



Report to the Board of Trustees

April 4, 2018

Campaign for the Blackstone

Almost one year ago, we launched Campaign for the Blackstone, the fundraising effort designated to pay a portion of the capital cost of renovation and redesign.

With your help, we have raised \$686,000 toward our goal of \$800,000. The Town of Branford has approved funding for \$3.4 million toward the project; the State Library has awarded a \$1 million grant, leaving us with just \$14,000 left to go! Compared to the total cost, this is a small amount; for us it is very significant. We'll continue to work toward raising those funds and we appreciate your support. To donate, visit our website and look for the Campaign for the Blackstone badge, or request a donation envelope on your next visit to the library.

Every amount helps, and donations up to \$1,000 will be matched by the Branford Community Foundation!

From the Director

The renovation planning group met this month to review alternative designs for the new entryway. The group unanimously approved a design that modifies the stone panel sizes and cladding joints. The entry vestibule roof was also modified to add a new hip roof in place of the dome roof. The modified design was subsequently approved by the State Historic Preservation Office and will be presented at the Town Center Revitalization and Review Board's April 11 meeting for approval.

The State Bond Commission cancelled its regular meeting scheduled for March 29, so we hope our project will be placed on the April 26 agenda. No contracts can be approved until the Bond Commission approves the grant.

Our budget request passed review by the Board of Finance. Many thanks to Library Board Vice President Robin Sandler and Finance Manager Kathy Oxsalida for attending with me. The RTM Education Committee reviews our request on April 2.

The Development Committee of the Board met this month to map out a plan for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. The draft was sent to Board members for discussion.



We published Uncover Branford II in February. Branford's ERAGE classes participated for this volume, which was celebrated at a special reception. Carly, Katy and Whitney have been doing such a great job with the project—there are over 300 members on meetup who follow it now!

The Capital Campaign Committee is working on plans to hold a raffle for a naming opportunity in the renovated building. The Campaign is very close to reaching the \$100,000 matching grant from the Branford Community Foundation. The Campaign still needs major gifts in order to meet its \$800,000 goal.

Friends of the Library have established a new editorial committee to work on Marble Columns. The next issue will be mailed to members in Mid-April and features an article on Ella Wheeler Wilcox in time for National Poetry Month.

With the help of Whitney and Sarah, Katy has launched a weekly Teen Café open after school every Tuesday afternoon.

The Passport to CT Libraries will take place from April 2—30. This initiative from the CT Library Association encourages patrons to visit libraries all over the state to discover the variety of resources available. The Blackstone Library will give car magnets to those who present a passport for our stamp.

Jenna Anthony applied for and won a \$1000 tuition scholarship from the Fairfield Library Administrators Group—AND \$1000 from CLA! She competed with library students from all over the state; reviewers thought her application was quite remarkable. Jenna will be recognized by both organizations at the CLA Conference in April. Congratulations, Jenna!

Karen Jensen

Highlights from the Youth Services Department—February

For the past three months the Youth Services Department has been running seamlessly without me. This would not have been possible without the library supporting me. I would like to thank the entire staff for filling in, answering questions and giving the Youth Services staff assistance when problems arose.

I would also like to personally thank Miss Mary and Miss Jenn for working extra hours, taking on new tasks, training our volunteers and for continuing to provide top notch service while I was away. I did not have any doubts leaving the department in your hands and have only heard staff members and patrons sing your praises since I have returned.

Staying home with my daughter has been a joyful experience but I still came to the library once a week to partake in baby storytime not only to check-in with the co-workers I so missed but also to allow my daughter to see other children, read books, experience music and be part of a group. I was able to make connections with other first time mothers and fathers and had a developmentally appropriate class to bring my child to in the middle of the winter for free! This was something that I looked forward to each week and became part of our schedule. Seeing the library through a parental lens and how we promote literacy and development all while bringing people together energized me and reinforced our importance to the communi-

ty. Heading back to work at times is hard but I am reminded every time that I am with my daughter that we are providing essential services for people just like me! So, in the end I am happy to be back and am ready to continue to learn, provide service and try new things.

