



Report to the Board of Trustees

December 5, 2018

From the Director

Well, we did it! We exceeded our fundraising goal of \$800,000 and celebrated by unveiling our thermometer on the library lawn on November 15th. We are so grateful to the community for supporting our renovation project.



Win Naming Rights In the Renovated Library

Raffle tickets are currently on sale in support of the library renovation. The tickets cost \$20 each—the grand prize is naming rights to the Upper Rotunda art gallery.

Tickets are available at blackstonelibrary.org and at the library Reference Desk.

Groundbreaking for the project will take place on December 6th, and we will begin preparing for the renovation shortly thereafter.

We also learned this month that the library was featured in *CT Architecture: Stories of 100 Places*, by Christopher Wigren. Copies of the book are available in our collection and a program with the author will be scheduled in the upcoming months.

Deb was recognized in the *Shoreline Times* for her outstanding work in helping to track down the story of Austin Ryer, a World War II soldier who was killed in action. We were able to purchase a mounted copy of the article to display in the library.

The program committee met to plan upcoming programs for the winter season. As we are finally ready to begin the renovation, programs will take place in the Lucy Hammer Room, the Reading Room, or off site. The calen-



It was a wonderful feeling to update the Campaign Thermometer this month. L to R: Eunice Lasala, Sandra Baldwin, Andy McKirdy, Karen Jensen, Matt Hughes, Kathleen Fox, Lisa and Al Bertoline.

dar will be ready by mid-December.

The Friends of the Library approved a major gift to the library, which will be formally announced at their December 18 meeting.

Deb Trofatter, Katy McNicol and I are working on a project for Branford's 375th anniversary that will incorporate facts from Branford's history with a map featuring selected landmarks. We are also grateful for the help of our Town Historian, Jane Bouley, and two local artists, Jean Polka and Pamela Morgan, for their help with this project.

Katy and I attended a Fairfield Library Administrator's Group meeting which included a robust discussion of fundraising strategies of various libraries. The meeting was very informative and we hope

to make use of the knowledge we gained by participating.

For the third year, we decorated a wreath for the Branford Town Merchants group. Proceeds from the wreath auction will benefit Feed Branford Kids.

We were sad to say farewell to Jenn Aldieri, a part-time staff member in the Youth Services Department. Jenn moved to South Carolina with her family and we wish her all the best.

The Friends of the library are ready for their annual Holiday Basket Sale which kicks off on December 6th at 5pm. There will be over 50 baskets to choose from; literally something for everyone!

Karen Jensen

Highlights from the Youth Services Department—October



Salt and Pepper made a SPLASH at the Halloween Parade!

October is always buzzing in the Youth Services Department and this year was no exception. Even with the pending renovation Miss Mary and I knew that we wanted to host our annual Halloween Parade (no matter what the building looked like) and families were happy that we did since ninety plus people showed up to take part in the event. Pictures of our storytime and parade can be found on our Facebook and Instagram page, both displaying the magnitude of the event! Even with so many faces the class remained calm and families participated in all the books, rhymes and songs we threw at them. Miss Mary and I were extremely impressed and couldn't have been more happy with the results.

The entire staff participates by handing out goodies and dressing up for the occasion. At the reference desk kids were greeted by a sweet pirate and talking skeleton! Down below staff members were dressed as witches and kittens and bedazzled with orange scarves and spider leggings! Miss Mary and I kept our costume pairing tradition alive by becoming Salt and Pepper - the popular table spices.

Families thanked us for our time and the younger set of kids had a safe place to sing, dance and share their costumes. The only question is...what to dress up as next year?

This year we also participated in the town-wide Trick or

Trunk program at Foote Park. This event gives preschoolers another chance to experience Halloween without staying out late. Different town agencies dress-up, decorate their cars and hand out treats. This year Miss Jenn transformed my car into a monster's mouth - teeth and tongue included. Many of the families got a kick out of our display and we handed out treats along with information about our 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program. Word is spreading and we have seen a handful of new participants check-in.

This month's half day program for elementary school students was a mish mash of different crafts. Families could drop in to work with duct tape, create personalized buttons, bead, make paper pumpkins and more! Although the program was small Miss Katy and I were able to meet new families and perfect our beading skills.

Miss Katy and I also spent two days at Branford High School sharing information about programming and e-materials patrons have access to from home. The school media specialists wanted everyone in the freshmen class to have an active card in order to access e-materials, a collection they are lacking.

It was great being able to meet everyone, answer questions and share information about Overdrive and Hoopla. I think the students were surprised by the fact that both sites had new titles, did not collect fines and could down-

load immediately! Being free doesn't mean cheap and I believe they were surprised by what we had to offer, including the teachers.

