



Report to the Board of Trustees

March 4, 2020

From the Director

The library is getting back to normal as we all settle in to our new spaces with no disruptions. Gradually, patrons are coming back to see the transformation and the response continues to be overwhelmingly positive.

The library was featured in an article titled *Book Keepers* in the *Daily Nutmeg* this month. A reporter from the *Hartford Courant* is also working on an article, and Jean Polka, one of the artists who created our Branford 375 commemorative print, was featured in *The Sound* as person of the week.

The children's department received two new AWE learning stations which were discovered immediately and have been very popular. Also, Kathy Oxsalida's husband, Al, re-painted the train table in the children's room—it's beautiful.

Work continued on the information kiosk donated by the Rotary Club. It is scheduled to be installed during the week of March 9.

Staff met with ERACE and Legacy Theater to discuss future program collaborations. I also met with the Shoreline ElderCare Alliance to give a presentation about library services.

Our Yale SOM Fellow, Eloise



The Friends of the Library have installed two shelves in the lobby which will offer recently published, gently read books for sale. L-R: Jon Clark, Gerri Reider, Joe Genua.

Owens, visited the library on February 26. Polly and I talked about strategic planning and gave her a tour of the library. She will begin working with us to apply for a planning grant through the state library. The board will meet her on March 4.

The library's budget request was submitted to the Town. It includes a 3.11%, or \$44,863 increase in Town funding. The Town's budget review process begins March 16th.

The Friends of the library voted to purchase a new scanning station for the computer lab. We realized just how much we rely on this piece of equipment when it was out of order for the month. It should be back by early March.

Our building committee met on February 20 to discuss the roof repairs. We are meeting again on March 5 to review a proposal for completing the work.

Karen Jensen



Mini Golf: After Hours

March 28, 7:00 pm

18 holds of mini golf inside the library—play upstairs, downstairs, everywhere!

The Saturday evening event features tastings of whiskey, spirits, beer and wine sponsored by Branford Wine & Liquor.

Plus, mini golf, food, silent auction and prizes for lowest scores.

Tickets are \$40 and on sale now!

Highlights from the Youth Services Department—January



Our new train table!

This month we welcomed back our regular storytimes. Miss Mary is still running her Monday—Wednesday classes along with additional book readings at the Family Resource Center and Child Development Center. I have also started PJ storytime on Thursday evenings, created a joint storytime on Fridays that brings books and film shorts together plus a monthly Saturday storytime for working families. We blasted the news on our website, social media outlets and printed calendars to let families know that we are up and running and they have been dropping in to see our new space!

We have updated the play-space with a variety of early learning toys. We were able to acquire a new dollhouse along with furniture, puzzles, new cars/trucks, different grocery items and other odds and ends. This was made possible by the Friends of the James Blackstone Memorial Library and we thank them for making our new children's space delightful.

Our business manager, Kathy Oxsalida and her husband surprised us by updating our train table. The dynamic duo built and secured train tracks to the table and added personal touches with hand painted gardens, roads and streams. They even used wood glue and different blocks to create a little town, waterfall and ferry! The results were breathtaking, a true piece of art and we know

that our families will cherish this updated table in our new space.

We also acquired two AWE, Early Literacy Stations. The stations are programmed computers filled with early learning games appropriate for ages 2 to 6. The game categories include reading, math, science, engineering, music and art. Each station is programmed for 20 minutes of play and allows families to learn computer basics through mouse, keyboard and touchscreen requests. The games also reinforce concepts like matching, color recognition, opposites, numeracy, writing and more. Other CT libraries have been offering AWE stations for quite some time and we are now excited to give our community access.

The Youth Services Department also received a \$100 donation from 10 year-old Lorelei Ranalli. Lorelei and her mother have been coming to the Blackstone to attend Miss Mary's storytimes ever since she was a baby. During the renovations Lorelei and her mother would drive by the construction site and she would ask how she could contribute. At the beginning of January Lorelei made good on that question and donated her own money to enhance the children's fantasy collection. Karen, Miss Mary and I were so touched by her selfless act that we put together a certificate and tote bag as a thank

you for supporting the library. Lorelei could not wait to fill her new bag with Blackstone items and put her certificate on display as soon as she got home. Seeing the youth service's department foster such a young supporter reminds us how impactful one's library experience can be and that we are in charge of fostering library users of the future.

Miss Mary and I also attended a professional development workshop on welcoming kids on the spectrum to the library. The program was presented by the Connecticut Library Consortium and brought a librarian from MA to share her experience as a mother with a child who has autism and how that translates to a library setting. The information she provided was invaluable; not only discussing proper terminology but also how kids can manifest their traits in different ways. Even though the library is open to all, some families are anxious about bringing their child to an area that creates unpredictability, especially if judgment is attached. Being able to break those barriers and ease their fears is key. Simple steps include saying hello and addressing a child personally, creating quiet areas where families can get away from loud noises and lights. Marking important areas pictures. These changes can help families with children on the spectrum feel welcome.

