



Report to the Board of Trustees

November 4, 2014

From the Director

Results from our annual staff climate survey are in, and they are excellent! The overall negative response rate was down to 4.1%, which qualifies the library as a very healthy organization. The report notes that there are limited challenges internally, which is significantly better than 2012 and 2013. Supervisors and staff reviewed the results and representative comments. We will use the information to set goals for the upcoming year.



Christopher Dormer, Anthony Festa and Kelliann Festa conferring in character at Hogwarts School of Wizardry and Magic.

Hogwarts Year 3 Raises over \$14,000

With the help of an incredible team of volunteers, Hogwarts Halloween raised over \$14,000 for children's programs and materials at the Blackstone Library.

We were overwhelmed by the popularity of the program and grateful for the outpouring of support the community has shown for the Blackstone. To see children and adults alike transported into literature as though they were characters in the story is a powerful testament to the lifelong impact of literature and libraries.

On the development front, Katy drafted and mailed invitations to our Leadership Circle for the November 9th RaveOn! concert and donor reception. A draft of our year-end appeal is also ready for approval by the board.

Since Bookmark Branford is not at the level we were hoping for, Co-Communications has launched some Facebook advertising to help drive story submissions. We are also offering an entry in a drawing for an iPad Mini for stories submitted by November 30.

Staff received training on our new defibrillator on October 15. The device is located at the main floor circulation desk.

Co-Communications spent a day filming on location at the

library on October 21. Dave Henderson (board member & parent), Remsen Welsh (teen patron) and Charlotte D'Aniello were interviewed, and the videographer filmed several programs throughout the day, including the Maker-Lab.

Staff completed the second half of Mental Health First Aid training in October.

Friends started planning for their Downton Abbey Tea scheduled for Sunday, January 18 from 1-4pm.

Notices about our impending Smoke-Free campus policy were posted around the library entrances. So far there have been no comments from the public. The policy goes into effect on November 1.

Jan Day and I attended the ACLB leadership conference at the University of Hartford on October 24. John Chrastka, executive director of EveryLibrary presented useful tips on advocacy and political action for libraries. Alice Knapp of the Stamford library gave a talk on the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, describing how her library used techniques to determine and fulfill community aspirations.

I attended Rotary meetings, a Chamber of Commerce Non-profit council meeting, and a Rotary Interact meeting at the high school this month.

*Karen Jensen
Library Director*

This Month in the Youth Services Department - September

This month the youth services department got back into the swing of things by taking on a massive shelf read. Staff reviewed our collections to be sure that items were back in place. Everyone worked together to get through the entire department and I want to thank them for their time and effort—it takes a lot of patience to review each item—especially when the spine labels are smaller! In the end, it is great knowing that everything is back in order so that families can find what they need.

We also weeded our chapter book and non-fiction collection. Jenna has done a fantastic job evaluating our chapter books for deletion and has been sure to take the classics and award winners into consideration. Christina has also been working on our non-fiction collection to determine what subject matters need to be updated. Are we missing important topics or historical events? Information is constantly changing—having access to the internet and the state's databases helps when it is time to decide which subjects are best served in book or electronic formats.

Continuing our “out with the old and in with the new” theme, Miss Mary and I decided to survey our story time and playroom materials. Over time these materials see a lot of use tend to get shabby. After discarding items that no longer meet our needs, we

rediscovered never-before-used toys, puzzles and games from our storage closet that we were saving for a rainy day. At the end of the month we placed an order for some new items - including rhythm sticks that will be incorporated in our Stories for 2s class! We cannot wait to try everything out and see the excited reactions for our smallest patrons in October.

The Blackstone Library has been working with the Branford Early Childhood Collaborative on various projects for quite some time. The goal of the BECC is to bridge organizations that work towards improving the health, education and safety of children birth to age 8. Some of the collaborators include: the East Shore Health District, Birth to 3, local preschools and School Aged Childcare. The BECC has expanded their work to include parent education, which is something the youth services department has been trying to build by taking part in ELL breakfasts, summer reading kick-offs and expanding the number of parent-based services on our website. This fall the BECC and Family Resource Center have come together to host Circle of Security, a parent-based support group with a trained leader that allows parents of children birth to 5 to discuss key issues while focusing on the social, emotional and educational growth of their children. The group meets every Tuesday at the James Black-

stone Memorial Library at 11:30am and provides lunch through the Community Dining Room and childcare through the BECC for those that do not have access to a sitter. The group will run through November. I think hosting something like this is extremely beneficial not only for the parent to parent contact but also to have the ability to talk to a professional at no cost to seek advice. Much like our non-fiction collection, there is always new research out there and tips and tricks that parents can grab to ensure that their children are happy, healthy and open to learning. If you are interested in attending the parent group simply contact the youth services department or drop in during their meeting.

At the end of the month, we hosted an energy-filled program with local author Cathrene Youngquist. Cathrene is the author of a three billygoats gruff adaptation entitled *The Three Billygoats Gruff and Mean Calypso Joe*. The story was inspired by her time spent in the Caribbean and she incorporates steel drums and puppets with her reading. The kids had a blast not only hearing the story but also taking in the Caribbean music and moving throughout the room. We want to thank Cathrene for bringing her story and lively program to the library. Our children and families really got a kick out of it.

