



Report to the Board of Trustees

January 2, 2019

From the Director



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 until February 1, when the winner will be drawn, at blackstonelibrary.org and at the library Reference Desk.



Construction has finally begun! Hoping the sun continues to shine upon us during the renovation project. Photo: Keira Cervoni

We had a beautiful day on December 6th for the renovation groundbreaking ceremony. I wanted to give special thanks to all who shared their remarks about the project, and especially our Board President, Robin Sandler, who was the best master of ceremonies that anyone could ask for!

By the end of the month, Downes Construction had installed a trailer and their storage unit and equipment will follow soon. They will be creating a temporary entrance to the library through the staff entrance. This will be in place for the next 6 months while the new entry is being

constructed. Parking will be challenging and we ask for everyone's patience.

I attended a LION meeting this month; fees for the upcoming fiscal year are not scheduled to increase.

The Friends of the Library announced a major gift of \$50,000 to the library. \$25,000 was given in honor of Betsey Klarman, past president, and will be designated to improve the sound system. The other \$25,000 was given in recognition of Mary and Matt Hally, who have organized the very successful Friends book sale for 20 years. The Hallys have

stepped down from the book sale committee and Joe Genua has volunteered to become the new chairman. The Friends holiday basket sale was a huge success, earning approximately \$2,000 which will support library services and programs.

We were a host site for the annual holiday program *Be a Santa to a Senior* which provides holiday gifts to seniors in need in our community. We are so grateful to the generous members of our community who come forward each year with their generous donations.

Karen Jensen

Highlights from the Youth Services Department—November



**Maker Monday and
Makey Makey**

This month the Youth Services Department said goodbye to one of our staff members, Jenn Aldieri. During the past two years, Jenn worked well with the families, enjoyed keeping things in order and spent most of her time prepping for programs, assisting in activities and ordering new items. Miss Mary and Miss Carly will miss Jenn as she heads down south to be closer to family. We would also like to thank our current staff for taking on additional hours during this transition. Working around this renovation will truly be an adventure for all!

November's half day activity was a hands-on blast as we experimented with slime! During this event Erin and I set up six different slime making stations. Each station provided a different slime recipe for our participants to try. Some stations called for Borax and glue while others used common household items like: hand lotion, conditioner and corn starch. Some recipes were more successful than others and the kids made sure to let us know.

One of the coolest parts about slime creation is that kids need to pay attention and learn how to follow directions, which included measuring liquids. Throughout the process Erin and I reiterated the fact that they had to read through each slime recipe and follow every direction precisely in order to create the best result; something that they will learn to appreciate once they start baking in the kitchen!

Everyone left the program with two to three types of slime to take home, and they REALLY enjoyed adding "extras" to their creations. Now, this was something I had never heard of, but after doing a little research it seems that you can make your slime more tactile by adding glitter, clay, beads and foam. Once the kids saw the possibilities they could not stop throwing in extras and it truly made for some interesting textures!

In the end the program was a success and the kids had the best time working together. As a matter of fact, some of the parents even got into the act and made some slime to take home.

We also hosted a nature program this past month, made possible by The Allan Louis Loeb Foundation. The program was entitled *Nuts for Squirrels* and introduced their characteristics, how they survive as well as different species. One of the most interesting parts of the program was when the instructor shared how smart squirrels are, especially when it comes to storing nuts for the winter. Squirrels can remember where they hid their nuts months later and with the addition of snow! The instructor actually had our participants hide "nuts" at the beginning of the program and then asked them to find them when it was complete. Many were found, but there were some stragglers and that was just 40 minutes later! To think that squirrels can find these items months later and

with a different looking terrain is pretty awesome.

Maker Monday was a blast as we introduced our Makey Makey sets. During our most recent session I dared our participants to make a "physical" gaming controller out of the sets - meaning, their bodies had to move in some way in order for their characters to react on the gaming screen. Kids could choose from a series of retro games like: PacMan, Space Invaders and Frogger but in turn had to make their physical controller simple to use, so that anyone could walk in the Lucy Hammer Room and start playing.

The results were awesome! The kids were not only challenging one another to use their controllers but we actually hooked their creations to our Prowise. Seeing them not only code their controllers but also get excited about sharing what they made with one another brought a new level of satisfaction.

This month Miss Mary also took a well deserved vacation, so it was up to me to provide storytime for a couple of weeks. It was really fun reconnecting with her families and getting a "schooling" on the hippest toddler songs - like "Baby Shark!" I have to say reading, singing and rhyming with little ones is a total blast and the joy they exude is contagious! I'm truly going to miss spending one on one time with these little faces once December hits.

