



Report to the Board of Trustees

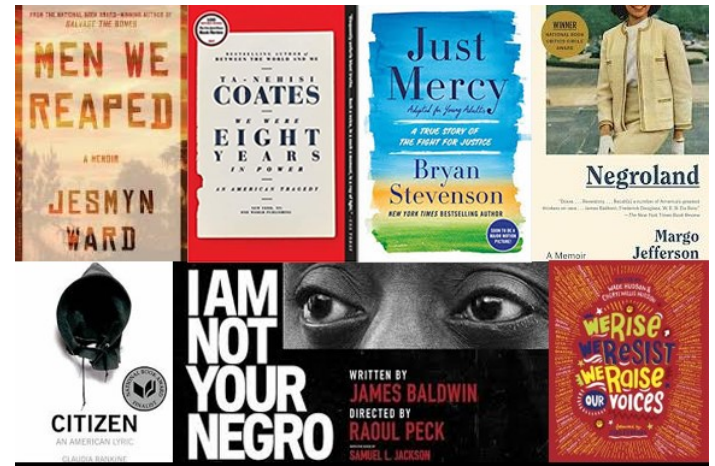
July 8, 2020

From the Director

The contactless pickup continues to work very well, and the entire circulation department has been working hard to help our patrons choose books and make sure they are available as quickly and safely as possible. With that success under our belts, we have been planning to offer computer access by appointment in July.

Staff have attended countless zoom meetings to learn about requirements and best practices for libraries as we plan to reopen. It is challenging to navigate as information is changing often. For instance, we originally were quarantining returned books for 3 days, cleaning them and then returning them to shelves. Then, midway through June, new research was circulated that advised quarantining books for 7 days as the safest and most cost effective procedure. After we made the switch to 7 days, research came out that indicated 3 days was ok. For now, we continue to hold the books for 7 days to err on the conservative side.

By the end of the month, we had a plan for reopening for computer appointments. Our plan meets the Governor's sector guidelines for libraries, and has been reviewed and approved by the East Shore Health Department. We also



These titles and more are available from our library to learn more about systemic racism.

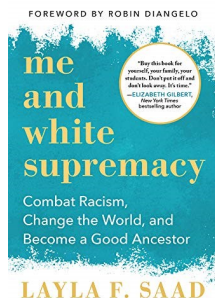
checked with our insurance agent about coverage, and confirmed that our policy does not contain an exclusion for communicable diseases. The current best advice from multiple sources is that the best practice is to diligently follow the sector guidelines and document our compliance.

With some of the funds that were unspent by the end of the month, I purchased tables, chairs and umbrellas for the new terrace. These items should arrive by the end of July. We also purchased the benches for the new plaza, which were naming opportunities, a new Prowise computer (similar to a smart-board) for the new conference room, and some much needed furniture for the new children's space. Coincidentally, I was invited to participate on the CT Library

Consortium's committee to identify furniture companies for their annual bid process. This experience introduced me to several manufacturers that I was not aware of before.

Finally, a movement against systemic racism has begun throughout our country. Our community has expressed interest in learning more about racial injustice and we have responded by purchasing and recommending several books and films that can help. I incorporated *Me and White Supremacy* into my regular Friday book discussion which was very instructional and well received. I hope the discussion will continue and that the Library will be part of it.

Karen Jensen



Available through
HOOPLA

Me and White Supremacy is #10 on Amazon's popularity list, and it is available electronically, free of charge to Blackstone patrons through the library's subscription to HOOPLA, sponsored by our Friends of the Library. Even better, there are NO waiting lists!

Highlights from the Youth Services Department—May

May was an exciting month for the entire library since we were able to head back into the building. Miss Mary, Sarah and I spend most mornings “hunting” for holds and many have told us how much they appreciate the contactless pickup service when we meet for Saturday Stories. I’m proud to say that we are meeting our community’s needs during this difficult time.

Realizing that this summer was going to look different due to COVID we knew that our summer reading program was also going to have to be different in order to reach everyone. Creating our Summer Reading Quest was the first step but we also had to set up a virtual programming lineup that would engage a wide age range; one that had already been spending most of their time behind a screen, and we all know (since working from home) that screen burnout is a real thing! So, as a department we decided to streamline our programming options and create intentional events that promoted interaction, connection and excitement.