While I was away Miss Mary and Miss Jenn worked with the Willoughby Wallace Memorial Library to take part in Take Your Child to the Library Day. Every year both libraries work together to provide special programming at both locations. Since the winter Olympics were underway both locations decided that they would follow a winter sports theme.

At the James Blackstone Memorial Library Miss Jenn created an online scavenger hunt that had families use Olympic.org to answer past and present questions about the Olympic games. This was a great way to create excitement around the games while having participants practice their research skills. Families were also welcome to create flag pins, paper torches and a variety of Olympic themed games like: snowball bowling and Olympic BINGO. The event brought in a total of 30 families and Miss Mary said that everyone had a blast.

Miss Jenn also helped Katy at the middle school's annual library card drive. Throughout the day Miss Jenn and Katy were camped out in the school's media center to meet students that needed

new library cards. This also gives the library an opportunity to create connections and talk to students about upcoming programs and services that may be of interest. Every year we pull in a fair amount of students that have never had or lost their library cards. All of the database entering, or card creating actually happens back at the library so I would like to thank those who took the time to get these students back in the system so that they can start using the library as soon as possible.

Miss Mary continued to provide outreach while I was away, visiting the Child Development Center, Saint Mary's School and the Family Resource Center. Going out into the community and being visible is important to the Youth Services Department and the library as a whole. When children see Miss Mary they associate her with the library and are more apt to visit the Blackstone since they have had a positive experience with her. During the renovation we are planning to not only continue but possibly expand our outreach so that we can come in contact with additional preschools and possibly elementary and middle school students after school. Making these connections will not only increase our visibility but also facilitate discussions on how we can partner and provide services to schools in the future.

Carly Lemire



Olympic BINGO!

Gaming Together

Playing board games can build community and bring diverse people together for a powerful shared experience. Play has been proven to be essential to our social skills, adaptability, intelligence, creativity and problem solving abilities, and board games are the perfect vehicle for play.

Board gaming not only exercises a player's creativity and imagination—it can also facilitate learning in an experiential way. Some of the best historically and scientifically accurate games have taken their designers years to complete due to the extensive research behind them. One example of a powerful, historically accurate game is Freedom: The Underground

Railroad, designed by Brian Mayer. Freedom allows each player to explore the role of a notable abolitionist working through pivotal events to end slavery in the United States. This game has been used in classrooms throughout the country and is a fantastic asset to libraries as well.

A notable scientifically accurate game is Cytosis: A Cell Building Game by John Coveyou. This gorgeously illustrated game takes place entirely within a human cell, allowing players to carry out essential actions within the cell.

The Blackstone Library has begun offering game nights with a variety of board games, sponsored by the

Friends of the Library. The game nights have been well-attended by people in a wide range of ages—one teen girl even celebrated her birthday at a game night session!

On April 12, the library will expand on this program by offering a Family Game Night. With over 30 different games to choose from, we'll have something for everyone. Playing together is a great way to relax, bond, and make family memories!

Interested families may register by calling 203.488.1441, ext. 318 or through our website.

Whitney Gayle

pronunciator: 

ESL courses taught in 51 non-English languages.

Highlights from the Reference Department-February

I'm very pleased to report that following two classes on how to use Pronunciator that were given to ERACE ESL students by Christina and Sarah, our registered users went up by 133 in a single month. (To put this in perspective, we had 17 new users in January.) Kudos to Christina and Sarah for providing such a valuable service to our patrons!

Whitney and Sarah continue to have great success with the Adult Game Night, held on the first Friday of every month. They are now offering themed game nights; the mystery themed one was a big hit. Whitney will be trying

a new, related event called Puzzled Pint in April. It's a casual, social puzzling event which takes place all over the world. Participants solve puzzles in teams of 2 to 6. Whitney and Katy also have a Family Game Night planned and Katy will be offering board games at her new Teen Café on Tuesday afternoons.

