy School. We were given 3 books donated by the United Way, and after reading to the classroom, we gave the books to the classroom to keep.



Katy and Nicolette visited Murphy School during Read Across America Day.

We held an inservice day on March 7, sponsored by the Friends of the Library. We had a live Zoom presenter, Michelle Mock from Collaborative Thinking Leadership Development, who led staff through a session on Leading with Emotional Intelligence. She got staff engaged while learning about leadership presence, strategies, managing triggers and developing personal practices. We then did a chair yoga session before walking the building as a group, learning about various "need to know" items in each area. I am grateful to the Friends for making this day possible, giving staff a great half-day to spend time learning and developing skills together.

for funding this new sound system, given in memory of Betsy Klarman.

Branford's Poet Laureate Judith K. Liebmann gave a reading from her book, Ekphrasis. Over 50 people came out to attend this wonderful event, and cookies from Branford High School Culinary Arts program were sponsored by the Friends. The poems Judith read were all inspired by pictures or physical objects, and her reading of them was powerful. BCTV was also on hand to film the event.

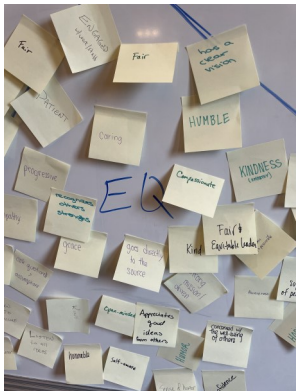
tend programs and easily use their North Branford library cards to check our materials out.

Janice, Kathy, and I presented our FY2025 budget to the Board of Finance on March 21st. Thanks to Michelle, Sue, and Larry for attending in support. We look forward to presenting our budget to the RTM Education Committee next.

Tina and I attended the Shoreline Chamber's Nonprofit Conference at Woodwinds. We attended sessions on grantwriting, using social media to secure donations, recruiting and engaging board members, and generational differences in giving. This was the first nonprofit conference held in 5 years, and we look forward to more opportunities to meet and engage with area nonprofits.

The North Branford Senior Center organized a trip to the Blackstone and I gave a tour to their attendees. They were so impressed with the building and its history, and excited to learn that they were welcome to visit anytime, and can at-

The final component of the new sound system was installed: a new wall rack to house all of the equipment. The old one was too small to fit the additional mixer that allows 4 microphones to be live at once, and now the new rack means a secure place for all pieces. Thank you to the Friends



(top) Qualities we appreciate in leaders we admire.

(below) Learning about Emotional Intelligence at our inservice day.



Branford's Poet Laureate, Judith K. Liebmann, reads to a packed and rapt audience.

— Katy McNicol

Highlights from the Youth Services Department—February

February was a month of exploration and discovery, starting with our Science Saturday event. This month, kids learned about how animals survive in the winter. Claudia from Cool-ology taught us about animals that migrate, hibernate, or adapt to the colder weather. Kids did an experiment comparing frozen water to frozen syrup to learn how glucose keeps frogs' blood from completely freezing. We also used paper materials, cotton balls, and tape to create a squirrel nest built to withstand the wind and rain, which were simulated using a spray bottle and hair dryer.

Animals were also a theme during the Stamford Museum & Nature Center's visit for a Books and Beasts program. Excerpts from books about various animals were enhanced with interactions with the animals themselves. Participants got to meet a gecko, painted turtle, red-eyed tree frog, snake, and ferret!

For our homeschool meetup this month, we were joined by local author Kimberly Behre Kenna, who led us in a writing workshop. Kimberly brought postcards depicting the National Parks, which the kids used as inspiration for their writing projects. They brainstormed questions about their images, using their curiosity to generate ideas about what might be happening in the postcard. They then used these questions as a starting point to begin to create a narrative about the image. Everyone appreciated the creativity



Children's enjoying some Valentine's Day slime!

and expertise that Kimberly brought to the hour!

We also had plenty of relaxing fun this month too! Nicolette hosted a Valentine's Day slime event, where children got to customize their slime with food coloring and heart shaped glitter. On Take Your Child to the Library Day, we set out our ever-popular button maker for kids and families to create buttons and celebrate all the library has to offer. Teens also got in on the fun with a Super Smash Bros Nintendo Switch tournament. The winner got to take home a bag of prizes as a celebration of their victory

We are so excited to welcome Laura to the Youth Services department. Laura is joining us as the Youth Services Programming Assistant and has previously worked at the Branford Early Learning Center and the Willoughby Wallace Library. She will be helping Nicolette with storytimes, continuing our outreach to the local preschools, and assisting with other programs in the department as needed. She's

already dived into outreach by attending STEM Night at Tisko Elementary this month, partnering with Becca at Willoughby Wallace to highlight all that the libraries have to offer.

