



Report to the Board of Trustees

April 6, 2022

From the Director

We presented the Library's budget request to the Town Board of Finance on March 21 and our request was approved with no changes at their meeting on March 28. We present to the RTM Education Committee on April 4.

Our team continues to work with Trustee Michelle Blank on our strategic framework and we are on target for the draft writeup by June.

The Library Director position was posted on various local and national platforms. The committee reports that they are beginning to receive applications, which is great news!

Katy attended Futures School through a program sponsored by the State Library. The Futures School is based on the premise that old ways of developing strategy, managing change and creating innovation are no longer adequate in a complex landscape of accelerating and exponential change. The Futures School leverages a holistic framework for thinking and acting on the future called Natural Foresight®, which includes tools such as environmental scanning, assumption and bias modeling and scenario development.

I had a lovely exchange with a



We received some quince branches as a result of some spring pruning. Their blooms can be forced by making cross cuts on the cut end of the branches and putting them in water. Be careful to replace the water every few days to ensure blooming.

patron who became fascinated with our display on William Hopson, the artist who created the library's first bookplate. She was inspired to write an article about him for submission to the *Daily Nutmeg*, and we decided to keep the display in place a bit longer in the event that photography is needed.

We received the final payment from the State Library to close out our \$1M construction grant, and turned that payment over to the Town of Branford. We are in the process of closing out the SHPO grant, which will offi-

cially conclude the project.

Our program planning team met to discuss plans for summer events. The summer reading theme is *Oceans of Possibilities* and there will be programs for children as well as adults. We will have supplemental funding from a State Library Summer Enrichment Grant for children's writing workshops—as a result of Carly's excellent work.

Finally, several staff are registered to attend the CT Library Association conference in May - in person for the first time since 2019!

Karen Jensen

Mini Golf
at Blackstone Library



April 30 – May 1

Presented by:



Highlights from the Youth Services Department—February

Much of February was spent planning to welcome our families to in-person programs again. We decided to have story times along with outdoor activities for spring break, and we went through all of our toddler toys and backpack kits so that we could get them back on the Youth Services floor. Items in rough shape were discarded so that we could start fresh - including an update to our train table. Families have been asking for them for quite some time so it felt good bringing this service back to those that have been looking for a place to play and connect.

We also held a virtual research workshop with the CT Experiential Learning Center or CELC, a private middle school in Branford that focuses on hands-on learning experiences with small class sizes. Every year we work with CELC to access resources for their final research project. This year's theme was renewable energy, so Miss Sarah and I worked on pulling specific books based on each middle schooler's resource. We met through ZOOM to show students how to use our catalog, place holds and access our downloadable resources like Kanopy so that they could reference documentary films related to their particular resource. We also showed students researchIT CT, in order to access vetted articles about their topics. One of the nice things about this resource is it breaks

down databases by age, so there is a full set of resources for middle school learners. There is even a reading assist option for those that need a little support.

Miss Mary and I held Take Your Child to Library Day in the Youth Services area and had great success! The drop-in program featured Elephant and Piggie activities which families could read, create and find! Once all activities were complete, families received cupcakes to celebrate! The drop-in format allowed families to attend on their own timeframe and we believe that is one of the many reasons why our Take & Makes are so successful. Families like the fact that they can snag an activity and then complete it when they have time. Hosting something throughout the day has a similar effect, making it possible for everyone to participate.

I have represented the library on the School Readiness Committee for quite some time. The committee oversees state funds that make it possible for children to attend high quality preschool programs at a reasonable rate. Besides working on the federal grant, the group is also responsible for putting on informative events. This year we are hosting a Week of the Young Child Event on April 9, on the Town green, where preschool art will be displayed. The event will include music, storytelling, food

and drink. The Branford Community Foundation has sponsored the event making it possible for 700+ families to take home a copy of *Be You* by Peter Reynolds. The book is all about expressing your true self and children are encouraged to create a self portrait so that they can share what is most important to them. I am currently working on nailing down how many copies of the book each Branford based preschool will need. I will then deliver the titles as soon as possible so that each school has plenty of time to distribute the books and create their art projects. The event is slated to take from 10AM to 1PM.

Miss Sarah started a whiteboard question of the week and it has been super popular. We currently have two whiteboards in the Youth Services Department - one entering the kids space and another for the teens. We have been using it to share favorites (foods, books, tv shows and more) but also as a way for patrons to communicate. Many times users will agree with other posts or add to them by drawing pictures or making comments. It's delightful watching everyone participate. It has become something the teens look forward to doing - they literally stop in their tracks to see what the question will be. Miss Mary and I also really enjoy reading all of the creative spelling that comes our way.

Carly Lemire

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE hobbies and fun activities?

Tell us in the Time Capsule Submission Form & be a part of our history!



**BLACKSTONE LIBRARY
125th ANNIVERSARY
TIME CAPSULE**

We're collecting your stories from now through the end of April to go in our time capsule! Tell us about your favorite things, favorite places and experiences in town and at the Blackstone! We can't wait to hear from you.

Your stories (and images, too!) will be printed on special paper and included in our time capsule, which will be sealed in June. We'll open it again in 25 years and see how life has changed!

Visit our website to participate!

