



Report to the Board of Trustees

March 2, 2016

From the Director

The LION best practices task force continues to work on standardizing lending practices. A draft recommendation was sent to member libraries requesting feedback by March 4.

LION has also approved funding a shared objects collection. Materials in this collection include Keva Planks, jewelry making kits, etc. Items will circulate for up to two months at a time. LION hopes to have this collection ready by summer.



This vintage souvenir spoon was made by Gorham Silver. Souvenir spoons were popular at the turn of the century to commemorate buildings, fairs, special events, presidents, etc. The base pattern is Gorham's "Buttercup." The library was able to add this to our collection of souvenir items recently.

We display these items from time to time. If you have a similar souvenir, we would love to know about it.

In April, Blackstone Library will join 123 other Connecticut libraries for the CLA's Passport to Connecticut Libraries Program. The program encourages residents to explore the amazing diversity of our public libraries. Participants who visit at least five participating libraries and return their stamped passport to a participating library by May 6 will be entered into one state-wide drawing for a chance to win a \$150 Visa gift card for adults (18 and up) and a \$100 Visa gift card for children (under 18). This is a state-wide contest where four winners will be selected: one adult and one child from a random drawing from all who visit at least five libraries, and one adult and one child from a



Our Romance Authors Panel was held just in time for Valentine's Day. From left to right: Regina Kyle, Gail Chianese, Jamie Pope/Sugar Jamison, Jamie Schmidt, Sparrow Beckett.

random drawing from all who visit the most libraries.

At the end of January, Andy McKirdy, Robin Sandler and I attended the Board of Finance meeting to request funding to continue with the schematic phase of the library's renovation design. The request was tabled until the February 29 meeting. In the meantime, we met with Jamie Cosgrove, Jim Finch and Janice Plaziak to discuss how the project would be handled, if funding is approved.

On February 8, the New Haven Register ran a very positive article about the library's proposed renovation.

On February 12, Andy McKirdy, Kathy Oxsalida and I went to the offices of Robinson and Cole in Hartford, to meet with a repre-

sentative from Pro Bono Partners. Pro Bono provides legal services to nonprofit organizations, and they accepted our application to become a client. The first project they will work on is updating our personnel manual.

The library was closed the morning of February 26 for our annual in-service training day. Staff from all departments made presentations to share what they had learned throughout the year from various workshops. There were sessions on building safety, expert searching of our catalog, superior customer service skills, reader's advisory tips, and our Maker-Lab. Staff did a fantastic job, and they learned valuable skills from each other.

Karen Jensen

January Highlights from the Youth Services Department

This month we worked with the Connecticut Experiential Learning Center (CELC), to prepare them for their end of the year projects. Every year the CELC uses the James Blackstone Memorial Library as their research “base” and a location for displaying their final projects. Each year, students present their concept, supported by visual aids and a verbal explanation. This year, students will transform into influential people!



It's hard to tell who is more content—the dog or the reader!

During CELC’s research visit, we introduced students to our online resources, helping them search for books and find reliable electronic sources through the State’s research database, formerly ReQuest and iCONN.org, rebranded as researchITCT. The site is extremely kid friendly allowing students to narrow down their searches by grade level and providing scanned articles which make it possible for readers to see magazine spreads and colored photos. There is even a citation device that helps students populate their bibliography automatically; making it easy for them to keep track of all of their research.

Once students completed their research assignments they were treated to a two-hour MakerLab workshop, with instruction on our newest 3-D printer. Students created TinkerCad accounts, learning the software and eventually creating their own prints. This MakerLab workshop was particularly special

because CELC invited their pen pals from New Jersey (another hands-on private school) to join in the 3-D design fun! We had a total of 15 students and 4 teachers attend the workshop. It was fun to introduce our MakerLab to their out of state friends, and CELC documented the entire visit on their website.

This month we also piloted a brand new program entitled Read to a Dog. Back in December, a member of the Pet Partners organization approached me about encouraging reading through the use of therapy dogs. Studies have shown that children who are nervous about reading out loud are more likely to do so with a dog since they know that they will not be judged. Students who read with dogs not only show small signs of improvement but also gain confidence in their ability since it is a joyful process. Knowing that this could positively impact readers of all ages I jumped at the chance and reached out to our elementary school reading specialists and English as a second language (ESL) teachers to spread the word about the program and see if certain children could benefit from reading to a dog. The schools were excited about the prospect so we formed our first Read with a Dog program this past month.

The first program attracted 9 students who read aloud to one of three certified therapy

dogs for a total of 15 minutes. Children were encouraged to bring their own “just right” reading material but we also had a small basket of books on standby in case somebody forgot. The kids that participated had the best time petting, reading and interacting with their dogs. Each dog also had their trainer nearby so that the kids could ask questions and learn a little about their dog before settling in with their books. The parents that attended were happy with the overall experience and cannot wait to bring their kids back the following month. I think one of the most gratifying parts of the program was seeing the number of ESL students that attended. Since those students were encouraged to sign up at school, two of their classroom teachers also came to check on the event and offer language support for those that may have needed instructional clarification. Both teachers responded positively to the event and said that they would share their experiences with other teachers and classrooms in hope of expanding the number of attendees.

-Carly Lemire

CELC Students Meet Pen Pals and Attend Maker Lab at Blackstone Library

This article was posted on the Shoreline Chamber of Commerce website on January 18:

The small schools movement is building momentum throughout the country. Students receive a personalized education and take advantage of a variety of unique opportunities. James Blackstone Memorial Library made available its MakerLab for just such an opportunity.

