



June 7, 2023

# Report to the Board of Trustees

## From the Director

Kathy and I, along with members of the Board of Trustees, attended the RTM Education Committee budget vote on May 1 and the RTM budget vote on May 9. The Blackstone budget was passed without changes. Thank you to Ed Prete and members of the Board of Trustees for their support in presenting this year's budget, and to Kathy for her work in preparing the budget and guidance throughout the process.

With funding from the Friends, staff members from each department attended the Connecticut Library Association (CLA) conference on May 1 and 2 (6 attendees on Monday, 7 on Tuesday). The conference was very informative and was a great opportunity to connect with other colleagues from around the state. Staff attended sessions such as: Community Impact through Learning; Leading from the Inside Out; Revolutionizing Outreach; and, The Future of AI in Libraries. We're so appreciative of these opportunities to refresh ideas and refocus our work.

We welcomed our new Children's Librarian Nicolette Pavain



Staff attended the CLA conference on May 1 & 2 at the Mystic Marriott in Groton, CT.

on May 4. She brings a lot of enthusiasm and some great experience working with children. We're excited to watch her grow and develop this position.

The Branford Book Festival & Author Walk took place on Saturday, May 6, and we hosted the Meet & Greet Reception at the end of the day. Our Reading Room was full of authors and attendees who had participated in the event on Main Street that day and a prize drawing was held.

The Friends held their Spring Sale on May 12 and 13 in their warehouse. The successful event grossed over \$3,700, which helps support the Friends efforts to support the Blackstone Library. Congratulations, Friends, and thank you for your hard work.

I began a 3-part workshop offered by the American Library Association on Human Re-

sources for Library Managers. The course covers hiring, policies, feedback, discipline, termination and succession planning. I've learned that our job descriptions and hiring practices are well-crafted, and I'm looking forward to more discussion with the group on giving feedback and annual evaluations, all with the goal of setting expectations and encouraging staff buy-in to work toward those expectations.

On May 31, Kathy and I joined many other local organizations at a discussion hosted by the Branford Community Foundation about their role in distributing a portion of the American Rescue Plan Act Funds for non-profits serving the Branford community. This was a learning session for BCF to better understand the impact of COVID-19 and the most meaningful and efficient ways to distribute those funds.

— Katy McNicol

**This is the first class that I participated in at the library, but I'm looking forward to other programs and activities.**

—Post-program survey feedback from April's Express Yourself Writing Workshop, sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.



**EXTENDED!** **JUNE 1-30**

**Branford Food Pantry**

**FOOD DRIVE**

Bring your donations to the  
Blackstone Library  
758 Main St. in Branford



## Highlights from the Youth Services Department—April

April was a month of learning and connection in Youth Services. An educator from the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center presented a program, *Animal Superheroes*, on how animals make a positive impact on their environments. Children learned how bats, beavers, bees, and beetles do their part to keep our community thriving. Many different creatures made an appearance: kids were thrilled to meet a bullfrog, ball python, and a Madagascar hissing cockroach, and even got to interact with some of the critters!

We also had several events that allowed children and teens to explore their creativity! Teens celebrated National Poetry Month with a poetry writing workshop. We learned about some of the literary elements common in poetry, read some poems for inspiration, and then tried our hand at writing a few poems of our own! We learned all about ekphrasis — poetry inspired by a work of art — and wrote poems using paintings as our inspiration. Teens also got crafty this month with a DIY bath bomb program. Using a few simple kitchen ingredients, essential oils, and dried flowers, teens made beautiful creations that dissolve in warm water to transform a bath into a sensory experience.



A DIY bath bomb made during a teen program.

The creativity continued throughout the month, thanks to our partnership with the Legacy Theatre. Actors shared a special storytime event to celebrate their family production of *A Princess Tea*. Rapunzel and Snow White visited in costume to share



their stories, sing a song from the show, and read picture books about their princess friends. Many children came in costume and enjoyed getting to take pictures with our royal guests.

We connected with a few other community partners this month, as well. The Week of the Young Child Early Childhood Fair is a yearly event celebrating the youngest members of our community. The event, hosted at the Branford Community House, included a pancake breakfast, music and dance performances, and soccer and yoga for the whole family. Over 20 Shoreline child care providers and local organizations that serve

families were present at the event.