Highlights from the Reference Department-February

Technology education continues to be an important part of what we do. Christina and Brendan regularly have a full house at their Senior Center Drop-In Tech Help sessions. We also schedule private tech help appointments and hold a monthly drop-in at the library. These sessions remain very popular and we cover a wide range of subjects, from resume help and job searching resources to help with smartphones, sending photos via text and email or transferring photos to a Mac. Christina has even held tech sessions in cars, assisting patrons with setting up their Bluetooth connections.

The library had a number of interesting program offerings this month (some in person)

in addition to our recurring monthly programs for adult coloring, Latin, poetry, knitting and book groups. We hosted the Branford Historical Society's program "Bicycle Craze to Auto Age: CT Leads the Way", offered a program on mindful eating, a violin concert, a virtual author event, Branford Forum's "The History of American Cuisine and How It Got This Way" and a return of our in person monthly movie showing.

We recently had a patron ask if we could help her locate information on the Branford Women's Club support of the library when the Children's Department was first envisioned. Fortunately, we have a collection of scrapbooks with newspaper articles,

notes, and letters about the library and one dedicated just to the fundraising efforts made by the Branford Women's Club. We are always delighted when we can find exactly what our patrons are searching for!

-Deb Trofatter



Rosettes are featured extensively in classical architecture

Rosettes in the Library

Are you ready to learn about another architectural detail of the Blackstone Library? For today's 125th Anniversary Fact, we're sharing what is by far the most common motif sprinkled throughout the library. The library is home to hundreds of rosettes in marble, wood, and metal, but what exactly is the humble rosette? A rosette is a round, stylized flower design, used extensively in sculptural objects from antiquity, appear-

ing in Mesopotamia and used to decorate the funeral sites in Ancient Greece. It was adopted later in Romanesque and Renaissance, and also common in the art of Central Asia, spreading as far as India where it is used as a decorative motif in Greco-Buddhist art. Since the library is modeled on the Greek Erechtheion (Temple of Athena), it makes sense that the building would feature an architectural detail so popular with the

Greeks, as well as the rest of the ancient world. The next time you're at the Blackstone, see how many you can find!

-Jenna Anthony



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...more than books

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

April 2022 Program Highlights

English Conversation Group
Tuesdays at 10:00 – 11:00 am
in our Conference Room
Wednesdays 4-5:00 pm Zoom
For ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) adults. For more information and to register, contact Kathleen McKenna of Literacy Volunteers at 203-285-2621 or kmckenna@lvaghn.org.

Painting En Plein Air
April 5 @ 6:30- 7:30 pm
Patty Meglio shares more than 20 years' experience painting en plein air in New England. This is a Blackstone Artists Circle Gallery Talk – the artist's work will be on display in the upper rotunda gallery in April.

Awakening to Change: Social Justice Discussion
April 7 @ 7:00 - 8:30 pm
This session will focus on the true meaning of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Art of the Blackstone Library: Oliver Dennett Grover
April 9 @ 2:00 - 3:00 pm
The crown jewels of the Blackstone Library are our murals, painted by renowned Chicago artist Oliver Dennett Grover. Join Grover's official biographer Joel Dryer for a discussion of the art featured on the dome, as well as his life, art, and legacy. *Sponsored by the Friends of Blackstone Library.*

The Finest Library in New England: Branford & The Blackstone in 1896
April 13 @ 6:00 - 7:00 pm
Historian Jane Bouley provides a snapshot of Branford in 1896. Learn about what life was like and how the Blackstone Library came to be.

Drop-in Tech Session
April 14 @ 2:00 - 4:00 pm
Have a tech question? Drop in to the library for answers!

First come, first served. Sessions will be limited to 15 minutes; no registration.

Awakening to Change Social Justice Discussion
April 21 @ 7:00 - 8:30 pm
This session will focus on the phrase "achievement gap" and explore racial inequities in public schools.

A Story of Friendship and Resettlement from the Front Lines of Afghanistan
April 23 @ 2:00 - 3:00 pm
Join Ann Marshman, IRIS and CIRI Afghan resettlement volunteer, for a personal story of soldiers, interpreters, and the rescue of dozens of people in Kabul. You'll also learn how you can support Afghan refugees in our town.

Best Seller Book Club
April 30 @ 3:30 - 4:30 pm
This month we're reading *The Maid* by Nita Prose.

Programs require registration—see our website at blackstonelibrary.org

February 2022 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

Total Circulation: 6,670
February 2021: 4,306

borrowIT: 1,266
February 2021: 1,024

Renewals: 4,499

Computer Sessions: 498
WIFI Logins: 2601

Facebook: 2085 Likes
Instagram: 1084 Followers
MailChimp: 7542

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 1,555
Overdrive audiobooks: 767
Overdrive Magazines: 131
HOOPLA: 1187
Kanopy: 337
Pronunciator: 586
Ancestry Library: 339
New Haven Register: 130
Creative Bug: 12

Total Downloadable: 5,044

Children's Programs
18 programs/169 attendance

Teen Programs (12+)
9 programs/62 attendance

Adult programs
40 programs/394 attendance

Lucy Hammer Room & Conference Room
148 meetings/444 attendees

Average Daily Visitors: 285
Days Open: 27