Miss Katy also visited the High School earlier this month to talk about volunteering opportunities. One of the ideas Miss Katy came up with was to combine service hours with Teen Café by creating a Teen Advisory Board. Our hope was to bring together a group of teens that could help with programming, talk up the Library, create displays and even help us with our new Teen Space. We found that 20 or more students were interested. Some are working with me during Maker Mondays to assist our middle school students while others are meeting during Teen Café to complete small projects, move our Worm Wednesday (it's on Instagram) and even construct a Teen Advisory Blog. Many are new faces, so we hope that this interest in the Library and being part of the Blackstone will grow and continue.

Last but far from least the Youth Services Department wants to thank the Friends of the Blackstone Library for participating in Light the Night - Branford's Halloween event for families. Three "Friends" volunteered to dress up and handout sweets on our front steps. Lots of families came and because of them the Library was able to have a face and be a part of the event. We thank you!

Carly Lemire

Groundbreaking Scheduled for December 6th



A groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for Thursday, December 6th at the library.

We expect mobilization for the project to begin by the end of December, with the

Youth Services Department moving into the Auditorium. There will be some construction equipment in the parking lot, so parking will be more challenging.

The library will be open throughout the process, which is expected to last one year.

Project updates will be posted regularly.

Highlights from the Reference Department-October

The author Neil Gaiman once said **“Google can bring you back a hundred thousand answers. A librarian can bring you back the right one.”** This quote is shown to be true at Blackstone Library on a regular basis. While we all love and use Google and other online sites regularly, sifting through the thousands of results can be very difficult. We are always pleased when we can help very frustrated patrons find the answer they are looking for.

Our experiences this month in the Reference Department definitely underscored this, as we answered a wide variety of questions.

One patron was looking for a telephone number for a person in Colombia. While we were not successful in finding a white pages for the town of Pereira, we were able to refer the patron to the local embassy, library and city government website where they could get in contact to ask about how to obtain a local person’s telephone number.

Another patron was trying to track down a story about a family member, a young girl who had died in a fire in Branford. We were able to locate several newspaper articles in our Branford History database. It is unlikely that

the patron would have had as much success on her own; we found three extremely different spellings of the girl’s last name. We were able to find the articles using just her first name and other keywords, but strategies such as these are not known to everyone. This is one of the most important attributes of a librarian in our connected world; the ability to tailor specific searches and narrow down the results to end up with the answer our patrons are searching for.

Debby Trofatter



Deb Trofatter was recognized for her work in tracking down information on a WWII hero.



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

December 2018 Program Highlights

First Friday Game Group (F2G2)**

December 7 @ 6-9 pm

Join us for game night! This month we'll be playing Wits 'n Wagers. Read a fun question and everyone writes down their guess. Then place your bets... Which guess is closest? Feeling confident? Bet on yourself. Think others know better? Bet on them. No idea? Bet on any guess and hope to get lucky. Adults of all ages welcome.

Intro to 3D Printing**

December 11 @ 6-7:45 pm

Learn how to create your own 3D files for printing with instructor Jim Davis. For all ages.

Uncover Branford**

December 15 @ 10:30am-12

Share your favorite Branford spots and plan an outing as a

group to visit and uncover new places in town.

Books & Brews**

December 19 @ 6—8 pm

Each month, Books & Brews offers 2 titles to choose from, each with its own discussion group to take part in.

We bring the following month's books to each meeting. Come out and grab one for next month's group. You can also borrow one from the library (place a hold on our online catalog), or purchase your own copy. New members welcome. Read one of the titles and come out and join the fun!

Find us on meetup.com to connect with the group and RSVP to the meeting. Books 'n' Brews meets at Thimble Island Brewery.

Lock Picking Club

December 17 @ 10—11 am

Join us for our first meeting, lead by Jim Davis. This is an informal learning and discussion setting where attendees are encouraged to bring their own locks and lockpicks and any relevant equipment. Attendees should have a way to identify their equipment. Jim and the library will provide a limited amount of picking resources for those who do not have much or any equipment.

Ask A Lawyer**

December 20 @ 6—8 pm

Free consultation with a lawyer, from the New Haven County Bar Association. First-come, first-served. Sign up at Reference up to 30 minutes before program begins.

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

October 2018 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

Total Circulation: 10,296

October 2017: 10,767

borrowIT: 2,328

October 2017: 2,358

Renewals: 2,777

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 881

Overdrive audiobooks: 427

RB Digital: 316

Hoopla: 387 plays

Kanopy: 123 plays

Pronunciator: 393 users

Children's Programs:

Babies (0-2)

10 programs/180 attendance

Preschool (3-5)

7 programs/121 attendance

School-age (6-11)

6 programs/46 attendance

All Ages

0 programs/0 attendance

Total Children's Programs: 23

Total Attendance: 347

Teen Programs (12+)

3 programs/45 attendance

Adult programs

17 programs/171 attendance

Lucy Hammer Room

40 meetings/221 attendance

Computer Sessions: 2,211

Facebook: 1,579 Likes

Instagram: 374 Followers

MailChimp: 7,218 subscribers

Average Daily Visitors: 460

Days Open: 29