



Director's Report to the Board of Trustees

January 2013

With a new year comes a new director for the James Blackstone Memorial Library. I began work on January 14 and I am thrilled to be here at a time of forward moving change. With a wonderful staff, great community and an amazing facility, I see a great potential to accomplish our goals and more.

"The James Blackstone Memorial Library provides essential access to information, resources, and unique shared experiences to help ensure Branford is an educated and enriched community."

The new mission statement of the Blackstone Library was created following six months of intensive analysis of the community, staff and board climates. Over 600 members of the community provided input which allowed Anne Yurasek of Fio Partners to present a finalized strategic plan for 2013—2015 in December.

It now falls to the library board and library director to prioritize goals and objectives as we begin to implement the plan. Several areas have come to the forefront:

Building issues: John Casso worked with Conserv for a lighting efficiency proposal for the board of trustees to review. Several pieces of furniture have been identified to be refurbished in the next few months. Damaged

plaster in the reading room and reference room will be repaired. I will be working with the building committee to identify architects who may be interested in working with the library to analyze the use of the current space and redesign underused spaces including the high density shelving and auditorium balcony (historical room). I will be working with the custodian to evaluate daily cleaning/maintenance process.

Technology: How do we keep up with new developments and help our patrons do the same?

Collection: Staff will begin to evaluate methods of collection development for print, media and e-products in order to enhance our collection.

Customer Service: This will continue to be our primary focus in all departments. Dierdre and I are working on incorporating customer service training into future department meetings.

Christina Kondziela received these kind words on Facebook from an appreciative patron:

"Many thanks to Christina who works at the Blackstone. Last week, while on my way to Miss Mary with my toddler, I returned books to her and mentioned that I need to find some new authors but it was hard navigating the library with a toddler. By the time we finished Miss Mary's story time, Christina came to find me and had a list of new authors for me and helped me to get some new books. For a mom with little time for me, that was a huge kindness on her part! Thank you for Christina! You made

continued on back

my day and you are one of the reasons the Blackstone Library is such an amazing place!"

Marketing-We will be working on the "face" we present to our patrons both inside and outside of the library; improving communications, and the presentation of our electronic and printed marketing materials.

Outreach and Partnerships: I have begun the process of meeting members of our community; I attended two Chamber of Commerce events, the MLK breakfast and town department head meetings. I will be involved in the Town Merchants Committee, and the Nonprofits Council of the Chamber of Commerce.

Professional Development: I joined Toastmasters this month in order to improve my public speaking skills.

Programming and Event Coordination: We have begun to discuss ways to work better with our partners in the community to schedule relevant programming and coordinate private events in the auditorium with less disruption for library activities.

Board & Staff Relationships: the board and staff exchanged bios in an effort to know each other better. Library staff will present highlights of their respective departments at upcoming meetings.

Finance: Kathy O. worked with the Finance Committee to prepare the annual budget request for submission in February.

Planning for February:

Friends of the Library Meeting 2/5
Board of Trustees 2/6
Chamber Women in Business 2/6
Branford Rotary 2/6
Town Merchants Committee 2/12
Nonprofits Council 2/14
Budget Meeting with 1st Selectman 2/20
Toastmasters 2/13 & 27
LION 2/26

February Program Highlights:

Food For Fines 2/10—2/16
(benefits Branford Food Pantry)
Take Your Child to the Library 2/2
Legacy Theater Mime Performance 2/9
Toulouse-Lautrec with Fred Biamonte 2/12
Preschool Info Fair 2/23
Audubon Film: Facing the Storm 2/24
Branford Land Trust: Return of the Osprey 2/27

The library will be closed on **Sunday, February 17 and Monday, February 18** for President's Day.

*Karen Jensen
Library Director*



Statistics for December 2012

Circulation Statistics

Circulation December 2012	13,696
Circulation December 2011	15,710
CT Car December 2012	2,619
CT Car December 2011	3,268
Books added	279
Audio Visual added	188
Deleted items	490
Overdrive Circulation	490

Youth Services Statistics

- Miss Mary's class for Babies - 3 classes, 120 attendants
- Miss Mary's class for 2's - 3 classes, 117 attendants
- Miss Mary's class for Pre-K - 4 classes, 58 attendants
- Miss Mary's outreach classes - 7 classes, 222 attendants
- Miss Carly's PJ stories - 4 classes, 18 attendants
- Miss Carly's School Aged classes - 6 classes, 144 attendants
- Saturday Craft - 5 classes, 186 attendants

Grand Total: 922 attendants

December reports from Circulation and Technical Services

—Deirdre Santora and Gennett Grinnell

Stats for December:

- Facebook— 632 “Likes”
- Constant Contact—2296 active contacts,
- Downloadable Audio books— December - 81
- Downloadable E-books— December 409

Circulation staff:

- Checked out/Checked in, renewals and holds = 34,493 items in December.

