



Report to the Board of Trustees

December 7, 2022

From the Director

After sharing the Strategic Framework with the community, we were invited to attend a presentation at the beginning of November hosted by Trinity Episcopal Church and NetworX, an organization dedicated to bringing communities together to reduce poverty. Additional meetings with local organizations and community members will happen in the coming year. Thank you to Christina and Carly for attending.

We welcomed artist John Simboli and his photography exhibit, entitled "A Sense of Place." John hosted a reception and gave a presentation about his work. We also hosted a 6-panel banner display from the CT Women's Hall of Fame about women's suffrage, accompanying a program by the Hall of Fame about Women in War.

Angela and Alondra signed up to join the LION Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee. They will be attending future meetings and will report back.

Kathy attended the Branford Town Safety Committee meeting and Tina attended the Town Merchant's meeting.

We extended the deadline for the Children's Room mural submissions to November 30, and have received over 15 submissions, which will be reviewed.

The new online library events calendar was launched after



Thank you to the Branford Garden Club for decorating the library for the holidays, putting up garland, ribbons, and bows to get everyone into the spirit of the season.

staff training sessions were conducted. The calendar is populated with events starting in December, and functionality allowing patrons to easily request meeting room reservations is live. Thank you to the Friends for sponsoring the calendar software and making this robust tool a reality for us.

Kayla McInnis, our new part-time Circulation Assistant, started on November 16. She is eager to learn and a welcome addition to the team.

Our diaper and food drive to benefit the Community Dining Room (CDR) was an overwhelming success. We will plan to hold future drives in support of the CDR, and have reached out to the Branford Food Pantry to discuss possible food drives to benefit that

organization, as well.

Angela and Tina began planning the staff holiday party in December, which is sponsored by the Friends.

Jared, a member of the Social Media Committee, has started a TikTok account for the library and is exploring its potential for sharing the library's offerings in fun, new ways.

Moir continues to scan issues of the Shoreline Times and the Sound into digital, searchable formats for public use.

The Fall Appeal is off to a great start, with over \$8,100 in gifts received before December 1.

— Katy McNicol



Stacks of donated diapers for the Branford Diaper Bank are taller than Erin. Thank you to the Branford community for your generosity and support!

Highlights from the Youth Services Department—October

COMMUNITY EVENTS

This October we participated in a few community-wide events thanks to the Friends of the Blackstone Library. Staff members were able to represent the library at Branford Public Schools' Trunk or Treat, as well as the townwide event held around the Green. We connected with hundreds of families at both events and it was so fun seeing everyone out having fun together.



Our annual Halloween Storytime & Parade was back this year, and the auditorium was once again filled with families and children in costume.

We were able to have our own Halloween fun again this year, bringing back our annual Halloween Parade and Storytime in the auditorium. During this event families with children ages five and under were invited to take part in a typical storytime and then parade around the building for giveaways. Staff get to participate by handing out small items and many have said this is their favorite time

of year – who doesn't like to see small children in cute costumes? Our parade brought in a total of 125 participants and it was exciting to see the auditorium full. We are hoping

for the same level of enthusiasm for our NOON Year's Eve storytime in December.

NEW TEEN LIBRARIAN

We interviewed potential candidates for the teen position, in hope of finding the perfect replacement. It turned out that the perfect person was just a floor away, in Reference. Emily Yates was our part-time Reference librarian, and had formerly worked as a high school media specialist in North

Carolina. Although excited about using her skills in a new environment, she missed working closely with teens. Once learning about her library journey and desire to serve teens, as well as her ideas for the space, we knew that we had found the right person to lead our teen department into the future. It is a pleasure working with her. Please feel free to pop into the Youth Services Department anytime to introduce yourself.

SCARY STORIES & MONSTERS

This month the Friends of the Library made it possible for us to welcome Connecticut Storyteller Ann Shapiro. Ann works for the Connecticut Storytelling Center and has been telling stories most of her life. The Center reached out to us in hope of being a part of Tellabration — a month-long storytelling program that brings well-known storytellers to libraries and schools. Families with children of all ages attended the “Scary (but not-too-scary) Stories” session and Ann did a fantastic job of keeping everyone engaged with music, hand gestures, and call and response requests. Everyone had the best time interacting and left with huge smiles on their faces. It was the perfect

way to kick-off this spooky month.