I had the opportunity to attend a helpful professional development session this month through the Connecticut Library Association called Beyond Everyone is Welcome: Inclusion and Belonging at the Library. During the session the presenters shared the results of their interviews with teens about how they were treated in library spaces, highlighting the importance of creating a welcoming and equitable environment for all patrons.

Finally, we celebrated the Leap Year with our Take-N-Make this month. Children were given the supplies to create another thing that leaps, a frog! We are looking forward to all of the great events we have planned for the spring!

— Emily Yates



Local author Kimberly Behre Kenna teaching a writing workshop to the homeschool meetup group.



Teens competing in a Nintendo Switch tournament.

Highlights from the Reference Department—February

Jenna continues to offer some great programming for our patrons. In addition to our monthly support groups, poetry group, knitting group, Latin classes, tech help, Saturday Cinema, library tour, game night, writer’s group, Trivia nights, Awakening to Change discussion and Pilates, we had programs on New Haven pizza, hairstyling, a virtual program on the Stony Creek Quarry, a Poetry of Love reading with our new Poet Laureate, a violin/cello concert, an author talk, and a Land Trust lecture on moths.

Jordan has been working on updating and adding to our collection of brochures. Deb updated

the information for the genealogy brochure and Jordan and our intern, Kacie, updated the graphics and styling so that it looks like our other brochures. Jordan is also working on a new Library of Things brochure as well as a business one.

Christina hosted Game Night with Jared and Trivia Night with Angela, held five individual tech help appointments as well as a number of quick tech help sessions with patrons who stopped by the desk. She and Jordan will continue to host twice-monthly drop-in tech help sessions at the library and are returning to the Senior Center for monthly tech help days.

Stephanie is continuing her work with Jared on TikTok and we receive very positive comments from a wide range of patrons. She also maintains our obituary index, which now contains nearly 6,000 entries.

Everyone in the Reference department has been preparing for our new website by visiting many other library websites to help determine what we like and don’t like in a website and how we can improve ours to make it easier for patrons to navigate. We are working through all of the pages and posts on our current website so that we are ready for the migration once a web designer is chosen.

— Deborah Trofatter

Explore Your Family History


Branford Resources

- Cemetery Indexes & Surveys
- Census Records
- Church Histories
- Church Record Indexes
- City Directories
- Family Genealogies
- High School Yearbooks
- Land Record Indexes
- Maps
- Military Lists and Titles
- Newspapers (microfilm and some online)
 - Branford News*, 28 February 1878 – 9 August 1878
 - Branford Gleaner*, 28 February 1878 – 3 March 1880
 - Branford Opinion*, 4 January 1896 – 13 March 1913
 - Branford Review*, 13 April 1928 – 11 December 2008
- Photographs and Postcards
- Town Annual Reports
- Vital Record Indexes

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Local Titles

- Bells of Branford (Birbarie)
- Branford: A Commemorative Album
- Branford, Connecticut: A Survey of Architectural & Historic Resources (available online)
- Branford in the Beginning (Feld)
- Families of Ancient New Haven (Jacobus)
- History of New Haven County (Rockey)
- History of North Branford & Northford (Miller)
- History of the Colony of New Haren (Lambert)

A History of Totoket or Branford (Thompson)

It Happened in Branford (Frann)

A Modern History of New Haven & Eastern New Haven County (Hill)

Old Branford 1635 – 1935 (Carr)

The Origin & Naming of Branford’s Streets (Bouley)

Records & Tales of Old Branford (McKenzie)

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Local Titles with a Regional Twist


- Back Then (Indian Neck)
- A Brief History of Pawson Park from Early Times to 1916 (Indian Neck)
- Brief History of Pine Orchard
- A Brief History of Stony Creek
- A Brief History of the Thimble Islands
- Ecology of the Stony Creek Quarry Preserve
- Flesh and Stone: Stony Creek and the Age of Granite
- Hunting Grounds (Indian Neck)
- Nature & Character of Granite Bay (Short Beach)
- On the Ebb (Short Beach)
- The Pine Orchard Shore: A Brief History and a Glimpse at the Summer of 1916
- Ride Down Memory Lane: The Story of the Branford Trolley Museum
- Stony Creek in 1880
- Stony Creek Mapscrap Book
- A Stony Creek Miscellany
- Summer Island: A Century of History & Nostalgia

Online Resources

- American Ancestors
in-library use
- Ancestry Library Edition
in-library use
- Architectural & Historic Resources Survey
- Branford History Digital Scrapbooks
- CT Historical Newspapers
- Family Search
free from home, additional resources when in the library
- Godfrey Library
in-library use
- Hartford Courant (1764-1922)
- New Haven Journal-Courier (1894-1907)

Need help getting started? Stop by the Reference desk to ask for help or call 203-488-1441, ext. 318.