Carly Lemire

Highlights from the Reference Department-January

This month, I'd like to spotlight our digital offerings and databases.

Our ebook and audiobook services include both OverDrive and Hoopla. OverDrive offers thousands of ebooks and audiobooks to all LION library cardholders. The Hoopla service is offered to all Blackstone Library patrons and has the advantage of not requiring a patron to go on a hold list for a title. If the title is in the Hoopla catalog, it can be borrowed right away. In addition to ebooks and audiobooks, Hoopla offers movies, TV shows and graphic novels. All Connecticut residents also have access to the State ebook and audiobook collection.

LION library cardholders have access to Digital Magazines from RB Digital. This collection offers 240 magazines that patrons can download to their mobile devices and computers. Included in this collection are magazines such as The New Yorker, Prevention, Cook's Illustrated, Rolling Stone, National Geographic, Vanity Fair, Architectural Digest and many more.

For patrons interested in learning a foreign language or improving their English language skills, we offer SCOLA, which provides language learning and videos; and Pronunciator, for Blackstone Library cardholders, which provides lessons in 146 different languages as well as mu-

sic and movies.

Blackstone Library cardholders can find international films, documentaries, PBS and The Great Courses on Kanopy. They can search the New Haven Register from 1988 to the present. Also available to any Connecticut resident through researchITCT are the Chicago Tribune, Hartford Courant, Los Angeles Times, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post and thousands of articles in magazines, including Consumer Reports.

Branford residents with a Blackstone Library card can access AtoZ Databases and JobNow from home. If they are interested in their family history, they can visit the library and access AncestryLibrary from one of our computers or their own laptop. In addition, the library is a Family History affiliate library which means they have access to genealogy resources on Family Search that are not available from home.

Our reference librarians have created a Blackstone Library Learning Commons with links to lessons on anything from Instagram to Microsoft Word to Gmail to Pinterest. In addition, they have created subject specific pages with links to many valuable websites; included are subjects such as business, careers, genealogy, health, local history and resources for seniors.

To view any of these resources, just visit our website and click on the Digital Resources and Research dropdown menus.

Debby Trofatter



Hoopla is one of the digital resources sponsored by the Friends of the Library.



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...more than books

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

March 2020 Program Highlights

F2G2 Game Night*

March 6 @ 6:00 - 9:00 pm

Join us for game night! We'll be playing all types of board games, from fast-paced, hilarious party games to highly strategic, thinky games that will leave your head spinning! Feel free to bring your own games too. Adults of all ages welcome.

Internet Basics*

March 19 @ 2:00 - 3:30 pm

Attendees will have the opportunity to learn about web browsers, hyperlinks, downloading and uploading files, and more.

Ask A Lawyer

March 19 @ 6:00 - 7:45 pm

Have a legal question? Get a free consultation with a lawyer, brought to you by the New Haven County Bar Association. Consultations are first-come, first-served. Sign up at

Reference up to 30 minutes before program begins. Free and open to the public.

The Severed Finger:

A Thimble Island Mystery*

March 21 @ 2:00 - 3:30 pm

Join us for some light refreshments and a fascinating fire-side presentation by local author Arno B. Zimmer. He'll be discussing his fifth book, *The Severed Finger*, a mystery novel set right off the coast of the Thimble Islands! Copies of the book will be available for purchase at the special rate of \$8.00.

Making the Most of your Health Insurance

March 28 @ 11 - 12:00 noon

Enrolling in a health insurance plan is only the first step toward living a healthy life. What comes next is figuring

out how to make the most of your coverage. *Presented by members of the AmeriCorps STICH Program.*

Lock Picking for Beginners*

March 28 @ 1:00 - 2:30 pm

We provide everything that you need to learn how to open simple pin-tumbler locks, learn which locks are secure and which are not, and have a great time doing it! We also cover local and federal laws surrounding this hobby.

Bestseller Book Club*

March 28 @ 3:30 - 4:30 pm

In the Bestseller Book Club, we'll be reading and discussing newly released, highly rated books from a wide variety of genres. This month we are reading *Such a Fun Age* by Kiley Reid. Copies are available at the library. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

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

January 2020 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

Total Circulation: 10,039

January 2019: 10,739

borrowIT: 2,539

January 2019: 2,400

Renewals: 5,719

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 1088

Overdrive audiobooks: 573

RB Digital: 299

Hoopla: 606 plays

Kanopy: 150 plays

Pronunciator: 477 users

Children's Programs:

Babies (0-2)

12 programs/173 attendance

Preschool (3-5)

15 programs/192 attendance

School-age (6-11)

4 programs/20 attendance

All Ages

0 programs/0 attendance

Total Children's Programs: 31

Total Attendance: 385

Teen Programs (12+)

23 programs/215 attendance

Adult programs

21 programs/307 attendance

Hammer & Conference Room

155 meetings/450 attendance

Computer Sessions: 1,557

Facebook: 1,812 Likes

MailChimp: 7,771 subscribers

Days Open: 28

Daily Attendance: 498