

Report to the Board of Trustees

June 1, 2022

From the Director

Our team continues to work with Trustee Michelle Blank on our strategic framework. Michelle has created a draft writeup of the strategic framework that will be shared on June 25.

Frank and I installed the tree tags on our 36 different specimen trees on the grounds. Now, you can point your phone at the QR code which brings you to our webpage with a list of the trees and links for more information.



Frank and I spent an afternoon in May installing tags on the specimen trees on the grounds.

Summer reading is set to begin on June 18—many thanks to the Branford Community Foundation, State Library of CT and Institute of Museum Studies, Allen Louis Loeb Foundation, and not least, our Friends of the Library, for the support necessary to bring “Oceans of Possibilities” to our community this year.

The Friends of the Library’s book sale on May 14—15 was a success, earning almost \$5,000 in gross receipts. The Friends’ annual meeting is scheduled to take place on June 21. At this meeting, the Friends elect new officers and present an annual gift to the library.

It is exciting to turn the management of the library over to our incoming new director, Katy McNicol. Katy has come

1896 THE LEGACY ENDURES **BLACKSTONE LIBRARY** **125 years**

BLACKSTONE LIBRARY
BIRTHDAY BASH
SAVE THE DATE **SATURDAY JUNE 25th**
A Community-wide Day of Celebration

Start the day with **FAMILY FUN** on the Blackstone Library lawn... End the day With town **FIREWORKS** on Branford Point!

Commemorate 125 years of Making A Difference To Branford Life
ENGAGING COMMUNITY EXPANDING MINDS ENRICHING LIVES

10:30 – 11:30 • Family Storytime with Bill Harley
(Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library)
12:00 – 12:30 • Ceremony: Time Capsule Sealing, Announcements
12:30 – 3:00 • Picnic – Live MUSIC by COVERGIRL – Lawn Games
(Lawn Games sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library)

LUNCH IS ON US... DANCING IS ON YOU!
Enjoy Complementary Picnic lunch & Commemorative Blackstone Picnic Blanket
(Limited quantities available, so don't be late!)

COVERGIRL THE SHORELINE'S PARTY BAND
HORNET'S NEST
FRIENDS OF BLACKSTONE LIBRARY
2021/22

COME ONE, COME ALL to BLACKSTONE'S 125TH BIRTHDAY BASH!
All of Branford Welcome – RAIN or SHINE (Festivities inside if it rains.)

up through our ranks and already accomplished a great deal during her career, including the establishment of our Maker Lab, now Library of Things, improved marketing, and a development program with donations increasing consistently year over year.

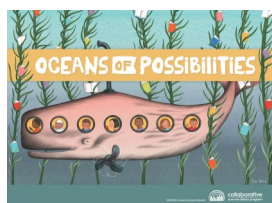
My last day at the library is June 14, so between now and then, Katy and I will go over outstanding projects, open positions, and all of the details necessary to ensure the library continues to meet expectations.

My deepest appreciation goes out to you, all of our staff, and trustees, without whose support the library would not be in the position it is today. The library is fortunate to be part of a strong professional community, including our elected officials, town departments and our many partners in the community.

It has been my absolute privilege to spend 9 years of my career here at the Blackstone Library. Maybe we'll see each other again at the 150th anniversary, if not before!

Karen Jensen

Highlights from the Youth Services Department—April



Registration for our summer reading program Oceans of Possibilities begins on June 18!

In April we were fortunate to receive two grants to support summer reading program. The first is a summer enrichment grant from the Connecticut State Library. The idea to garner extra funding stemmed from our annual StoryWalk®. It's something that we take pride in and really wanted to highlight in a fun and inventive way post pandemic, so we thought "what if" the walkers became the storytellers. Is there a way to bridge walking, reading and writing? And, then we had the "ah ha moment." What if we used a wordless book so that readers of all levels could participate? Better yet, what if we encouraged families to tell their version of the story, whether it is the entire book or a certain panel we want to see how the illustrations moved them! Families can submit a formal story, poem or graphic representation; all forms of the creative process will be accepted throughout the summer and will culminate with a Creative Writing Contest!

To promote the StoryWalk® and ramp up participation we decided to offer creative writing journals to families that take the walk along with prizes for participating. We are also offering 3 creative writing sessions with local writer and teacher Amy Bowers for select grade levels. Amy has designed 3 very distinct workshops that use images, movement, writing and more to encourage the creative process.

We also received a grant from the Branford Community Foundation which will make it possible for us to expand our creative writing classes to run extra sessions on Saturday mornings and Monday evenings.

We are also using the BCF funds to enhance our summer reading theme by offering a combination of "deep sea" events that will focus on the ocean as a resource as well as the animals that rely on it to survive. The Mystic Aquarium is scheduled to bring their mobile touch tank on a Saturday in July. We are also offering our first paint night on the library grounds for littles which is pretty exciting. Pam's Picassos has worked with our teen and and this program will allow a caregiver and child complete a piece of art by bridging their canvases together. Pam will guide participants in creating a beach seascape featuring sandcastles, an umbrella and flip flops. No experience is needed!

The Friends of the Blackstone Library are regular summer reading supporters and this year they have made it possible for us to create a fish reading nook! Miss Sarah is working on filling a 20 gallon fish tank that will be on display all summer long. We are going to welcome our new fin friends by watching Finding Nemo and hosting a fish naming contest because we know EVERYONE is going to ask for their names. Plus, we are

going to encourage children of all ages to settle in and read to the fish by making the area inviting and displaying a combination of deep sea books. We believe much like our marble machine this is something that families are going to love well beyond August.

