



Report to the Board of Trustees

November 2, 2022

From the Director

Help fill the shelves at the Community Dining Room and Diaper Bank this holiday season. Collection boxes in the library lobby, now through November 30.



Laura Noe installed our second First Amendment Wall – an interactive display inviting the community to answer weekly questions, such as “Why is freedom of speech important?”

Free copies of the US Constitution are also available free of charge.

At the beginning of October, Kathryn Hughes came out to witness the planting of a new red maple on the library lawn. The tree was a gift in memory of Kathryn’s husband, David J. Hughes. She has also established a fund for programming and books in his name.

We’re excited to announce that Emily Yates will be moving from Reference to the Teen Librarian position. Emily brings lots of teen experience and enthusiasm for working with teens.

We have also filled the full-time Reference Librarian position. Jordan Nolan starts November 14. He joins us from the Hebron Library and is experienced with teaching technology to patrons.

The library signed up for Northstar Digital Literacy, a subscription platform that offers training on the basic skills needed to use a computer and the internet in daily life. This program is free to us, sponsored by the CT State Library. We will be training on the software and making it available soon.

Jenna Anthony worked with the Community Dining Room to make the Blackstone an official drop-off location for their diaper and food drive. We’re collecting items in the lobby through November 30.

Jared Torello created a display for the lobby featuring a Poem of the Week, using poetry books from our collection.



Kathryn Hughes joined us for the planting of a new red maple tree on the library grounds in memory of her late husband, David J. Hughes.

To make our collection more discoverable, we’ve added new functionality to our website. Debby Trofatter worked with the web designer to incorporate a book banner that links directly to our catalog, showcasing new books that users can easily request for borrowing.

I posted the final Strategic Framework to the website and have begun sharing it with the community and staff. We look forward to using it as a guide for future library offerings.

The Reference Department helped sign people up for the Town’s new CodeRED alert system, fielding over 60 phone calls in the few days following its announcement.



The library partnered with the Friends to participate in two Trunk or Treat events at the end of the month. Children loved seeing the ‘haunted library’ at both events.

— Katy McNicol

Highlights from the Youth Services Department—September

SCIENCE SATURDAYS

September marked the start of our fall programming lineup. A new program, Super Science Saturdays, is a STEAM-focused series delivered by a company called Cool-ology. These programs are designed to broaden scientific, mathematical, and engineering understanding through critical thinking, problem solving, and creative design.

Our first session focused on aerodynamics. During this workshop, participants learned about the history of flight and how liftoff happens. They were then asked to create a series of aircrafts and then test which worked the best. Participants had a blast during these comparisons and could not wait to show them off! The October session is already full.



September's Take & Make Kits gave families the opportunity to decorate birdfeeders and learn all about local birds who might benefit from a backyard treat. Thanks to the Allan Louis Loeb Foundation for sponsoring our fall series of nature-themed crafts.

HOMESCHOOL MEETUP

Our second new program offering is a Homeschool meet and greet where families who are learning at home can come together to meet other families and hopefully connect. Miss Sarah enticed participants by offering fall snacks and showcasing our lawn games provided by the Friends of the Library. Many of the parents took this time to connect and share questions and answers about the homeschooling experience.

One participant was a “father to be” that wanted to hear more about the different options and avenues other families had taken to educate their children. The children really enjoyed being together. They learned about upcoming library programs and shared their own ideas about what we can do in the future.

SAYING GOODBYE

Miss Sarah, our beloved teen librarian, will be leaving the Blackstone to continue her library story at Hagman Memorial Library in East Haven. Before transitioning to a full-time position at the Blackstone, she was the teen librarian at Hagman, and has now accepted the director position there. This is very exciting for her and very sad for us. Our hope is to send her with well wishes and continue to collaborate in inventive ways in the future.

We are currently in the interview process to fill her position. We met with our Teen Advisory Board to get a talk with them about what the teens loved about Miss Sarah as well as where they see the Teen Department going. The discussion was extremely

informative and was a nice way to ensure that the type of librarian we are looking for is also someone they could open up to (the ideas shared in this discussion helped inform our decision to offer Emily Yates the position).