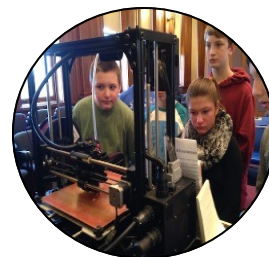
Two small schools, CT Experiential Learning Center (CELC)

Middle School of Branford and The Flex School of Fanwood, New Jersey, have joined forces. The students began in September with correspondence through the old-fashioned method of letter writing.

Then, Tuesday, 12 January, the groups came together and met for the first time. They greeted one another, sat down for lunch, and then took part in a Maker Lab to explore 3D-printer technology. Students were

fascinated, as program director Katy Dillman demonstrated the process of creating a design using Tinkercad software. Each student also had a chance to work on a computer to create designs to be printed.

A great first meeting followed by a special treat of Ashley's Ice Cream! The next collaborative adventure between CELC and Flex will be a visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.



CELC students learn to use our 3-D printer.

Highlights from the Reference Department-January

This month Christina switched our monthly online events calendar from Constant Contact to MailChimp. In order to do this, Christina learned the new software, migrated the various lists of email addresses, and created templates for our three monthly listings. All of this was done in addition to Christina's regular duties, and the result was a seamless transition. MailChimp is recommended for its lower cost and better integration with EventBrite and SurveyMonkey. The three newsletters look great and Christina is sharing her knowledge with other staff members who send out mailings. Thank you, Christina!

A few technology notes

Our Makerbot 3-D printer was moved to the reference department this month, and it has been very active. We

have had lots of requests for print jobs from patrons and many visitors are immediately drawn to the printer on the Reference floor when they come to the library. The Reference staff has enjoyed demonstrating the printer to our patrons.

Our T-Mobile hotspots remain extremely popular. They are always checked out and the holds list is staying at around a dozen patrons on a steady basis.

Top ten books trending at LION libraries this month:

My Name Is Lucy Barton
by Elizabeth Strout

15th Affair
by James Patterson

Private Paris
by James Patterson

Rogue Lawyer
by John Grisham

When Breath Becomes Air
by Paul Kalanithi

The Guilty by David Baldacci

NYPD Red 4
by James Patterson

See Me by Nicholas Sparks

Blue by Danielle Steel

Fool Me Once
by Harlan Coben

Deborah 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

March 2016 Program Highlights

The Jolly Beggars Concert

3/6 @ 2—3:30 PM

Join us for traditional stories from Irish folklore interspersed with music, traditional reels and jigs. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

Intro to Digital Photography

3/7, 14, 21 & 28 @ 6 PM

Learn the basics of digital photography with local photographer, Ben Sordo. Increase your knowledge of photography and learn by doing in this 4-part class, whether you have a digital camera, DSLR, or simply a cell phone camera. You must bring your own device to this class.

Intro to 3-D Printing*

3/10 @ 1—2:30 PM

In this class, you'll learn by using Tinkercad's online lessons, with guidance from our staff. Go at your own pace,

and create something that's truly yours.

A Fly Fishing Safari*

3/19 @ 2—3 PM

Enjoy an afternoon learning about the art and craft of fly fishing with Jim Turecek, an expert fly fisherman with 40 years experience. Whether you are an experienced fisherman or someone interested in starting a new hobby, you'll gain a new insight to the excitement of fly fishing. We'll travel from local trout streams and Long Island Sound, to the bonefish flats of the Caribbean to learn about fresh and salt water fly fishing. There will be displays of equipment, prey species and Q & A following the program.

Homemade Body Scrubs

3/22 @ 6:30—7:30 PM

Make your own Coffee Body Scrub or Vanilla Pumpkin

Spice Sugar Scrub. You decide which 4 ounce scrub to create! The caffeine in coffee works as a vasodilator, tightening the surface of the skin, making your skin firmer. The small molecular structure of pumpkin penetrates deep within the skin when used topically to treat dull complexion, aging skin, and pigmentation. Presented by mother/daughter team Velya Jancz-Urban & Ehris Urban of Grounded Holistic Wellness.

Bestseller Book Club*

Saturdays @ 3—4 PM

March 26, April 30, May 28

In March we will read *The Muralist* by B.A. Shapiro. April's title is *The Nest* by Cynthia D'Apris Sweeney and in May we will read *Everyone Brave is Forgiven* by Chris Cleave. Books are available at the library.

*Programs with an * require registration.*

January 2016 Statistics—Deirdre Santora & Gennett Grinnell

Total Circulation: 13,031

January 2015: 14,146

ConnectiCard: 2,808

January 2015: 2,788

Renewals: 3,038

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 574

Overdrive audiobooks: 182

Zinio: 242

Interlibrary Loan

Borrowed 20 Loaned 31

Children's Programs:

Babies (0-2)

14 programs/296 attendance

Preschool (3-5)

10 programs/200 attendance

School-age (6-11)

10 programs/227 attendance

All Ages

0 programs/0 attendance

Total Children's Programs: 34

Total Attendance: 723

Teen Programs (12+)

3 programs/30 attendance

Adult programs

21 programs/637 attendance

Lucy Hammer Room

45 meetings/83 attendance

Computer Sessions: 1837

Facebook: 1241 Likes

MailChimp: 4982 subscribers (replaces Constant Contact)

Average Daily Visitors: 496

Days Open: 28