Amy Bowers returned to the library for a monster-filled creative writing session for 1st thru 4th graders. Amy had the perfect activity to get everyone focused and thinking creatively: draw your own monsters! Once completed, everyone shared their monsters and talked about why they drew the features they did. Amy then challenged them to create a backstory for their monster. This type of exercise gives some insight into what it takes to develop a well-rounded character and how the more you know about your character the easier it is to predict what they will do in a creative writing piece. Miss Mary said that everyone was really happy with the monsters they created and were encouraged to use their characters in the next story they write from home.

– Carly Lemire



Friends member Dr. Carrie Lakin joined Jenna and Miss Mary to give out candy to hundreds of children at the Town's community-wide Trunk-or-Treat.

Highlights from the Reference Department—October

PROGRAMS, PROGRAMS, & MORE PROGRAMS

In addition to our monthly book groups, Latin classes, poetry discussions, Saturday Cinema, Awakening to Change discussion, Adult Game Night, Tech drop-in, coloring and knitting groups, we had programs on the Secrets of Getting Published, an art show opening, and a lecture on the discovery of the Dutch fort in Indian Neck (which had 96 people in attendance).

NEW WEBSITE FEATURE

We added a new feature to the website: a scrolling list of new adult fiction and nonfiction. These are current titles that have been added to the collection in the last month or two. It gives patrons a chance to see what we have just purchased and they can simply

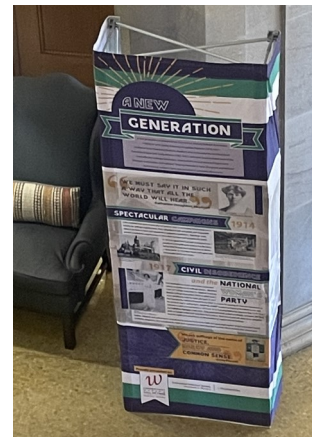
click on a title to go to the catalog where they can place a hold on the item.

FROM REFERENCE TO TEENS

The reference staff said goodbye to Emily Yates this month; she began her new job as Teen Services Librarian on October 31. We were very sad to see her go; she made a very positive impact on the department and our patrons. But we are delighted that she is staying with Blackstone and taking on this new role.

WEDDING VENUE

People may not know that the Blackstone Library is a very popular venue for “First Look” and wedding photos. As I write this report, we have a lovely young couple taking their First Look photos on the marble staircase. There have



ON DISPLAY

Left: A week-long banner display by the CT Women's Hall of Fame.

Below: John Simboli's photography exhibit, "A Sense of Place," is on display in the rotunda gallery through December.



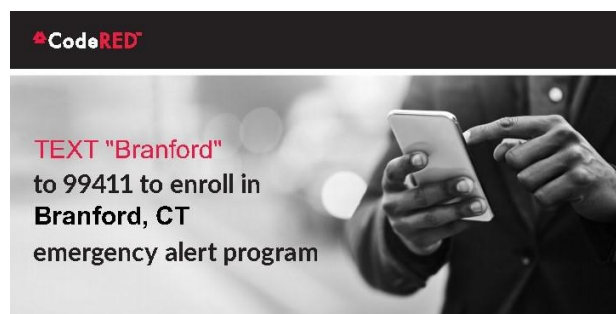
been a couple of months recently where we had three or four couples come in to take photographs. And as I return to writing, after a bit of time away to help patrons, there is a second couple arriving for photos. We don't often see two in an afternoon!

— Deborah Trofatter

CODE RED: THE LIBRARY IS AT YOUR SERVICE

In October, the town of Branford informed residents that a new emergency notification system was being implemented, called CodeRED. Everyone in Branford received a postcard in the mail (and an automated phone call) encouraging them to sign up for the new system online, and if they did not have access to the internet, to call either the Blackstone Library or Willoughby Wallace for assistance. Our phone didn't stop ringing for days. So far, we have signed up more than 80 residents over the phone and in person, and we expect to continue signing people up.