We closed off the month by hosting one of The Community Dining Room's weekly family dinners in the Blackstone auditorium. The Community Dining Room is a local nonprofit that aims to provide meals, support, and companionship to members of the Shoreline community. This was a great opportunity to connect CDR families to library resources and to introduce our library patrons to the Community Dining Room's services. We look forward to many more community collaborations throughout the year!

— Emily Yates



## Highlights from the Reference Department—April

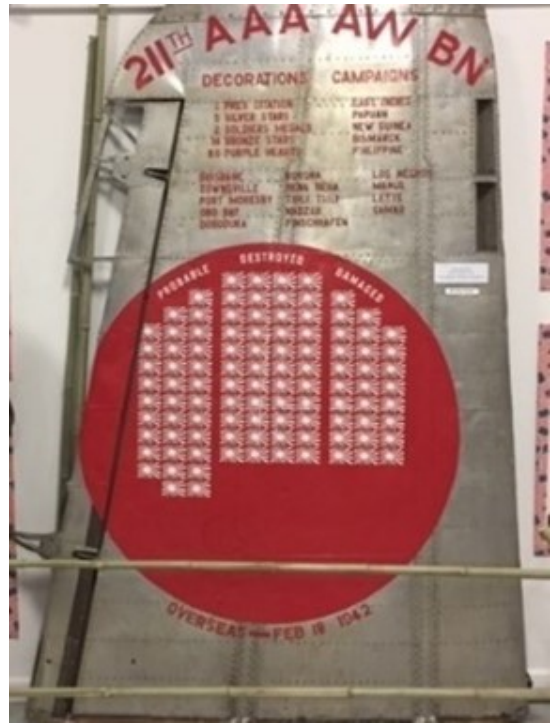
This month's programs included Latin classes, poetry discussion, knitting, coloring, writer's and grief support groups, two drop-in tech help sessions and a Libby class, book groups, Game Night, programs on Cat Care, the Search for Life in the Universe and Wild Plant Foraging, a Nature Journal workshop, Awakening to Change, Family Dinner Night with the Community Dining Room and a program on Using Land Records in Genealogy Research given by Town Historian Jane Bouley.

The Reference department recently had an inquiry from a patron about a plane wing from a WWII Japanese Mitsubishi Zero. He asked if we had the wing here at the library and while at first glance, it might seem like an unusual request, we did in fact have this plane wing on display at the library in 2005 when the eight surviving veterans of the 211th AAA Battalion, Battery D, were honored.

They are credited with shooting down more enemy planes than any other unit during the war. They recorded their combat kills and company history on the wing and while once thought left behind and lost in the South Pacific, it eventually made its way to Bridgeport several years after the war.

Branford residents Nick Palermo and Ed Zack Sr. worked hard to see that the wing was restored and it was then displayed at the library. Our patron was hoping to find the current location of the wing and Stephanie was able to track it down to the West Haven Veterans Museum, where it is on display. Jordan's indexing of our vertical file made it easy for staff to locate several articles on the display of the plane wing that we shared with our patron.

— Deborah Trofatter



A plane wing from a WWII Japanese Mitsubishi Zero.

### SAVE THE DATE FRIENDS BOOK SALE

Fall Sale on the Branford Green:  
September 14th – 17th (Thurs – Sun)  
Tent Sponsorships available!



JOIN THE FRIENDS OR  
RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!  
[blackstonelibrary.org/friends](http://blackstonelibrary.org/friends)

protect your privacy | protect your identity | protect your confidentiality

BLACKSTONE LIBRARY HOSTS A

## Shred-a-thon

### SHREDDING EVENT

Fundraiser to benefit the James Blackstone Memorial Library

SATURDAY, JUNE 10 | 9 AM–12 PM

Pre-Paid Cards—PURCHASE IN ADVANCE



**\$10** each

- good for 2 copy-paper sized boxes' worth of papers •

Available for purchase at the library until June 9

Day of the event: \$7 / first box, \$5 / each additional



James Blackstone Memorial Library  
758 Main Street  
Branford, CT 06405  
203.488.1441  
reference@blackstonelibrary.org  
facebook.com/blackstonelibrary  
instagram.com/blackstone\_library  
blackstonelibrary.org