This month the library launched its Roku borrowing program. The library owns two Rokus, which allow patrons to stream movies and TV shows (both newer and older model TVs can use these Rokus. All that's needed is an Internet connection.) Included is a subscription to

Netflix as well as over 40 movies available on the library's VUDU account. So far, patron response has been very positive.

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank Christina, Jenna and Angela for keeping me up to date on current DVDs, missing series, and suggestions for purchase. It's a big help to me as I try to keep our DVD collection current and updated. A big thank you as well to Jenna for updating and maintaining our printed booklists and for re-formatting them for the library's website.

Deb Trofatter



James Blackstone Memorial Library
758 Main Street
Branford, CT 06405

203.488.1441
reference@blackstonelibrary.org
facebook.com/blackstonelibrary
twitter.com/blackstonlib
www.blackstonelibrary.org

...more than books

Join our email list for more
information about programs
www.blackstonelibrary.org

April 2018 Program Highlights

Programs with an ** require registration. Call the library at 203.488.1441 ext 318, or visit the website: www.blackstonelibrary.org

Intro to Social Media**

April 5 @ 2-3:15 pm
Learn the basics of the most popular social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram. We'll teach you how to create an account, control your privacy settings, and create your own posts.

Sewing 101: Tote Bags**

April 7 @ 1-4 pm
Join us for a 3 hour introductory sewing class. You'll learn sewing basics such as how to read a pattern and how to choose the best fabric for your project. You'll leave knowing how to make your own unique tote bag in the fabric of your choice!

First Friday Game Group (F2G2)**

April 6 @ 6-9 pm
Join us for game night! We'll be playing all types of board games, from fast-paced, hilarious party games to highly strategic, thinking games that will leave your head spinning! We've got games for everyone, no matter your experience level. Feel free to bring your own games too. Adults of all ages welcome.

Uncover Branford**

April 14 @ 10:30 am
Share your favorite Branford spots and plan an outing as a group to visit and uncover new places in town.

Intro to Hoopla: Stream Movies, Music & More**

April 19 @ 2-3:15pm
Download FREE ebooks, audiobooks, comics, movies, TV

series and music to your PC, tablet or smartphone. NOTE: Hoopla is sponsored by the Friends of Blackstone Library, and available to Blackstone Library cardholders.

Ask a Lawyer**

April 19 @ 6pm
A free consultation with a lawyer, brought to you by the New Haven County Bar Association. First-come, first-served. Signup available in the Reference Department 30 minutes before program.

Bestsellers Book Club**

April 28 @ 3:30 pm
We'll discuss *White Houses* by Amy Bloom. Copies available at the library-all are welcome! *Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.*

*Check our website for more programs! Programs with ** require registration.*

February 2018 Statistics—Deirdre Santora & Gennett Grinnell

Total Circulation: 12,007

February 2017: 11,018

borrowIT: 2,649

February 2017: 2,598

Renewals: 2,691

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 835
Overdrive audiobooks: 288
RB Digital (Zinio): 192
Hoopla: 213 plays
Kanopy: 78 plays
Pronunciator: 348 users

Interlibrary Loan

Borrowed 15 Loaned 19

Children's Programs:

Babies (0-2)
7 programs/178 attendance

Preschool (3-5)
8 programs/64 attendance

School-age (6-11)
5 programs/69 attendance

All Ages
1 programs/26 attendance

Total Children's Programs: 21

Total Attendance: 337

Teen Programs (12+)

2 programs/18 attendance

Adult programs

21 programs/335 attendance

Lucy Hammer Room

52 meetings/206 attendance

Computer Sessions: 2,068

Facebook: 1,525 Likes

MailChimp: 7,201 subscribers

Average Daily Visitors: 500

Days Open: 26