With that in mind Miss Mary and I decided to downgrade to 3 storytimes a week, one being a sharing or circle time where children could showcase things they created, events that had taken place in their day to day lives or even their feelings. We also made sure that all of our “outside” performers embraced physicality so we

reached out to Ingrid Schaeffer to put together an actors workshop for elementary school students and an improv hour for tweens and teens. I was also able to reach out to people outside the country since we are using ZOOM as our connectivity platform. One day I came across Music with Drew, a Canadian performer that offered LIVE music classes for little ones Monday thru Friday on Instagram. His overall demeanor, song choice and the way he used common items around the house in new ways was sensational. I reached out to him through Instagram and was able to set up 2 music and movement dates for our youngest patrons.

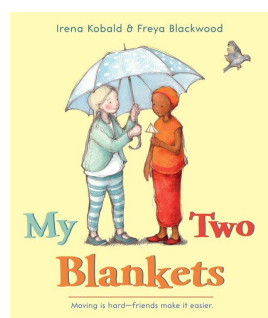
Miss Sarah has also reached out to her teens and discovered they are in need of interaction so she is going to start TAB meetings virtually, continue the teen writers group throughout the summer and will also keep up with her virtual book club. Teens have also expressed a need to share ideas or talents virtually. One young lady is putting together a makeup tutorial for tweens/teens, something she is very interested in but never would have done face to face. She says she feels more comfortable doing so behind the screen and it’s nice to be able to give her the opportunity, something that Miss Sarah hopes other teens will try.

In order to get the word out about our Summer Reading Quest and virtual programs, I

decided to use the video skills I had acquired from Tech this Out and a library tour I put together for Branford’s entire second grade to create a summer reading promotional video that had a little bit of humor, music and “how to” so that kids could see how easy it is to sign up from home. The results are pretty funny and can be found on our YouTube page, plus I would not have been able to complete the video without Katy’s daughter. She LOVES creating videos on her iPhone, so she sent me a “bootcamp” email detailing how to add music and images. The best part about reaching the kids in this manner is that additional slides were included so that I could link to our digital collection, contactless pickup rules and included a direct link to our Summer Reading Quest. These slides are something that families have access to all summer long. Kids and parents alike have full access to the presentation and can look back at it as a reminder of what they can be doing while school is out.

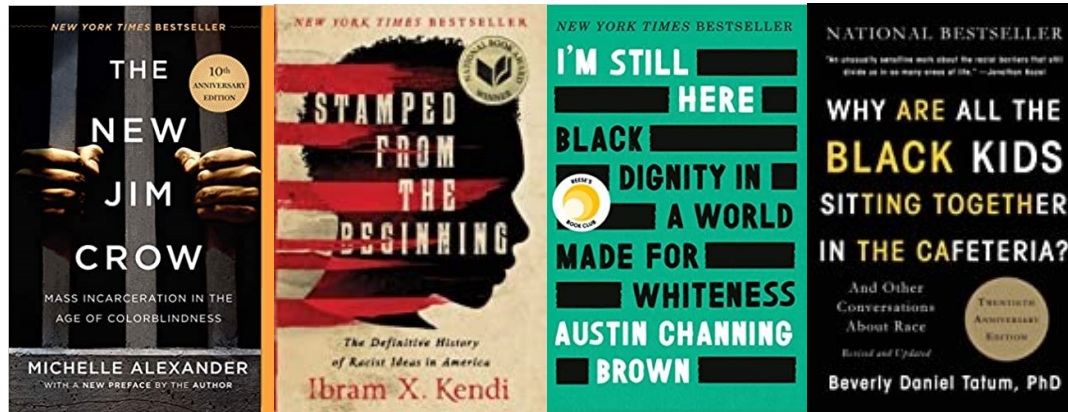
We started a mini promotion of our Summer Reading Quest by posting it on our website and social media and already have 15 participants. The school slides have not gone LIVE at this point so it will be interesting to see what kind of BOOST our newest promotion provides.

Carly Lemire



**This year's title for
Storywalk on Main
through August 21st**

E-Books to Help with Learning about Racism



We recently ordered these OverDrive Advantage titles (available first to Blackstone cardholders before entering the LION holds queue once our holds have all been filled).