...more than books

Join our email list for more  
information about programs  
[www.blackstonelibrary.org](http://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](http://blackstonelibrary.org/museum-passes)

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

## June 2023 Program Highlights

### Blind/Low Vision Resource Directory

**Tuesday, June 6 @ 6:30–7:30 pm**

Learn about resources available both inside and outside of Connecticut for older and disabled residents who need assistive technology and/or vision resources. Presented by UR Community Cares.

### Trans 101: What it Means to be Transgender

**Wednesday, June 14 @ 6–7 pm**

Join Jillian Celentano for an introduction to what it means to be transgender. It's a great opportunity to ask questions and gain new insights. **Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.**

### Storywalk® On Main

**On display along Main Street from**

**Friday, June 16– Friday, August 11**

*Drop-in event:* This summer's StoryWalk® on Main is all about finding your voice and making a difference! Gather your friends and family to read this year's picture book, *I Am One* by Susan Verde, in the store windows down Branford's Main Street. This event bridges walking, reading, and

conversation, and is provided with help from Branford's local merchants. **Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.**

### Estate Planning Documents

**Thursday, June 22**

**@ 6:30–7:30 pm**

Local Attorney Erin Duques will give an overview of the main estate planning documents such as wills, trusts, Power of Attorney, and healthcare directives, and how they can impact your future.

### Volunteer Fair

**Saturday, June 24 @ 10 am–1 pm**

Are you interested in volunteering but don't know where to start? Stop by our Volunteer Fair! You'll meet representatives from local nonprofits, find out more about what they do in our community, and learn about opportunities to get involved.

### Secrets of a Mockingbird

**Saturday, June 24 @ 2–3 pm**

Discover the secret world of Harper Lee. In this solo show, we learn of her close relationships with her father and her childhood friend, Truman Capote. Written and performed by Prudence

Wright Holmes. **Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.**

### Summer Family Take-N-Makes Wednesday, June 28

**@ 9 am–8 pm**

*Drop-in event.* The program with no schedule is back for another season. Each month, we're putting together a different hands-on kit. No sign up is required but kits are limited. **Sponsored by the Allan Louis Loeb Foundation.**

### Find Your Voice Storytelling Event Friday, June 30 @ 3–4 pm

Join storyteller Sara deBeer to kick off our summer reading theme Find Your Voice. Sara's storytelling is for listeners of all ages and includes audience participation to keep the youngest listeners involved. **Sponsored by the Branford Community Foundation.**

### Embroidery for Tweens & Teens Thursday, June 29

**@ 3:30–4:30 pm**

Join us to learn all about embroidery and create a beautiful design of your own to take home. No experience is necessary. **Sponsored by the Friends of Blackstone Library.**

*Check our website for more programs and registration details!*

## April 2023 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

**Total Circulation: 7,223**

*April 2022: 6,670*

**borrowIT: 1,582**

*April 2021: 1,529*

**Renewals: 4,795**

**Computer Sessions: 695**

**WIFI Logins: 3,828**

**Website visits: 9,883 sessions**

**Facebook: 2,554 followers**

**Instagram: 1,195 followers**

**MailChimp: 7,759 subscribers**

**Downloadable Circulation:**

**Overdrive/Libby ebooks: 1,257**

**Overdrive/Libby audiobooks: 889**

**Overdrive/Libby magazines: 109**

**Palace App: 18**

**HOOPLA: 1,170**

**Kanopy: 204**

**Pronunciator: 742**

**Ancestry Library: 161**

**New Haven Register: 372**

**Branford History Scrapbooks: 161**

**Creative Bug: 42**

**Lucy Hammer & Conference Room Usage: 150**

**Children's Programs**

*27 programs/626 attendance*

**Teen Programs (12+)**

*9 programs/36 attendance*

**Adult programs**

*46 programs/491 attendance*

**Average Daily Visitors: 346**

**Days open: 29**