



Report to the Board of Trustees

May 3, 2023

The Blackstone Library is a great resource for the community for not just books and movies, but for career and life advancement as well. Also, there are many great people and organizations dedicated to helping others in that regard.

—Post-program survey feedback from Careers in Healthcare Info session, presented in partnership with Shoreline Adult Education and American Job Center.

At the Earth Day Fair on the Branford Green, on Saturday April 15.



From the Director

Kathy and I presented the FY2024 budget request to the Education Committee of the Branford RTM on April 3. Thank you to trustees Beth Law, President, Jack Thompson, Asst Treasurer, Matt Roth, and Pat Sanders for being in the audience for support.

On April 4, Tina helped us participate in Library Giving Day, a national fundraising event with the goal of encouraging people who depend on and enjoy public libraries to donate to their individual community library. We received \$596 in donations for this one-day event.

Chris Rucinski, a Branford native who has become an award-winning independent filmmaker stopped by to meet with me and donate a Blu-Ray copy of his movie, Northern Shade. Chris wrote most of the movie while sitting in the Blackstone Library, and has a very soft place in his heart for it. His movie was filmed



Staff participated in a group webinar as part of a half-day in-service training session.

primarily in Branford, including the Stony Creek Quarry and Quinnipiac River. We are in the process of cataloging the movie and making it available for loan.

A high school student, Lia S., spent time behind the Reference desk for a few hours as part of a job shadow program, learning all about what they do. She has volunteered in the Youth Services department before but was really interested in spending some time at the Reference Desk, focusing on adult services. She is interested in becoming a librarian one day.

I manned a booth at the Earth Day Fair on the Branford Green. The fair was busy, and I got lots of questions about the seed library, telescope and other items in our Library of Things.

We conducted our second in-service training for this fiscal

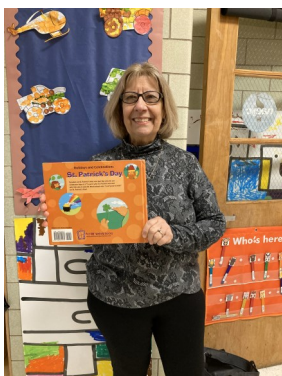
year. Detective Lieutenant Dominick Eula visited the library and spoke to staff about security and safety in the library, and conducted a building walk-through with our group, pointing out various things to be aware of in order to work in the safest environment possible. We then watched a webinar as a group that incorporated ideas on safety and service, to best serve all patrons, with some discussion following. Thank you to the Friends for sponsoring the half-day training.

I visited the Branford BHcare facility and presented to their SOCIAL Book Club about the library, its history, and programs and services. I also learned more about services that BHcare provides to the community. It was great to connect with this organization and I look forward to working with them more in the future.

— Katy McNicol

Highlights from the Youth Services Department—March

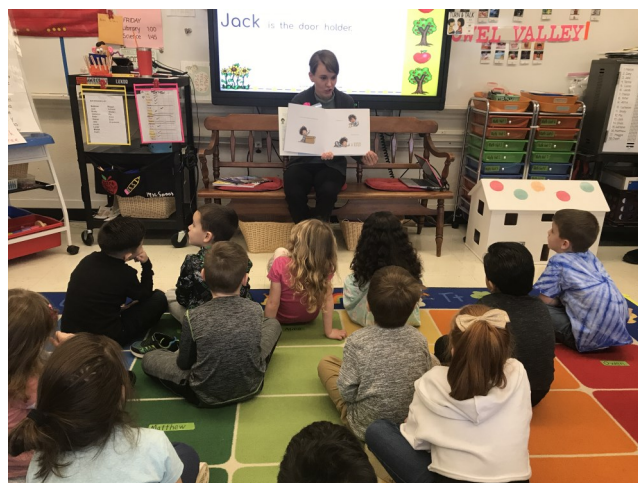
March was a blast in Youth Services! We started off the month with a Super Science Saturday program, March Madness Physics. After learning about Newton's law of motion and inertia with a science experiment, kids had fun putting their knowledge to use by designing their own basketball hoops! Super Science Saturday is hosted by Cool-ology, which specializes in hands-on STEAM activities. These popular programs are made possible by the Blackstone Library Friends and the Allan Louis Loeb Foundation.