View Our Genealogy Resources at
<https://www.blackstonelibrary.org/local/genealogy> or scan the QR code.



The Reference Department offers a tri-fold brochure on the resources available to help research local and family history.



James Blackstone Memorial Library
758 Main Street
Branford, CT 06405

203.488.1441 | blackstonelibrary.org
reference@blackstonelibrary.org
facebook.com/blackstonelibrary
instagram.com/blackstone_library

Join our email list for more information about programs
www.blackstonelibrary.org

MUSEUM PASSES AT THE BLACKSTONE LIBRARY



Looking for a fun outing for the whole family? Check out our museum pass collection! Passes offering free or discounted admission to museums all across the state (and beyond!).

Reserve passes online and get many passes sent directly to your smartphone or print from home.

More info: blackstonelibrary.org/museum-passes

Passes have been generously provided by the Friends of the Blackstone Library and the Allan Louis Loeb Foundation.



April 2024 Program Highlights

Solar Eclipse Watch Party

Monday, April 8 @ 2:45–4 pm

On April 8, a total solar eclipse will cross North America, and Branford will have almost 90 percent visibility. Join us on the lawn for an all ages viewing party!

Celebrating (Inter)National Poetry Month: Voices from Around the World

Tuesday, April 9 @ 5:30–7:30 pm

Guest readers will share poems from various cultures read in their original language and in translation. Featuring poems in German, Korean, Hebrew, Spanish, and more!

Tech-Help-a-Thon Wednesday, April 10

@ 9am–5 pm

Need help with Microsoft Word or Excel? Curious about A.I.? Having trouble with your new device? Stop by the library for a drop-in tech help session!

Reversals, Red Herrings, & Twists

Thursday, April 11

@ 6:30–7:30 pm

A panel of crime writers discuss how to keep the reader guessing. Presented by Sisters in Crime CT.

Love My Library Day Saturday, April 13

@ 10 am–1 pm

Spend a day exploring everything the Blackstone has to offer. Tour the building, explore our Library of Things, contribute to our community puzzle, and more!

Branford Historical Society Presents: This Land is Our Land Wednesday, April 17 @ 6–7 pm

Join us as co-authors Lorraine Doyle, Joann Terry Nelson, and Denise Doyle Fincke share stories from their book *This Land is Our Land: The Lanphier Cove Association, A Remarkable Story*, talk about the Branford summer colony's 100 year history, and path to land ownership.

Ask a Medicare Specialist: Drop-in Event

Saturday, April 20

@ 9 am–5 pm

Are you new to Medicare, turning 65, or retiring soon? Stop

by the Rotunda to get all your Medicare questions answered by Medicare Specialist Theresa Borchetta. She'll be available throughout the day to help you navigate the Medicare system.

Musical Art Society Presents: Concert Pianist Itay Goron Saturday, April 20

@ 2:30 –3:30 pm

Throughout history, nature has been a source of enchantment and inspiration for the great composers. Itay Goran will present works inspired by nature by Bach, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, and more, plus new work written especially for this program by Christodoulou Georgiades.

Rave On!: The Music of Buddy Holly & Roy Orbison

Sunday, April 21 @ 2 –3:15 pm

Back by popular demand, Rave On! plays the legendary music of early rock and roll. **Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.**

Check our website for more programs and registration details!

February 2024 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

Total Circulation: 7,673

February 2023: 6,829

borrowIT: 1,634

February 2023: 1,251

Renewals: 4,572

Computer Sessions: 736

WIFI Logins: 3,327

Website visits: 8,563 sessions

Facebook: 2,696 followers

Instagram: 1,325 followers

MailChimp: 8,573 subscribers

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive/Libby ebooks: 1,248

Overdrive/Libby audiobooks: 868

Overdrive/Libby magazines: 690

Palace App: 40

HOOPLA: 1,103

Kanopy: 388

Pronunciator: 812

Ancestry Library: 211

New Haven Register: 272

Branford History Scrapbooks: 149

Creative Bug: 37

Lucy Hammer & Conference Room Usage: 143

Children's Programs
22 programs/648 attendance

Teen Programs (12+)
6 programs/23 attendance

Adult programs
54 programs/707 attendance

Average Daily Visitors: 381
Days open: 26