



# Report to the Board of Trustees

June 7, 2017

## From the Director

This month the building committee met with Downes Construction to discuss phasing of the renovation plan and the details of an estimate they will present on June 16. Library staff have been researching technology to include in their departments.

We held a series of Open Houses this month; reaction to the plan remains extremely positive and it feels like momentum is building.

One of our former board members, Martha Clark, volunteers at the Murphy School, and she helped teachers coordinate an open house just for their students on May 25. Carly and Christina did a great job of creating a map that highlighted various stations around the library. The Murphy teachers even arranged a special visit from Clifford the Red Dog!

We were very lucky to have a high school intern during April. Idriss Nasry was a tremendous help in the Youth Services Department. This summer, we also have Rachel Wells working to organize the Blackstone Library files, which are voluminous. Rachel is a full-time student at St. Andrews University in Scotland, studying English literature.



*The Library received an Orion StarBlast 4.5" telescope from the Astronomical Society of New Haven to lend to our patrons. The public was invited to a demonstration on June 3.*

We absolutely love the new planters installed by the Garden Club, and our patrons do, too.

LION's new director will be announced soon. The current director, Alan Hagyard, is retiring and his farewell party is scheduled at the Owenego in Branford on June 20.

We had a request from the High School English department chair for summer reading support. Katy was able to pull together a list of recommended reading which was included in the letter home to students. Katy also scheduled a series of summer reading drop-in sessions, where library staff will be prepared to help students fulfill their sum-

mer reading requirements. Our grant for Uncover Branford was extended, so we are continuing the program over the summer months. So far, the group has visited and documented several spots in Branford.

BH Care held their annual art exhibit in recognition of Mental Health Month. It was especially nice this year as one of the artists had been featured in *The Sound*.

The Friends have organized their first Trivia Night, scheduled for June 8th at Pompeo's. The Friends annual meeting is June 6th.

*Karen Jensen*



### **Thank You Garden Club!**

*More than books, we have flowers, too! The Branford Garden Club has donated two beautiful planters to grace the library's front entrance. The planters contain hibiscus framed by a variety of annual plants. The planters were noticed and appreciated by our patrons right way—they add an extra touch of stately elegance and color.*

*Special thanks to Bonnie McKirdy and Eunice Lasala for initiating the project.*

## April Highlights from the Youth Services Department

This month our department supported the Welcoming Branford exhibit and open house by hosting a combined storytime with the Family Resource Center that featured a special class for English Language Learning (ELL) families. Miss Mary and the center decided to focus their storytime on families and how they come in all shapes and sizes. Participants that usually attend FRC were able to meet families that come to our 3 to 5 year old storytime on Monday mornings, allowing new connections to form. The kids had a blast and everyone closed the storytime by making self portraits of their families and sharing their drawings.

We also hosted our annual ELL Night with the Branford school district, which dovetailed nicely with the Welcoming Branford display. We had 197 participants attend this event, which included a combination of literacy activities, food and conversation. Our staff gave tours, issued library cards and gave away books. One of the newest additions to the evening was a series of display boards that students put together featuring facts about their homeland. It was nice to see them taking in pride what they created and was an creative way to strike up conversation.

We also had a presence at this year's YMCA Healthy Kids Day. Katy and Jenn worked together to man the table on Saturday, April 29th. They

brought information about the library, were able to create cards and also used the leftover books from our ELL night to host another giveaway, which Katy said was a huge draw!

In March we received a grant from Bird Brain Technologies to host a series of learning opportunities with Finch Robots. The company lent us 10 robots that can be programmed to move, speak, play music, avoid obstacles and more. In March, we used the robots during our mini maker tables and Maker Monday classes. This month we put together a week-long robot programming class during spring break. The class was composed of 10 participants in 5th grade and up that spent five days learning about the Finch Robot and how to manipulate its programming language.

Realizing that the group would range in ability, my programming volunteer Laurie and I worked hard to compose a series of lessons that would build upon one another in order to create variation and keep a high level of interest. Lessons included: paper programming, where you would have to create commands to compose pictures, an introduction to SCRATCH, the programming language we would be using to manipulate the Finches, exploratory time where they could test each of the Finches programming components, and even a game of Simon Says, where

groups were asked to complete a series of codes, so that they could take part in the game.

We closed out the week with a maze challenge, where groups had to work together to program their Finches to complete a maze they created with recycled boxes, Legos and more! Each group had the best time creating and completing their mazes and also enjoyed trying to complete each others. Participants stuck it out with us for the entire week and expressed how much they enjoyed coming back and learning each day. Parents were able to see their children put their robots in action at the weeks close and were impressed by how much they learned. It truly was a lot of fun and something that I see as a personal success.

The end of the month also marked The Week of the Young Child (WOTYC). Every year the Branford Early Childhood Collaborative creates a preschool art walk based around a particular book and hosts a family event. This year's book was *Happy in our Skin* by Fran Manushkin who actually traveled from New York to attend the final event at the Branford Early Learning Center! We take part in the planning of the WOTYC and house preschool art for the big art walk. This year I was in charge of food prep, which was a ton of fun since everyone cannot help but smile when they see pizza coming their way.

Carly Lemire



One of our Finch Mazes in action!