NEW EVENTS CALENDAR

We are also, alongside Reference, working to set up a new event calendar, registration, and room booking software, funded by the Friends of the Blackstone Library. Having a platform where everything is maintained in one place will be amazing! We are meeting weekly to make this happen. Look for the new calendar in early December.

– Carly Lemire



Miss Sarah's last teen program was a party to send her off with well-wishes and cake. Teens and adults alike came by to say farewell.

Highlights from the Reference Department—September

SEPTEMBER PROGRAMS

This month's events included our poetry and knitting groups, Latin classes, book groups, Saturday Cinema, Game Night, a talk on Wild Edible Plants and Fungi of Autumn, an author event and four vaccination clinics.

CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL CALENDAR SETUP

Along with Carly in Youth Services, all of the Reference librarians have been very busy this month working on the development of our new Library Calendar. We're looking forward to sharing this with our patrons, as it will be much easier for them to navigate.

It allows users to filter programs by age and category and is visually appealing with color coding of events by age group. Event details can be viewed simply by mousing

over the event title, patrons can register directly from the event page, and recurring events will show future dates. In addition, patrons will be able to book our Conference Room and Lucy Hammer Room themselves and even request specific audiovisual and other equipment.

TECHNOLOGY HELP

Patron requests for one-on-one technology assistance are increasing every month. Emily and Christina have been handling the bulk of the appointments, but everyone in Reference is willing and able to provide assistance. Christina and Jenna are planning additional drop-in tech help sessions and classes. Our patrons are enjoying the new Palace app and Hoopla and Kanopy continue to be very popular; we are generally able to help our patrons sign up in just a few minutes.

— Deborah Trofatter

Blackstone Artists Circle Presents:

Kathy R. King

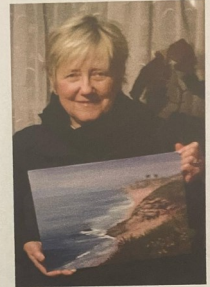
ABOUT THE ARTIST

I am always inspired by the natural world. I have enjoyed drawing, painting, making pottery and creating crafts. Several years ago, I lived on a small farm in Northfield, Connecticut sharing it with my horse, a goat, several ducks, a couple dogs and various cats. They inspired me every day to try and paint or draw them. Majoring in Animal Science at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, I took as many art classes as my schedule would allow. Like my mother and grandmother, I used painting with oils initially. And like my great grandmother, I also painted with watercolor. My grandmother, Jeannette Bartholomew, lived in Branford and painted for many people in town. Two of her paintings still hang in the Branford First Congregational Church.

In my 20's I taught eighth grade science in Chelsea. Working with young people is a passion of mine. Over the past few years I have cultivated a native organic flower garden for the Monarch butterflies I raise. Flowers continue to be a source of inspiration for me. I enjoy painting them and the butterflies that fill my garden.

As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker I have worked as a therapist in several settings. I am also an ordained minister for the United Church of Christ and have served several churches in Connecticut. Married and living in Branford, I enjoy taking with our very energetic 2 year old Australian Shepherd and tending our busy gardens filled with butterflies in the summer and the wild birds we feed as well. The natural world will always be a constant source of pleasure and inspiration.

If you would like to see more of my paintings they are presently on exhibit at BACA (Branford Arts and Cultural Alliance). You may also contact me directly.



Artwork will be on display for the entire month.

If you'd like to purchase any of the displayed pieces, please visit the Reference Desk, one floor below.



September's featured artist in the upper rotunda is Kathy R. King, with painting, drawings, and ceramics on display.



FRIENDS OF BLACKSTONE LIBRARY HOLIDAY BASKET SALE

COME GIFT SHOP AT THE LIBRARY!