Mary (top) visited the Family Resource Center to conduct a storytime, and Emily (below) reads a story to children at the Community Dining Room.

March was also a great month to reconnect with some of our community partners through outreach events. We started off the month by visiting all three Branford elementary schools for United Way's Read Across America Day event. Katy, Tina, and I enjoyed visiting the schools to read picture books to the students and to share a little bit about our roles at the library. The United Way donates these books to the classroom libraries at the schools, and the students were excited to have new titles to read!

I also visited the Community Dining Room to read stories at their family dinner and Literacy Night. I read picture books featuring food and cooking for the event, and we had fun talking afterwards about our favorite things to eat. Local non-profit, Read to Grow, was also there and hosted a bingo game with books as prizes for the children. It was a great way to introduce the library to families, and we are looking forward to hosting one of the Community Dining Room's family meals on April 25th.



Emily reading to a class during Read Across America day. Each classroom got to keep the books that were read for their class library.

In addition to hosting five storytimes a week for our youngest patrons at Blackstone, Miss Mary has been expanding our reach by visiting local preschools. She visits the Family Resource Center once a week to share stories and songs, and has also read stories at the Child Development Center. The teachers at these schools are so grateful for the visits, and it is a great way to introduce Branford's youngest residents to the library.

There were lots of fun teen events this month! Thanks to the Friends we hosted a program where teens got to decorate tote bags with fabric paint, and they came up with some beautiful and colorful designs. Our monthly Dungeons and Dragons group is also always a hit, with Dungeon Master Spencer guiding incredible role-playing adventures for participants.

I am so grateful for the Teen and Junior Teen Advisory Groups. These groups of dedicated teen volunteers help us select books to purchase and assist with many other projects for the library. This month they

helped get our Take-N-Make kits ready. These monthly Take and Make kits come out on early-release days for Branford Public Schools and are very popular with families. This month, each kit had a brief history of origami, along with origami patterns and paper. We can't wait to see what our patrons create!

March closed with a wonderful annual event at the Murphy School: English Language Learner Family Literacy Night. This event introduces families to the many literacy resources in our community, with lots of fun activities for kids. We shared a table with the Willoughby Wallace Library, and spent the evening creating library cards for families and sharing information about our services and programs. The biggest hit of the night was our button maker; kids watched with awe as the designs they colored were transformed into buttons. We hope to see some of the families we met at Literacy Night at the library soon!

— Emily Yates

Highlights from the Reference Department—March

Our programs in March included our monthly book groups, poetry discussion, Latin classes, coloring, knitting, writing, and grief support groups, Friday night game night, a class on Android basics, tech help sessions at the Library and Senior Center, programs on positive parenting and how Branford's government works.

We have been working with an intern from the Southern MLIS program, Kyle Russell, since January and we have enjoyed working with him. He has spent time in all departments, worked on general reference, local history projects, and cataloging. He is currently working with Jordan to develop an expanded Library of Things collection. Jordan created an online and print survey, asking patrons what items they would like to see in our collection and we have received over 150 responses already. We are all excited about expanding this collection.

Christina and Jordan have been working together to teach patrons how to use OverDrive's new Libby app. The original OverDrive app is being discontinued and will no longer function after May 1. They have held classes and help sessions, worked on instructions and created a graphic to feature Libby on the website.

Jenna has been busy with outreach and programming, running the current programs and setting up programming for the summer and fall. Attendance at many of our programs is increasing and we expect that to continue. Many of our programs have been recorded and are available on our YouTube page. Our most recent addition was a program on the search for life in the universe which was attended by elementary school age children, adults and seniors.

— Deborah Trofatter



Many of our events are recorded and available for viewing on our Youtube channel. Find it by visiting blackstonelibrary.org and clicking the Youtube icon.

