



Report to the Board of Trustees

April 6, 2016

From the Director

March began on an exciting note as the Town's Ways and Means Committee, and then the RTM, voted to approve our request for funding to continue to the next phase of design for our renovation project. The next step is to issue an RFP/RFQ for a new architect, then begin the selection process.

March is also the time of year when we submit our annual budget request to the town. The RTM will come back in April with the town's final approved budget.

The LION best practices task force met and drafted its final recommendation for member libraries, which will be presented to the membership on April 26.

Along the same theme of best practices, the State Library has issued a draft of "Best Practices in CT Public Libraries, that includes recommendations for libraries to achieve three levels of achievement: essential, enhanced and exemplary. Once the practices are adopted, the State Library will offer opportunities for supporting workshops, with the long term goal of tying rewards to the achievement of the three levels.



The annual district-wide art show was held at the library this month. Over 300 people attended the opening reception on March 9th. On left: Superintendent Hamlet Hernandez with Art Teacher Madelyn Paskiewicz

Kathy Oxsalida and I have been in contact with our assigned Pro Bono attorney, and we expect to work further on the employee manual in the coming month.

CLA's Passport to Connecticut Libraries Program kicked off on April 1. The program encourages residents to explore the amazing diversity of our public libraries. Participants who visit at least five participating libraries and return their stamped passport to a participating library by May 6 will be entered into a state-wide drawing for a chance to win a \$150 Visa gift card for adults (18 and up) and a \$100 Visa gift card for children (under 18).

The State Library transitioned its DeliverIT service from an outside vendor to a delivery

team that works directly for the State of CT. So far, the transition has been smooth, except for the discovery of additional backlogged items left by the vendor. These items are expected to be cleared out and delivered completely by the beginning of April. Until then, patrons may experience slight delays in receiving items from other libraries.

I attended a rally for CT Places Matter at the State Capitol this month. It was interesting to see leaders from various organizations, including CT Humanities Council, CT Library Association, and a variety of historical societies, testify and promote displays highlighting the importance of their organizations.

Karen Jensen



Murder at Blackstone Abbey

Tickets are selling fast for our second annual murder mystery fundraiser planned for Friday, May 13th from 7-10pm.

Solve the clues, interview suspects, and help catch a killer.

Tickets are \$50 and include food, drinks and a deathly funny interactive play.

February Highlights from the Youth Services Department

For the past two months the Youth Services Department has been weeding older materials, locating missing items and clearing the catalog of billed and lost/paid materials. So far we have gotten through all of our new materials as well as the Readers and Stories. Though this process takes patience, time and a good eye, it gives us a chance to see which authors and subjects are circulating as well as what missing or billed materials need to be reordered. Next month we will continue the process with our Non-Fiction collection, which should be exciting since there are a couple of subjects we really need to update.

This month we have taken strides to revise collection labels to make it easier for patrons to locate materials in each of our rooms. Our newly purchased label maker made it possible for Angela and Kat to update our Non-Fiction and Fiction call numbers since they have altered from our most recent weed. Moving items has also created additional shelf space; making it possible for us to showcase new/popular series. Our newest series on display include: The Dork Diaries, Dragonbreath and Popularity Papers.

We also celebrated a FIRST with our 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program! This month Laurel Katz reached the 1000 book finish line and came in to show us her accomplishment and claim her final prize. The entire staff

could not believe that she had already met the 1000 book mark! The Youth Services staff is currently making a 1000 Books Before Kindergarten Hall of Fame bulletin board where children who have met the 1000 books goal can be recognized by having their photo on display in our department. We currently have 48 families enrolled in the program and have been promoting it through the local preschools, our baby bundles and when children get their first library cards.

We were also able to take the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten promotion on the road with our annual Preschool Fair. Over the past couple of months the Willoughby Wallace Memorial Library, Branford Early Childhood Collaborative and the James Blackstone Memorial Library have been working to organize a mini fair where all of Branford's preschools can be found in one location to make the decision process a little easier. This year we held the fair at Trinity Church's Parish Hall and had 13 schools attend. Each school was in charge of providing a hands-on activity to keep the kids busy while parents gathered information and asked questions. Both of Branford's libraries shared a table that held promotional materials, calendars, library card forms and giveaway books from Read to Grow.

This month's half day program with the MakerLab for K through 4th graders and their caregivers was all about coding. Believe it or not creating a digital footprint begins at birth and families are expected to not only navigate different forms of information but also ways in which these pieces are accessed, whether it be a tablet, computer or smartphone. Learning to code allows children to see how their favorite video games, sites and YouTube videos work. Code.org was created to bridge the content creation gap and show children that coding can not only be fun but a way for them to express themselves. Children that code can create their own websites, games and even animated videos. During our Lab Katy and I introduced the site and different ways that they could learn to code. Families were enthralled with the lessons and really enjoyed the fact that they could move droids from *Star Wars*, and make Anna from *Frozen* dance. The best part—code.org is 100% free and easily accessible from a computer or tablet. Feel free to try an hour of code today—visit code.org to learn more.

-Carly Lemire



Laurel Katz is the first to complete our 1000 Books Before Kindergarten Challenge!

The Great Give May 3 & 4, 2016

The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven will hold The Great Give 2016 online to raise money for local nonprofits serving Greater New Haven, during a 36-hour period from 8 a.m. May 3 to 8 p.m. May 4.