DECEMBER 1 • 5PM-8PM
DECEMBER 2 • 10AM-4PM
DECEMBER 3 • 10AM-4PM

FRIENDS HOLIDAY GIFT BASKET SALE

The Friends of the Library are bringing back their holiday basket sale!

Opening night is Thursday, December 1st, during Branford's upcoming Sip, Shop & Stroll, and continues through Saturday, December 3rd at the Blackstone Library.

NOW COLLECTING ITEMS (new or gift quality) for the baskets. Please drop off the circulation desk at the back entrance through November 9th.



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...more than books

Join our email list for more
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www.blackstonelibrary.org

"A very large and warm THANK
YOU for allowing me to come and
shoot film for my student project!

Upon planning for the assignment,
I knew that my absolute favorite
place in town was perfect for my
needs.

I can't express my appreciation
enough, for this and for ALL you
do. Thank you!"

— Justin K.

November 2022 Program Highlights

It's Time to Pivot

**Saturday, November 5
@ 2-3:30 pm**

In-person. New Haven writer and documentary filmmaker Steve Hamm presents the case for society to pivot to become more sustainable and resilient and for individuals to become climate activists. He will show his new documentary, *A River Speaks* (34 minutes), which emerged out of his Pivot Projects work and explores the complex relationship between humans and the rest of nature. There will be time for discussion afterwards.

John Simboli Art Reception

**Saturday, November 5
@ 2:30-4:30 pm**

In-person. Drop in to the library and visit our top floor gallery to view the stunning black and white photographs done by local photographer John Simboli. You'll have the opportunity to chat with the artist about his work.

Stony Creek Museum Presents:

Papa Manteo's Sicilian Marionette Tradition

**Monday, November 7 @
6:30-7:30 pm**

In-person. An interactive marionette demonstration and film presentation by award-winning documentary filmmaker, historian, speaker in the humanities, educator, and puppeteer Tony De Nonno.

Rise Up, Sisters! Special Exhibit

On view November 7 – 18

Uncover the history of women's suffrage in the US from the 1830s to 1920. This 6-panel free-standing display chronicles the diverse group of CT women who were instrumental in the movement.

Presented by the CT Women's Hall of Fame.

Mozart & More with Ensemble Aubade

Sunday, November 13 @ 2-3 pm

In-person. Boston-based Ensemble Aubade (Peter H. Bloom, flute; Francis Grimes, viola; and Steven

Sussman, piano) will perform **Mozart and More!** – exhilarating chamber music spanning many styles and centuries that has captivated audiences with their virtuosity, versatility, and electrifying performances. Ensemble Aubade has been hailed for "intensity, imagination, skill, and finesse" (St. Lawrence University, New York). **Sponsored by the David Hughes Memorial Fund.**

Women in War

**Wednesday, November 16 @
6:30-7:30 pm**

Online. Women have been involved in military conflicts from the beginning of time and Connecticut women are among the finest and bravest who have stood for their cause – sometimes defying gender norms, and often without the recognition they deserved. Celebrate Veteran's Day with a presentation by Louisa Iacurci of the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame and learn more about some of these women who shattered gender barriers. **Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.**

Check our website for more programs and registration details!

September 2022 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

Total Circulation: 6,935

September 2021: 6,704

borrowIT: 1,735

September 2021: 1,623

Renewals: 4,859

Computer Sessions: 749

WIFI Logins: 3,407

Facebook: 2,223 Likes

Instagram: 1,131 Followers

MailChimp: 7,621 Subscribers

Average Daily Visitors: 310

Days open: 28

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive/Libby ebooks: 1,454

Overdrive/Libby audiobooks: 814

Overdrive/Libby magazines: 176

Palace App ebooks: 55

Palace App audiobooks: 19

HOOPLA: 1,119

Kanopy: 273

Pronunciator: 651

Ancestry Library: 1,619

New Haven Register: 402

Creative Bug: 31

**Lucy Hammer & Conference
Room Usage: 92**

Children's Programs

17 programs/283 attendance

Teen Programs (12+)

7 programs/41 attendance

Adult programs

31 programs/290 attendance