## Campaign for the Blackstone

The Branford Community Foundation is matching gifts from individuals up to \$1,000, doubling the impact of your contribution to the campaign!

By June 5, the campaign had received over \$34,460 in donations that will be matched 100% by the Branford Community Foundation. We are thrilled to be at 35% of the total matching commitment of \$100,000.

We held 4 Open House events at the library this month. We gave tours to over 70 people, all who were very excited to learn more about the plans.

**BRANFORD**  
Community Foundation

### Additional Open Houses:

**June 8 6:30-8pm**

**June 14 12:30-2pm**

There will be a brief introduction at the start of each open house, please drop in as your schedule allows. All open houses will be held in the main floor rotunda of the library.

A special thank you goes to members of the Board of

Trustees, Friends, and library staff who helped to make the open houses a success.

The campaign committee has met to plan several events over the summer.

## Highlights from the Reference Department-April

The Reference staff was very busy this month, both with programming and planning for future events. Whitney evaluated a variety of local bands to present to the Friends for future concerts. She also made plans for our "end of summer reading" outdoor movie showing at Foote Park on August 18. In addition, she met with our Uncover Branford participants to discuss their field trips.

Christina met with Carly and Murphy School to prepare for the Murphy-Blackstone Library Family Night which is scheduled for May 25 at the library. She also taught an

intermediate Excel class and does a great job every month preparing our newsletters (we are up to 6,555 subscribers!).

Debby attended Librarians Day at the New England Regional Genealogical Conference. She enjoyed talks given by genealogists and professors from Indiana, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania on "Making the Financial Case for Genealogical Librarianship", "Online Resources off the Beaten Path", "The Great Migration Study Project", and "Fostering Family History Services". It is estimated that interest in family history will double by 2025.

We launched our new language databases this month, Scola and Pronunciator, which have taken the place of Mango Languages. We had 44 patrons sign up for Pronunciator in our first few weeks.

Coming June 1, we will subscribe to HOOPLA, which offers free downloads of movies, audiobooks and ebooks. Patrons will be limited to 5 downloads per month as we determine how much demand there is.

*Deb Trofatter*



HOOPLA digital movies,  
ebooks and audiobooks  
launched June 1



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)

## June 2017 Program Highlights

### Hatha Yoga

**Mondays @ 5:15—6:30 pm**

Join yoga teacher Helen Lesprier every Monday evening. Free and open to all ages.

### Fiction Writing Workshop\*

**June 10, 17, 21 @ 10 am**

Sarah Bradley provides an overview of the elements needed to write compelling stories, including story arc, dialogue, point of view, character development, and conflict/resolution.

Meets the first three Saturdays in June. You are registering to attend all three sessions.

### Uncover Branford\*

**June 10 @ 2:30 pm - 4:00 pm**

Go out into the community to explore and uncover new places, make new friends, have lots of fun, and discover the hidden gems of Branford.

### Intro to Arduino\*

**June 13 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm**

Use a computer microchip to control simple electrical elements, like LED's buzzers, motors, and more with Jim Davis!

### Ask A Lawyer

**June 15 @ 6:00 pm - 7:45 pm**

Have a legal question? Get a free consultation with a lawyer, brought to you by the New Haven County Bar Association. Sign up at Reference up to 30 minutes before the program begins. Free and open to all.

### Bestseller Book Club\*:

**June 24 @ 3:00 pm**

*The Stars are Fire* by Anita Shreve

### Books 'n' Brews Book Club

**June 28 @ 6:00 pm**

Meets at the Thimble Island Brewery! We'll be discussing

*Annihilation*, by Jeff Vanermeer, and *A Heart-breaking Work of Staggering Genius*, by Dave Eggers.

New members welcome. You can borrow a copy from the library, or purchase your own copy. Read one of these titles and come out and join the fun!

### Game On!: Game Night\*

**June 29 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm**

Join us for a night of games, snacks, and new friends! We'll have a fun selection of card and board games available including Codenames, Sushi Go Party!, Dixit, & Pandemic. You're also welcome to bring your own games. Adults of all ages welcome. Refreshments provided.

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

## April 2017 Statistics—Deirdre Santora & Gennett Grinnell

**Total Circulation: 11,666**

*April 2016: 13,151*

**borrowIT: 2,773**

*March 2016: 3,055*

**Renewals: 2,836**

**Downloadable Circulation:**

Overdrive ebooks: 724

Overdrive audiobooks: 318

Zinio: 220

**Interlibrary Loan**

Borrowed **11** Loaned **18**

**Children's Programs:**

*Babies (0-2)*

*10 programs/275 attendance*

*Preschool (3-5)*

*12 programs/218 attendance*

*School-age (6-11)*

*13 programs/425 attendance*

*All Ages*

*0 programs/0 attendance*

**Total Children's Programs: 35**

**Total Attendance: 918**

**Teen Programs (12+)**

*7 programs/58 attendance*

**Adult programs**

*24 programs/640 attendance*

**Lucy Hammer Room**

*49 meetings/184 attendance*

**Computer Sessions: 2207**

**Facebook: 1424 Likes**

**MailChimp: 6555 subscribers**

**Average Daily Visitors: 478**

**Days Open: 30**