Gifts made to more than 400 participating nonprofits will be eligible to be matched and more than \$190,000 in matching funds and prizes for nonprofits is available, the release said.

The Great Give 2016 is the foundation's seventh communitywide online giving event.

Grand prizes will be awarded to the nonprofits that attract the most number of individual donors (\$15,000), get the

greatest number of new donors (\$10,000), raise the most money (\$5,000) and more.

Gifts will be matched on a pro-rated basis with additional funds by The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and Valley Community Foundation. Local businesses and corporations, including Alexion Pharmaceuticals, Liberty Bank Foundation and others, are offering prize and match money during the 36 hours. Additional features for donors have been added. A list of participating nonprofits, prizes and rules is online at www.thegreatgive.org.

The Great Give is the annual giving online event on giveGreater.org, a local resource for learning and giving cre-

ated in 2010. Since its beginning giveGreater.org has distributed over \$4 million to local nonprofits. Donors wishing to support the James Blackstone Memorial Library can visit giveGreater.org to view our profile, which includes our mission, governance, programs, finances and community impact. Donors can also stay connected by visiting www.facebook.com/givegreater and following @givegreater on Twitter. The Great Give 2016 is being held in conjunction with Give Local America's day of giving.

Watch for emails from us during the 36 hours!



The 2016 Preschool Fair in action.

Highlights from the Reference Department-February

February was a busy month for the Reference staff. Whitney attended the Reader's Advisory Roundtable Meeting and a publicity workshop at the New Haven Register. Christina and Kirsty taught Internet Basics and Email Basics.

We held our "Blind date with a book" program where we offered wrapped books for patrons to check out and take home; they only knew what they checked out when they unwrapped their books. Our Oscars display table was extremely successful; we are

working hard to increase our DVD collection of Oscar nominated films.

Debby, along with Deirdre and Gennett, presented searching tips, shortcuts for the Sierra circulation module, MARC record explanation, and other helpful information at the in-service day. Kirsty, with several colleagues, shared what was learned at a Customer Service workshop. Everyone felt that it was a very successful day.

Programs this month included Hula Hoops to High

Fashion, Menunkatuck Audubon lecture, Anatomy of a Romance discussion, sFOUR-zando concert, Branford Forum discussion of Political Polarization in the U.S., Opera lecture, Coloring and Conversation, Tilde Café, Saturday Cinema showing of Bridge of Spies and Branford Land Trust lecture. This month's Maker table was our button maker.

Deborah Trofatter



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...more than books

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information about programs
www.blackstonelibrary.org

April 2016 Program Highlights

Tilde Café

Saturday, April 2 @ 3 PM
Face-to-face conversations with a scientist about current science topics. For more information, visit www.tildecfe.org.

Shoreline Village CT Presents:

Annita Perez Sawyer
April 13 @ 2—3:30 PM
Annita Perez Sawyer will be here to discuss and read from her book *Smoking Cigarettes, Eating Glass*. For more information, visit shorelinevil-lagect.org.

Inside Emily Dickinson: Her Poetry & Her Life
Sunday, April 17 @ 2—4 PM
This inspiring biographical portrait is based on the letters, life stories and poems of Emily Dickinson. It combines performance with interactive workshop activities. In the

course of the show, creator and performer Ginger Grace reaches out to the audience for ideas, words and phrases, and with their input, new poems are created. The spirit of Emily Dickinson is celebrated not only with her story - filled with heart and humor - but with the immediate creativity taking place in the room! *Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

Investing 101

Monday, April 18 @ 6:30 PM
Connor Dolan from Guilford Savings Bank will answer your questions and teach you the basics of stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. This program is part of the CT Department of Banking's **DASH for the STASH** program where participants who attend will be eligible to win a \$1,000 contribution to an IRA. Registration required.

Sewing 101: Tote Bags & Alterations

April 24 @ 1:30—3:30 PM
May 7 @ 1:30—3:30 PM
Join us for a two-session introductory sewing class and learn sewing basics such as how to read a pattern and how to choose the best fabric for your project. You'll leave with your own unique tote bag and the knowledge you need to make basic alterations! Registration a must.

A History of

The Atlantic Wire Co.

April 26 @ 7—8:00 PM
Jane Bouley will discuss the land on Meadow Street and founder William Hitchcock who established the company in 1906. Come learn about the buildings, employees, the process of wire drawing, and the many products that were produced from the wire shipped by Atlantic Wire. *Sponsored by the Branford Historical Society.*

Check our website for more programs!

February 2016 Statistics—Deirdre Santora & Gennett Grinnell

Total Circulation: 12,932

February 2015: 12,734

ConnectiCard: 2,708

February 2015: 2,770

Renewals: 3,412

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 582

Overdrive audiobooks: 230

Zinio: 236

Interlibrary Loan

Borrowed 18 Loaned 35

Children's Programs:

Babies (0-2)

14 programs/188 attendance

Preschool (3-5)

7 programs/169 attendance

School-age (6-11)

11 programs/312 attendance

All Ages

0 programs/0 attendance

Total Children's Programs: 32

Total Attendance: 669

Teen Programs (12+)

6 programs/38 attendance

Adult programs

23 programs/423 attendance

Lucy Hammer Room

51 meetings/148 attendance

Computer Sessions: 1579

Facebook: 1252 Likes

MailChimp: 4260 subscribers

Average Daily Visitors: 516

Days Open: 27