



# Report to the Board of Trustees

February 7, 2018

## From the Director

On January 10, the RTM approved funding for the library renovation project. This was an effort that required many hours of involvement from our staff, members of our trustees, Friends and capital campaign committee, our first selectman Jamie Cosgrove, the town of Branford board of finance, and ultimately the RTM, whose members worked hard to understand the project and make a decision for the betterment of the community.

Through it all, our donors and library supporters, especially those who spoke in favor of the project at public meetings, have been instrumental in demonstrating the incredible public support that this project has.

The Blackstone Library's plan for a renovation and addition will ensure that the library can provide 21<sup>st</sup> century services now and in the future. Children will now have a safe and spacious area in which to learn the concepts they need to become ready to succeed in school. Teens will finally have an area of their own where they can practice group study and explore new technology in a space that is appropriate for them and their level of development.

### *Branford Community Foundation Matching Grant*

Last March, the Branford Community Foundation awarded the library the largest grant in the history of their organization. Over the past year, more than 600 members of our community donated amounts ranging from \$10 up to \$1,000—all of which have been matched by the Community Foundation.

To date, we have received almost \$95,000. The Foundation is still matching donations until we reach \$100,000. Please donate to show your support for the project and help us to claim the entire amount!

For more information on how to donate, visit the library's website at [www.blackstonelibrary.org](http://www.blackstonelibrary.org)



*Game Night takes place on the first Friday of the month and is one of several programs that will continue in the Lucy Hammer Room during construction.*

Having a computer lab will mean more tech classes can happen for seniors and adults of all ages. We'll be able to take our makerlab equipment out of storage and make it accessible to all. With two new meeting rooms, our community will have more space for opportunities to collaborate. And finally, with all of these wonderful things on the inside, we will have a beautiful access point from the outside, which creates a more functional service point, a more comfortable and accessible entrance, and the roof does extra duty as a terrace. All of these improvements will go a long way to make sure the library continues to be a jewel and a center for learning, exploration and community.

Every day between 500-600 people visit the Blackstone

Library to read, write, learn, meet and collaborate, conduct job searches and improve technology skills. In the past 20 years, annual visits to the library have grown from 86,500 to 180,000 per year. Last year, community members held 2,314 meetings at the library, borrowed 240,893 items, and used the computers 27,711 times. Over 14,600 people attended programs for adults and children. We are excited to move forward with a project that supports these evolving needs of our community.

With approval from the State Bond Commission, construction on the project should begin in late May.

*Karen Jensen*

## Renovation Plan Progress Timeline

**April 2012** – Board of Trustees commissions Milone & McBroom to review options for adding extra parking. FIO Partners is hired to guide the strategic planning process.

**December 2012** – Strategic Plan receives input from over 600 community members via online survey, interviews and focus groups, and is adopted by Library Board of Trustees. The plan is distributed to all participants and posted on the library website. Issues to be addressed include the location of the children's area, lack of teen space, a greater need for technology and meeting space, and the unwelcoming and awkward rear entryway.

**February 2013** – Parking study recommends options for adding parking. Trustees meet with First Selectman and conclude that the Main Street Gateway project will add required amount of additional parking needed for library.

**June 2013** – Arbonies King Vlock (AKV) engaged to conduct an architectural review in which the town government and members of the public were invited to participate in a series of workshops held over the summer. Public input was used to inform the design that was ultimately approved by the library board.

**September 2013** – Conceptual design and cost estimate provided by AKV submitted to State Library and \$1 million grant is extended. New deadline for local matching funds is March 1, 2018. Cost of the

project is estimated at \$6.9 million.

**February 2014** – Trustees meet with First Selectman and are advised that the Library should be able to demonstrate significant support for renovation plans before requesting funding from the RTM. Throughout the year, the library focuses on raising awareness for the renovation plan.

**April 2015** – Library displays renovation plans in rotunda and establishes Capital Campaign Committee. (Plans remain on display.)

**May 2015** – Trustees vote to support Main Street Gateway initiative.

**April 2016** – RTM approves \$50,000 funding, to be matched by Library funds, to move to the schematic phase of design, which will allow the library to have a better idea of its cost.

**May 2016** – Library applies to Branford Community Foundation for a \$100,000 matching grant to support the renovation. Library engages consultant to advise Capital Campaign Committee.

**July 2016** – Representatives appointed by the Town and Library Board, including the Town Engineer, select Silver Petrucelli & Associates to refine design created by AKV and provide schematic design documents.

**September-December 2016** – Design refined, Capital Campaign supporting documents created.

**March 2017**-Library receives \$100,000 matching grant from Branford Community Foundation; Capital Campaign launches with a goal of \$800,000.

**May 2017** - Library funds design development phase and hires Downes Construction to provide estimate.

**June 2017** - The public was invited to five information sessions at the library in May & June of this year, via a town-wide mailing.

**July 2017** – Library endorses Main Street Gateway project at public meeting. The project is expected to add needed parking adjacent to planning new entrance at rear of library building.

**Summer/Fall 2017** – Library funds cost of construction documents in order to be ready for construction in Spring 2018, pending RTM approval.

**December 2017** – Town Center Revitalization & Review Board approves design. Board of Finance unanimously approves resolution to appropriate \$5,245,000 for the project and authorizes issue of bonds.

**January 2018** – Capital Campaign has raised \$686,000 toward \$800,000 goal. Over 600 individuals and 6 organizations have contributed to the campaign. Ways & Means Committee approves Board of Finance resolution to appropriate \$5,245,000 for the project. RTM votes to approve funding for project 15-11 with one abstention.



Families had a blast at our Noon Year's Eve Celebration!