In between programming and grant writing we worked with the School Readiness Council to host the Week of the Young Child inside Branford's new Community House. We have not organized any in-person major events since the pandemic so people were excited to participate and really wanted to make the event shine. The event was based around the book *Be You* by Peter Reynolds, which every preschooler received. Children read the book in class and then created a piece of art based on the title which was then put on display throughout the building. Families spent the morning looking at their child's art and interacting with the preschools found around town. There was also a pancake breakfast, character meet and greet, musicians and artists on display. We must have met well over 300 families and everyone donated their time to make it a really special day.

Carly Lemire

Highlights from the Reference Department-April

The library held a variety of well-attended programs in April, in addition to our usual book clubs, Latin classes, Poetry discussion, Coloring Group, Knitting Group, Saturday Cinema and Game Night. We hosted an art talk titled *Painting En Plein Air*, a lecture given by Oliver Dennett Grover's biographer on the art and architecture of the Blackstone, a presentation by Jane Bouley on the Blackstone and Branford in the 1890's, a personal story of the rescue of dozens of people from Kabul, Afghanistan, and a Branford Forum talk on

protecting Long Island Sound.

Jenna, Christina and Brendan all attended the Connecticut Library Association Conference. Jenna was asked to do a poster session on the Books 'n Brews Group and she and Katy reported quite a bit of interest.

We wrapped up our participation in the Passport to CT Libraries program and sent off two adult and two child passports for entry in the Visa gift card drawings. Our most visited libraries passport was from an adult patron who

visited 53 Connecticut libraries in the month of April.

Work progresses on both the Digital Archives site, with additional yearbooks and Saturday Chronicle articles being uploaded and on the Community Webs site. We continue to work on our in-house scanning projects and are grateful to everyone on staff who are helping out with this large, ongoing project.

Deborah Trofatter

Shred-a-Thon

**Saturday, June 4
9am-12noon**

Purchase tickets in advance:

**\$10 for two boxes;
\$5 each additional**

Day of event:

**\$7 first box;
\$5 each additional**

Specimen Trees on Library Grounds

It's another beautiful day here in Branford, and another one of our specimen trees is in full bloom! Did you know the library's grounds are full of specimen trees donated by Dr. Nickolas Nickou, M.D. (1921-2015) in the years leading up to the library's 1996 renovation? Today's 125th Anniversary Fact is all about our Japanese Crabapple trees which are located near the front of the library.

This showy, fragrant tree is very attractive to birds, hummingbirds, and butterflies. It's an old favorite which produces one of the best flowering displays in mid-spring of any of the crabapples. Red buds open in spring to fragrant,

pale pink flowers which mature to white, and which are currently on display. Flowers are followed by small, yellowish crabapples (to 1/2" diameter) with a red blush. Flowers and subsequent crabapples are very profuse, but the fruits are not particularly showy (colorful) by crabapple standards, and usually do not persist beyond fall.

You can learn more about this tree, and all the other plants on the library grounds, [here on our website](#).

Jenna Anthony





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...more than books

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June 2022 Program Highlights

Awakening to Change: A Social Justice Discussion

June 2 & 16 @ 7 - 8 pm

Awakening to Change is designed to help unify our community by developing a shared understanding of the history, policy, and experiences shaping contemporary discussions of race. We tackle a new topic each month, sometimes reading books, discussing films, or learning from articles. All are welcome to join! June's conversations will focus on the book *Dear White Women, Please Come Home* by Kimberlee Yolanda Williams. A limited number of copies available at the library.

Olmsted & the Landscaping of New Haven County

June 5 @ 2 - 3:00 pm

This event is part of Olmsted 200, a nationwide initiative built upon the legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted, who is

known as the founder of American landscape architecture. Olmsted 200 promotes landscape stewardship and access to outdoor spaces, among other themes. Connecticut has a unique association with the Olmsted legacy, as the place of Olmsted's birth, early inspiration, education, and numerous Olmsted firm commissions.

The Thin Blue Lie: A Local Author Event

June 7 @ 6:30 - 7:30 pm

Former Branford police officer and FBI agent Greg Dillon shares his whistleblower story in *The Thin Blue Lie: An Honest Cop vs. The FBI*, to show just what happens when one tries to report FBI misconduct.

Drop-in Tech Session

June 9 @ 2 - 4:00 pm

Drop in to the library to get a

tech question answered. First come, first served. Sessions will be limited to 15 minutes per person. Registration is not required.

Masterworks for Violin

June 11 @ 3 pm - 4:00 pm

Violinist Michael Tropepe and Pianist Mun-Tzung Wong (piano) perform Tchaikovsky's complete violin works featuring his Violin Concerto, a show piece entitled Valse Scherzo, and 3 short pieces from his op. 42 collection, *Souvenir d'un lieu cher*.

Intro to Google Docs

June 15 @ 11 am - 12 pm

In this course, you will learn how to create and format a new document, create and manage comments, share your document with others, download your document as a PDF or Word document, and more.

Programs require registration—see our website at blackstonelibrary.org

April 2022 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

Total Circulation: 7,299

April 2021: 5,320

borrowIT: 1,529

March 2021: 1,186

Renewals: 4,773

Computer Sessions: 660

WIFI Logins: 3069

Facebook: 2115 Likes

Instagram: 1095 Followers

MailChimp: 7565

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 1,202

Overdrive audiobooks: 667

Overdrive Magazines: 167

HOOPLA: 1114

Kanopy: 242

Pronunciator: 592

Ancestry Library: 378

New Haven Register: 149

Creative Bug: 4

Total Downloadable: 4,515

Children's Programs

29 programs/675 attendance

Teen Programs (12+)

13 programs/61 attendance

Adult programs

43 programs/496 attendance

Lucy Hammer Room & Conference Room

149 meetings/441 attendees

Average Daily Visitors: 290

Days Open: 30