SAVE THE DATES FRIENDS BOOK SALES

Spring Sale: May 12 – 13 (Fri – Sat)
Children's books and Adult fiction (ONLY)

Location: Friends Warehouse
59 School Ground Road Unit 4 (River Run Plaza)
Friday, 12 – 6 pm; Saturday, 9 am – 3 pm

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



FRIENDS
OF
BLACKSTONE LIBRARY

AVAILABLE TO BORROW:

LAWN GAMES

Made possible with a generous gift from the Friends of the Blackstone Library

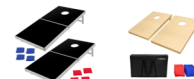
- Borrow for up to 2 weeks • Place a hold to be next in line •
- Pickup and return at Blackstone Library only •

BOCCIE



CORNHOLE

(standard and tailgate sizes)



CROQUET



GIANT TUMBLING TOWER



GIANT YARD DICE



HORSESHOES



KAN JAM



LADDER TOSS



SPIKEBALL



FRIENDS
OF
BLACKSTONE LIBRARY

Now is a great time to borrow one of our lawn games. Funded by a gift from the Friends, you can borrow these games for up to 2 weeks, and enjoy with the entire family!



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



SAVE THE DATE: Saturday June 10

Clear out confidential papers and documents at our Shred-a-thon event!

Purchase a prepaid card worth 2 banker's boxes of paper for \$10, now on sale at the library.

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

May 2023 Program Highlights

Drop-in Tech Help

Thursday, May 4

@ 1:30–@3:30 pm

In person. Confused about your new iPhone or iPad? Need help formatting a Word document? Drop in to get your tech question answered. First come, first served.

The Violins of Sibelius & Paganini **Saturday, May 6 @ 2–3 pm**

In person. Acclaimed violinist Michael Tropepe returns with the Sibelius Violin Concerto and pieces by Paganini.

Branford Forum

Sunday, May 7 @ 2–3 pm

In person. This month's topic is **Protecting the Natural Beauty of Branford.** Have you hiked a trail in Branford, enjoyed a view of a saltmarsh, or watched the ospreys nesting in the spring? If so, chances are you have enjoyed the work of the all-volunteer Branford Land Trust. Since 1967 the BLT has protected Branford's natural resources, acquired and managed open space, promoted public access, educated the public about our natural resources, and encouraged our community to get involved.

Collage Journals

Wednesday, May 17

@ 3:30–4:30 pm

In person. Teens, join us each month for a relaxing afternoon craft. This month every participant will get a blank notebook and we will create a collage cover for our new journals. **Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.**

Maya Vulinovic Artist Reception

Thursday, May 18 @ 5–8 pm

In person. Drop in to the library and visit our top floor gallery to view stunning black and white photo portraits by local photographer Maya Vulinovic. You'll have the opportunity to see the art up close chat with the artist about her work, which will be on display during May and June.

Carnaby Street Duo

Sunday, May 21 @ 2– pm

In person. Featuring music from the British Invasion, Carnaby Street breathes new life into songs that are fondly remembered as the cornerstones for popular music's favorite era. Carnaby Street takes their listeners on a musical experience of the 1960s. **Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.**

Pet Professions with the CT Humane Society

Tuesday, May 23 @ 3:30–4:30 pm

In person. Teens, do you love animals? Are you interested in working with animals in the future? This program from the Connecticut Humane Society will showcase the wide array of careers in the animal welfare field. Learn about the skills and education needed for different positions and hear about a typical work day from CHS staff. **Sponsored by the Allan Louis Loeb Foundation.**

Saturday Cinema

Saturday, May 27 @ 2–4 pm

In person. See a highly anticipated new release on our big screen in the auditorium. This month we're featuring *Tár* (2022, R). Set in the international world of Western classical music, the film centers on Lydia Tár, widely considered one of the greatest living composer-conductors and the very first female director of a major German orchestra. **Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.**

Check our website for more programs and registration details!

March 2023 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

Total Circulation: 8,233

March 2022: 7,611

borrowIT: 1,765

March 2021: 1,672

Renewals: 4,695

Computer Sessions: 725

WIFI Logins: 3,915

Website visits: 9,887 sessions

Facebook: 2,542 followers

Instagram: 1,179 followers

MailChimp: 7,755 subscribers

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive/Libby ebooks: 1,425

Overdrive/Libby audiobooks: 991

Overdrive/Libby magazines: 139

Palace App: 38

HOOPLA: 1,283

Kanopy: 364

Pronunciator: 725

Ancestry Library: 622

New Haven Register: 485

Branford History Scrapbooks: 444

Creative Bug: N/A

Lucy Hammer & Conference Room Usage: 125

Children's Programs

23 programs/653 attendance

Teen Programs (12+)

7 programs/35 attendance

Adult programs

46 programs/640 attendance

Average Daily Visitors: 369

Days open: 26