We've spoken with many people who haven't been to the library in several years, or who have never been to the library at all. It's been a nice way to introduce us to a new segment of the community, and to remind them that we're here to help.



We are happy to serve those who do not have home internet, own a computer, or use a smart phone, and do so every day. Nearly every aspect of life has moved online these days – from job applications and DMV appointments to connecting with friends and family on Zoom and social media. The library plays an integral role in providing access and helping our community navigate the technology that's become increasingly essential to modern life, and the CodeRED program is the latest example.

— Jenna Anthony



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...more than books

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

December 2022 Program Highlights

Blackstone Library Tour
Saturday, December 10
@ 10–11:30 am

In-person. Take a tour of the Blackstone, learn historical tidbits, and get an insider's peek at into a day in the life of a Blackstone Library employee.

BHS Music Makers Holiday Concert

Sunday, December 11 @ 2-3 pm
In-person. Join us for a special holiday concert presented by the Branford High School Music Makers. **Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.**

Meet Me at the Mini Maker Table
Monday, December 12 @ 4-5 pm
In-person. A drop-in 3D Printing Demo. Try out equipment, build things out of various materials and/or test your creations all in an effort to help you learn how to do something. Grades 2-8.

Grief & Loss Seminar
Monday, December 12
@ 6-7:30 pm

In-person. A Grief is universal and can be especially difficult around the holidays. Many people find it hard to talk about, but it is essential to process our grief in a healthy way. Presented by Cheryl Cole, AccentCare Bereavement Volunteer and Certified Grief Recovery Specialist.

Intro to 3D Printing
Thursday, December 15
@ 6:30-7:30 pm

In-person. Have you ever been curious about 3D printing? Did you know the Blackstone Library has 3D printers available for you to use? Come learn the ins and outs of this amazing technology in our Intro to 3D printing class! Instructor Jim Davis will take you through the basics of how 3D printing works and all the amazing things you can create. **Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.**

Mindful Making: Embroidered Constellations
Wednesday, December 21
@ 3:30 pm-4:30 pm

In-person, drop-in event. A relaxing craft and other activities with Maggy Trapasso, LSCW from Branford Counseling & Community Services. This month's craft is embroidered constellations. Create a beautiful design inspired by the night sky using metallic thread. No experience is necessary. Made possible by Branford Counseling & Community Services. Grades 5-12.

Hot Cocoa & a Film: Abominable
Thursday, December 29 @ 2-4 pm

In-person. All ages are welcome to join us for a winter warm-up during the holiday break. Bring your own snacks, hot cocoa is on us!

Happy Noon Year: Storytime
Saturday, December 31
@ 11:30 am-12 pm

In-person, drop-in event. Can't stay up till midnight? Join us for a special storytime and countdown to NOON! Ages 5 & under.

Check our website for more programs and registration details!

October 2022 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

Total Circulation: 6,762
October 2021: 6,443

borrowIT: 1,588
October 2021: 1,498

Renewals: 4,598

Computer Sessions: 682
WIFI Logins: 3,612
Website visits: 6,422 session

Facebook: 2,242 Likes
Instagram: 1,144 Followers
MailChimp: 7,651 Subscribers

Average Daily Visitors: 323
Days open: 28

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive/Libby ebooks: 1,450
Overdrive/Libby audiobooks: 800
Overdrive/Libby magazines: 149
Palace App: 19
HOOPLA: 1,219
Kanopy: 365
Pronunciator: 653
Ancestry Library: 824
New Haven Register: 192
Branford History Scrapbooks: 370
Creative Bug: 0

Lucy Hammer & Conference Room Usage: 95

Children's Programs
19 programs/536 attendance

Teen Programs (12+)
6 programs/57 attendance

Adult programs
31 programs/275 attendance

"I am in awe of your beautiful library. What a gem of a building - and it has books, too!"

— Lorraine T.

"[We] have attended the last two Sunday afternoon music events and enjoyed them both. We look forward to attending other events as the schedule becomes available. I also believe the Library does a wonderful job supporting the community."

— Bob D.