Carly Lemire

What to Expect During Construction

The project we have been planning for years is finally set to begin. On December 20, our construction manager at risk, Downes Construction Co., installed their trailer and equipment on the library parking lot. The Youth Services Department will be moving into the auditorium during the week of January 7. Then, Downes Construction will create a temporary entry, where patrons will be directed into the library through the back entrance next to the book drop, while the new entryway is constructed. There will be temporary walls separating the office areas from the public entryway.

Parking will be more of a challenge than usual in the upcoming year. Please remember that the book drop located in back of the building is open 24-7, as is the Friends donation bin. If at all possible please try to utilize those services after hours.

While construction is in progress, there is no better time to explore the resources available online: Hoopla, Kanopy, Overdrive, and RB digital. In need of a tutorial? Contact our Reference staff at ext. 318.

Remember, your Blackstone library card is good for all services at libraries throughout Connecticut, including

our neighboring shoreline towns. And if you do borrow books from other libraries, you can always return them at the Blackstone for transport back home. This is true vice-versa if you find yourself visiting one of our state's other libraries, don't hesitate to return your books there.

We are also fortunate in Branford to have two libraries; Blackstone and the Willoughby Wallace Library in Stony Creek—books are delivered back and forth between us on a daily basis for your convenience.

The project is expected to last 12 months.



Downes Construction moved their trailer onsite in December. We'll be posting regular updates in the building, online and on social media throughout the project.

Highlights from the Reference Department-November

The Reference staff is excited about the upcoming renovation and working hard to make sure the collections are ready to be moved and to schedule programs that can take place in the Lucy Hammer or Reading Rooms.

Christina, with help from other staff, has been focusing on Drop-In Tech Help sessions in the library and on outreach to the Senior Center to teach about tablets and Hoopla and Kanopy. She has a couple of Drop-In sessions scheduled for January, as we know that tablets are a popular Christmas gift.

The Hoopla and Kanopy services have been extremely popular, especially among those looking to get an eBook or eAudiobook right away (these services don't have holds lists). We recently helped a patron download a Hoopla title when her OverDrive checkout was expiring and she hadn't finished reading it.

Our new Reference staff, Jenna and Anne, are working on a couple of archives projects. Jenna is completing the indexing and describing of our Baxter and VanDyke photograph/postcard albums that Karen had worked on.

Anne will be undertaking an evaluation of our vertical file and will eventually create an index for it. Jenna will tackle the Blackstone Library articles once she finishes the photograph albums. We will be updating the website with additional information from these projects as well.

Debby Trofatter



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...more than books

Join our email list for more information about programs
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January 2019 Program Highlights

Intro to Calligraphy**

January 6 @ 2:30-3:45 pm

Pamela LaRegina shares her expertise with various styles of lettering, guiding participants through hands-on exercises. Handouts and information for further study will be provided.

Drop-In Tech Help

January 17 & 31 @ 2-4pm

Having trouble downloading books through OverDrive? Need help with a Microsoft Word document? Can't figure out how to email a picture from your iPhone? Swing on by for drop-in tech help! Visit the Lucy Hammer Room anytime during the session to get a tech question answered. No registration required.

Ask A Lawyer**

January 17 @ 3:30—5:30pm

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.

Uncover Branford**

January 19 @ 10:30am-12

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

Opera Talk: Carmen**

January 26 @ 1-2:30pm

Enrich your knowledge and appreciation of the opera Carmen before seeing it streamed live from the Met in HD at Regal Branford Stadium 12 on February 2 at 12:55 pm. Presented by Charlotte D'Aniello.

Books & Brews**

January 30 @ 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.

*Check our website for more programs! Programs with ** require registration. Please note that during construction, the auditorium will not be available. Programs will take place in other areas of the library, or off-site as indicated.*

November 2018 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

Total Circulation: 10,180

November 2017: 11,358

borrowIT: 2,522

November 2017: 2,360

Renewals: 2,784

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 843

Overdrive audiobooks: 328

RB Digital: 568

Hoopla: 370 plays

Kanopy: 109 plays

Pronunciator: 393 users

Children's Programs:

Babies (0-2)

12 programs/259 attendance

Preschool (3-5)

7 programs/89 attendance

School-age (6-11)

2 programs/18 attendance

All Ages

4 programs/67 attendance

Total Children's Programs: 25

Total Attendance: 433

Teen Programs (12+)

4 programs/67 attendance

Adult programs

16 programs/152 attendance

Lucy Hammer Room

40 meetings/173 attendance

Computer Sessions: 1,984

Facebook: 1,595 Likes

Instagram: 423 Followers

MailChimp: 7,298 subscribers

Average Daily Visitors: 401

Days Open: 29