Carly Lemire



Author Cathrene Youngquist and her puppet squad!

September Highlights from the Reference Department

The library is always busy and there is always something or someone who needs our attention or assistance. The reference department has two service desks (one on each level) which are designed to guide people to us; however, seven days a week (63 hours) we can be found almost anywhere in our 25,000 square foot building – finding large print books, setting up the DVD/projector for a film, searching for a sports section of the Boston Globe, helping patrons use an electronic gadget or the copier, guiding patrons to available study tables, or directing them to the café. Luckily, we enjoy moving around and helping our library patrons with whatever they need. September was no exception. Here are a few highlights in no particular order:

Outreach:

Barbara gave two tours of the library to ELL adult students from ERACE on September 23rd. *Great group of enthusiastic new library users!*

Technology:

Deb worked tirelessly with LION staff to upgrade our network and wireless connections for improved speed. *Our patrons are not "Slowskys" – they like fast*

internet connections!

Collection maintenance:

Shauna single-handedly helped us clean up our database by removing selected outdated and incorrect records. *We pride ourselves on providing accurate information in our online catalog!*

Welcome:

Kirsty Smith joined the reference team on September 22nd. She is our new 20-hour Reference Assistant, The reference staff is introducing her to the ins and outs of our fast-paced department. *Welcome, Kirsty, we hope you enjoy the ride!*

Professional Development:

Whitney's submitted a book review of Garth Stein's *A Sudden Light* to LibraryReads.org which lists the top ten books published this month that librarians across the country love. Whitney's pick earned a "Favorite" rating. Whitney and Kirsty attended the two-part Mental Health First Aid Workshop held at the Blackstone. *There is always something new to learn and ways expand your horizons!*

Books and more:

Good Books You May Have Missed was a very popular book display this month for

our department. In addition, for Banned Books Week, Whitney - with some assistance from other library staff – set up a great book display celebrating the freedom to read. (Thanks, Jenna and Ariel!) *Collaboration and collegiality works!*

Research and Reference:

A fun and challenging question from a group of students looking for the front page newspaper headlines on the day they were born for a class assignment. It was great to reminisce and dig through the online archives before and after the 1980s. *Flashback!*

FREE  PERMIT PRACTICE TESTS
get ready for your DMV test

The Blackstone Library is pleased to offer free online test prep for CT driving tests!

blackstone.driving-tests.org/connecticut



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November 2014 Program Highlights

Writers Workshop

Saturdays
November 1, 8, 15, 22

@ 10:30 AM
Sarah Bradley helps you work on your memoir, explore your creativity in the world of fiction, or craft essays in a supportive group environment.

Dear Eva: WWII Letters

Saturday
November 8 @ 1—2 PM
A captivating play based on World War II letters written by ordinary men and women. The play's co-authors, Catherine Ladnier and Paul Janensch will welcome your questions immediately after.

Rave On!

Sunday
November 9 @ 2—3:30 PM
Back by popular demand, Rave On! plays the legendary music of early rock and roll. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

Menunkatuck Audubon Society Presents:

Wednesday
November 12 @ 7—8 PM
Iceland's birds, flowers and wildlife. Free and open to the public. Contact Carl at program@menunkatuck.org.

Holiday Greetings

Sunday
November 16 @ 1:30 PM
Craft beautiful holiday letters that are sure to bring lots of joy to your friends & family. Presented by Carol Christmas.

ShoreGrass Concert

Saturday
November 22 @ 2-3:30 PM
Bluegrass instrumentation, traditional 3-part harmony and creative arrangements. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

Reviving 5000 Years of Chinese Civilization

Tuesday
November 18 @ 7—8 PM
Presented by the CT Chinese Culture Association.

Dementia Care Education for Families

Thursdays @ 10—11:30 AM
November 13, 20
For caregivers of people with any type of dementia. The series covers communication techniques, strategies for behavioral challenges, safety, caregiver health, plus financial and legal issues. Sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association of CT. Please register by calling: 203-230-1777, ext. 14.

September 2014 Statistics—Deirdre Santora & Gennett Grinnell

Total Circulation: 14,195

September 2013: 13,985

ConnectiCard: 2,864

August 2013: 2,645

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks: 510
Overdrive audiobooks: 152
Axis360: 24
Zinio: 156
IndieFlix: 14

Interlibrary Loan

Borrowed 54 Loaned 79

Children's Programs:

Babies (0-2)
14 programs/311 attendance
Preschool (3-5)
11 programs/142 attendance
School-age (6-11)
15 programs/204 attendance

Total Children's Programs: 40

Total Attendance: 659

Teen Programs (12+)

1 program/2 attendance

Adult programs

19 programs/387 attendance

Lucy Hammer Room

60 meetings/130 attendance

Computer Sessions: 2436

Facebook: 992 Likes

Constant Contact: 3890

Average Daily Visitors: 557

Days Open: 29