## Capital Campaign Update

*The following gifts from local organizations were announced on January 28th.*

**American Polyfilm** is owned and operated by the Cassella family. Founded in 1998, API is an expert producer of made-to-order blown thermoplastic polyurethane film products for a variety of industries, including medical applications, performance textiles, protective garments, food processing products, and the petroleum industry. API has made a gift of \$25,000 and their company name will be displayed in our new Computer Lab.

**Branford Hills Health Care Center** is a community of caring. They aim to provide care that will assist residents to achieve an optimal level of functioning, independence and quality of life without interference from pain. Their

community promotes self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence in an environment that embraces a goal of independence with a respect for dignity and individuality of the population served. Their gift of \$10,000 on behalf of Branford Hills Healthcare will be recognized by naming the circulation desk in the new lobby.

Founded in 1875, **The Guilford Savings Bank** has grown to a six-office, \$700 million bank, committed to local businesses, non-profits and community needs. The Bank has made a gift of \$5,000 which will be applied to a naming opportunity of their choice.

**The Rotary Club of Branford** was chartered in 1928 and supports local fundraising and humanitarian efforts worldwide. The club has a

membership of over 80 Rotarians who reside or work in the Connecticut Shoreline Region. Their gift of \$10,000 is a combination of fundraising and personal donations by members.

To date, our campaign has raised a total of \$686,000 in pledges and donations. We are very close to our goal of \$800,000, and we are thankful for those donations. If you have already donated and can contribute more, we appreciate your support. If you have not donated yet, we hope to convince you to make a contribution. We also hope that everyone can spread the word and help us to get to our final goal, and hopefully beyond!



Families making hats and crafts to celebrate the New Year!

## Highlights from the Reference Department-December

In the last year, we have added two new streaming services, Kanopy and Hoopla and the language learning program Pronunciator. We are adding two Rokus to our collection, which will give our patrons access to Netflix and our digital movie collection on Vudu. We have expanded our training opportunities, offering more one on one tech appointments with a librarian, offered classes in Microsoft Word and Excel, Internet, Gmail, and Basic Computing. In addition, we gave classes at Branford High School for ESL students. New programs were added this year as well, both here in the

library and in other locations in town. These included Uncover Branford, Books 'n Brews and Game Night for adults.

Our photographs collection is now available online as are indexes to the Historical Society photographs collection and the Historical Society's and the library's archives. In addition, we are working on a scanning project of the library's archives, with the ultimate goal of uploading the scans to our website. We are organizing and indexing the library's extensive vertical file collection on Branford, its people, industries, history and schools.

On one day we will have multiple questions on technology and on the next a mix of historical and genealogical questions. In the coming year, as we begin our renovation, we will focus on enhancing and improving these services. The planned computer lab will provide a permanent space for computer classes and training. The new space for the Branford History Room, adjacent to the nonfiction collection and the Reference desk, will provide easier access. We are all excited to see what 2018 has in store for us!

*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](http://www.blackstonelibrary.org)

## February 2018 Program Highlights

### Internet Basics\*\*

**February 1 @ 2–3:15 pm**  
Ready to get online but not sure how? This introductory class is for those who are new to the Internet or want to brush up on basic skills. Feel free to bring your own laptop or use one of ours.

### First Friday Game Group (F2G2)\*\*

**February 2 @ 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\*\*

**February 10 @ 10:30am-12**  
Share your favorite Branford

spots and plan an outing as a group to visit and uncover new places in town.

### Intro to Arduino\*\*

**February 10 @ 2-4 pm**  
Learn how to use a computer microchip to control simple electrical elements, like LED's, buzzers, motors, and more with Jim Davis! Registration required.

### Ask A Lawyer\*\*

**February 15 @ 6-7:45 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.

### Fireside Book Chat & Tea\*\*

**February 24 @ 2-3 pm**  
Looking for book recommendations? Join us by the fireside to talk books! We'll dis-

cuss our favorite books of 2017 and share our most anticipated books of 2018! Please come with a list of some of your favorite titles of the past year as well as a few books you're looking forward to reading. We'll provide the tea!

### Bestsellers Book Club\*\*

**February 24 @ 3:30 pm**  
We'll discuss *The Woman in the Window* by A.J. Finn. Copies available at the library -all are welcome!

### Creature Creation: Create Your Own 3D Creatures\*\*

**February 25 @ 2-4 pm**  
Instructor Jim Davis will teach you how to design your own 3D printable creature using a new 3D design software. For all ages.

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

## December 2017 Statistics—Deirdre Santora & Gennett Grinnell

### Total Circulation: 10,682

December 2016: 11,026

### borrowIT: 2,318

December 2016: 2,571

### Renewals: 2,940

### Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 839  
Overdrive audiobooks: 267  
RB Digital (Zinio): 138  
Hoopla: 197 users  
Kanopy: 56 plays  
Pronunciator: 198 users

### Interlibrary Loan

Borrowed 5 Loaned 12

### Children's Programs:

*Babies (0-2)*  
16 programs/359 attendance  
*Preschool (3-5)*  
4 programs/95 attendance  
*School-age (6-11)*  
8 programs/70 attendance  
*All Ages*  
0 programs/0 attendance

**Total Children's Programs: 28**  
**Total Attendance: 524**

### Teen Programs (12+)

4 programs/38 attendance

### Adult programs

18 programs/369 attendance  
**Lucy Hammer Room**  
39 meetings/173 attendance  
**Computer Sessions: 2,098**  
**Facebook: 1,500 Likes**  
**MailChimp: 7,130 subscribers**  
**Average Daily Visitors: 460**  
**Days Open: 28**