Technical Services staff:

- Cataloging—648 total
- Processing—695 total
- Orders received—367 total
- Mending—77 total

Additional duties:

- Gennett cataloged, processed, received, checked in and mended 819 items. Processed 108 ILL: 34 borrowed and 80 loaned, plus other administrative tasks. Attended [Effective Communication: Making your Point \(nicely\)](#) on Dec 8th.

- Linda ordered, received, checked in, distributed, cataloged, processed, and deleted 1,271 items. She also completed numerous administrative tasks.
- Patricia B. cataloged, processed, received, checked in, relabeled, returned, and repaired 569 items. 2,352 items were processed for C-Car, plus other administrative tasks.

Highlights from Reference —Barbara Cangiano

Whitney attended the “Bed Bugs in Your Library, Knowledge is Power” workshop held on December 6th at the Middletown Public Library. Five speakers shared their expertise and insights in dealing with the issue of bed bugs in libraries.

Katy created new signs for all the service desks complete with the library’s new logo. She also attended the monthly LUX (Library User Experience) meeting held at the West Haven Public Library on December 13th. Topics included a review of the Overdrive redesign, Sierra

update and Overdrive Advantage Program.

Barbara attended the LION Annual Board Meeting on December 18th at the Russell Library in Middletown. Recap of year’s accomplishments include Sierra upgrade, new website design, Overdrive upgrade and bookmobile, and more.

Deb works hard to keep the library website current with information about our library fundraisers, children’s events, Friends lectures, concerts, workshops and more.

Featured prominently this month was the Friends Annual Gift Basket Sale and holiday programs for adults and children's department.

Whitney and Katy continue to show off some of the great books we have in our non-fiction collection. This month, they created several displays highlighting the hidden gems from our collection. We love letting our readers know about them. This month's highlights were "'Tis the Season", "and the ever popular "Double Duty" (a selection of books by authors who write fiction and non-fiction books) and a popular one called "Real Sense of History".

Our homebound delivery service continues to expand. Reference staff selects materials based on individual's preferences and prepares them for the weekly delivery by clients of SARAH Inc. Books, magazines and DVDs are delivered to those Branford residents who have no other way to get to the library.

Each month, the Reference staff painstakingly prepares our electronic email newsletter of library events, a printed events calendar for those not electronically inclined as well as press releases for local newspapers to announce events.

News from Youth Services—Carly Rencsko

Staff members updated our bulletin boards with new fiction, nonfiction and movie selections recently added to our collection. Carol created a Christmas/holiday board to display greeting cards and photos from many of our patrons. Next to the checkout desk is a BOOKS ARE FOR GIVING board so that parents can see some of the more popular books printed throughout the year. The list was compiled by the Connecticut Library Consortium and the recommendations were made by fellow librarians.

Last summer the Branford school system provided a list of leveled readers at the end of their elementary school summer reading list. The list is extensive and runs from level 1 to 38! Titles range from simple readers to complex chapter books. This list is a wonderful tool and helps parents pick appropriate titles for their children based on their most recent reading level. Staff have gone through the titles and highlighted those that we own. The list is located behind the youth services desk and in the preschool room.

This month the number of preschool classes increased with our Stay and Play Friday morning playgroup meet-

ing weekly rather than bi-weekly. The number of families participating has increased, and there was demand for the program to be held every week. We expect the number of families to continue to increase.

Patricia recently updated our museum pass list to include the Stamford Museum and Nature Center. The latest pass donated by the Friends provides free admission and full access to the museum, walking trails, a full working farm, special events, Animal Embassy and a planetarium.

This month the Branford School District had their usual winter break and the youth services staff offered a variety of educational and entertaining programs. Some events included: a board game day, hot chocolate and a movie – The Polar Express, and a storytelling session with Erin Zeidenberg. Erin's program was simply delightful, focusing on the winter season and snow. She kept the audience guessing by presenting a variety of stories – some older and others she had created. Erin made sure to include interactive elements. The morning she came was truly sensational and we are looking forward to welcoming Erin

back in the future.

Miss Mary and I also had a full house during our early release day craft and welcomed our friends from Sliney's after school program with open arms! During the two-hour session children and parents were able to create a variety of holiday ornaments. Some were prepackaged and asked children to follow a certain number of directions while older participants sat with Miss Mary and learned how to use recycled books in order to create snowflakes and Christmas trees. By the end of the session over 80 patrons had participated! Photos of the event can be found on our facebook page.

The youth services department closed out the month with a music and movement program for babies through age five provided by Musical Folk! The program was split into two sessions and allowed children and parents to enjoy one another through music. The program uses instruments, recorded and live music which is exciting for children to experience and is 100% interactive. We love working with the program and will be looking forward to inviting them back to the library in the future.