Highlights from the Reference Department-May

The Reference staff had another busy month. Jenna continues to help our regular presenters with their virtual Latin, Knitting and Poetry meetings. Tilde Café is back with us once more, with monthly virtual meetings. Jenna also set up and helped the host of a No-Till Gardening program that was very successful. Jenna and Katy hosted their monthly Books 'n Brews book discussion.

Christina taught a Cutting the Cord virtual class and plans to have another in the summer or fall. She has been busy creating Tech This Out videos on a variety of subjects.

These videos can be found on Blackstone's YouTube channel.

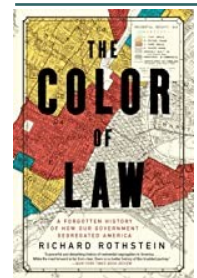
Anne has made great progress on indexing and scanning the Vertical File. This is one of a number of digitization projects that the department is working on, with the goal of posting Finding Aids online as well as a number of the actual scanned documents.

All of us attended a variety of meetings, roundtables and webinars on virtual programming, COVID-19, planning to reopen and other topics. We continued to update various

pages on the website and have added content.

We have resumed home-bound deliveries to patrons who are unable to get to the library for curbside pickup. The Reference department handles all holds requests made through our holds email, in support of the circulation staff.

-Debby Trofatter



Now available through Overdrive



James Blackstone Memorial Library
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Branford, CT 06405

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reference@blackstonelibrary.org
facebook.com/blackstone_library
twitter.com/blackstonelib
www.blackstonelibrary.org

...more than books

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

July 2020 Virtual Program Highlights

Knitting Group

Wednesdays @ 6-7:30 pm

Join our weekly knitting group where both beginners and experienced knitters are welcome.

Virtual Book Discussion

Girl in Disguise

July 10 @ 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

In the tumultuous years of the Civil War, the streets of Chicago offer a woman mostly danger and ruin—unless that woman is Kate Warne, the first female Pinkerton detective and a desperate widow with a knack for manipulation. Copies of the book are available for free download on HOOPLA with a Blackstone Library Card.

Spy Island: Author Talk

with Greg Gilmartin

July 11 @ 2:30 pm

Greg Gilmartin will discuss his latest novel: an unexpected story of ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances.

How to Access Ebooks, Movies and More:

Hoopla & Kanopy

July 16 @ 2 pm

Learn about two resources you can access exclusively with your Blackstone Library card. Hoopla has ebooks, audiobooks, movies, TV shows, and music! Kanopy is our on-demand movie streaming service, and includes collections like PBS, The Great Courses, and the Criterion Collection. *Hoopla and Kanopy are sponsored by the Friends of Blackstone Library.*

Drum Away the Blues

July 17 @ 2 pm

Master percussionist, storyteller, author, and radio host Craig Harris leads this exciting, multimedia celebration of international rhythm! *Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.*

Understanding Eating Disorders

July 23 @ 5 pm

Eating disorders can be difficult to understand and cope with. If you or someone you love has been affected by an eating disorder, join us for a talk by Gina MacDonald, MA, LPC, CEDS. She'll give an overview of various disorders, and discuss evidence-based treatments.

All programs are virtual—please visit our website at www.blackstonelibrary.org for registration information.

May 2020 Statistics

Contactless Pickup:

May 14-30, 2020 (11 days):

Patrons: 521

Items: 1,246

borrowIT: N/A

Renewals: N/A

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive eBooks: 1444

Overdrive audiobooks: 530

RB Digital: 397

Hoopla: 1362 checkouts

Kanopy: 324 checkouts

Pronunciator: 539 users

Ancestry Library: 1795

searches

Website: 5,441 sessions

Children's Programs:

Babies (0-2)

0 programs/0 attendance

Preschool (3-5)

0 programs/0 attendance

School-age (6-11)

0 programs/0 attendance

All Ages—Saturday Stories

4 programs/52 attendance

Total Children's Programs: 4

Total Attendance: 52

Teen Programs (12+)

4 programs/52 attendance

Adult programs

16 programs/264 attendance

Hammer & Conference Room

0 meetings/0 attendance

Computer Sessions: 0

Facebook: 1,856 Likes

Instagram: 865 followers

Twitter: 802 followers

MailChimp: 7,815 subscribers