Report to the Board of Trustees

October 5, 2016

From the Director

The start of September means that committees and organizations are back to work, just like school is back in session. I attended several meetings this month, including the Board and Friends meetings, CLA meetings, Shoreline Chamber of Commerce Donor Development workshop, hosted a CLA meetup at the library on September 9, met for CLA Conference planning, CLC Board meeting, and met to help kick off the revitalized CT Center for the Book.

I also volunteer as the Rotary Club’s Interact representative. With school back in session, the club has already met twice. Our representative teacher from the high school has a new position in the English Department, and she led a library card drive which registered over 50 BHS students for cards. We have been invited to visit the high school to demonstrate Overdrive downloadable books to the students in October.

The Capital Campaign kicked off on September 15 with a meeting of our committee, and consultant Ron Katz. Members of the committee include Andy McKirdy, Robin Sandler, Polly Fitz, Norman Dahl, Tom Perrone, Gina Wells, Susan Barnes, Charlie Andriolet, and Eunice Lasala. Once we have design alternatives from Silver Petrucci Architects in October, we will be able to share them with the committee.

One of my activities as library director is to participate in the Town Center Merchants Association. This year, the Association is planning a Holiday Wreath Auction where merchants will decorate the wreaths, to be auctioned off on December 3 at the Branford Arts Center. The proceeds will go to Feed Branford Kids.

At the end of the month, Christina and I presented a Job Search in the Digital Age program. The first class was filled with 10 participants, and we have a waiting list of 10 more. We’ll schedule a second session in October. Participants were glad to learn of the many resources available in the databases that we subscribe to. Job Now has opportunities to participate in live chats with experts for resume review, interviewing tips and career advice. A-Z databases is a robust source of company information.

A few months ago, we made a connection with the new director of the Community Dining Room, Judy Barron. She thought it would be helpful if library staff could come to the CDR to help clients with their resumes. Katy and I are scheduled for 4 sessions to take place over October and November.

Also at the end of month, a group of staff got together to discuss Celebrity Biographies. Whitney Gayle has been leading these regular discussions so that staff can explore new genres in order to strengthen their readers’ advisory skills.

Karen Jensen
August Highlights from the Youth Services Department

This month marked the close of our summer reading program. This year we had 923 children participate and over 7,300 books were read. Once again, we worked with the Branford Public Schools to get the word out and want to thank them for registering some of their students before the school year ended. We also wanted to congratulate all of our participants on their reading efforts and give a big high five to those that completed their reading goal.

Miss Mary, Miss Kat and I spent a lot of time this month printing out 3D keychains for those that met and surpassed their summer reading goals so we know you worked hard all summer long.

This past month also marked the end of working with our teen summer intern that we obtained through the Counseling Center. This year we worked with Meghan, a senior entering Branford High that enjoys reading and writing. Meghan has actually been volunteering at the Library the last couple of years, so bringing her into our department was smooth sailing. Throughout the summer Meghan was able to continue her regularly scheduled volunteer duties but also learned more about the Library system by checking items in and out. She also created displays, helped put together our successful Pokemon scavenger hunt and got to work one-on-one with the public by helping them locate materials, print documents and answer basic questions about our services. Meghan also introduced me to a newer genre making headway that is meant for late teens - mid twenties known as New Adult. These books focus on big topics like: relationships, empowerment and acceptance but also address the transition from child to adulthood. The main characters are not in high school rather in or just graduating college, trying to navigate the world on their own. Many say that this new trend is our “true” Young Adult genre since the main characters are essentially young adults. Meghan is a big reader of this genre so she gave a couple of book suggestions that Deirdre was happy to order. It will be interesting to see if New Adult will strike a chord with some of our younger readers and I want to thank her for sharing her knowledge.

One of our most popular programs this month was provided by Shakesperience Productions, Inc. in partnership with Shoreline Arts Alliance. Shakesperience actors performed a live adapted version of the children’s classic Gulliver’s Travels. Miss Mary was able to sit on production and reported back that she and the rest of the audience enjoyed every second of the performance. The production was actually led by two actors who switched parts throughout the show, playing all the characters found in the book. Miss Mary said that they were captivating and supplemented their performance with puppets and sign language that had the audience roaring. They also brought the viewers inside the story by going over the main themes and asking them questions at the end of the play.

We also received another set of diaper bags from our local Exchange Club for our baby bundle program. The baby bundle program was created in partnership with the Branford Early Childhood Collaborative with the goal of getting the word out about local early child development and services to new parents that were expecting. The baby bundles are essentially diaper bags filled with literature, books, baby caps and more. This is our third donation from the Exchange Club and their support has made this service possible.

In Maker news Katy and I received our new MakerBot, 5th generation 3D printer as well as their digitizer or 3D scanner. The digitizer is something that patrons have been requesting for quite some time. This equipment makes it possible for them to bring in 3 dimensional objects they want to replicate without having to design them from scratch. The digitizer uses a combination of lasers, a camera and turntable to produce a 360 degree scan that creates an STL file that can then be altered to produce a 3D print. The best part, the digitizer can be used by both of our 3D printers! We encourage you to stop in anytime for a demo, and feel free to bring items in that you are interested in printing.

Carly Lemire
The library has continued to be very busy this month. We are seeing lots of new patrons and the computers are always in use. People continue to need help with resumes and job searching so we are focusing our attention on that area for classes and website updates. Christina and Karen are giving a class on job searching in the digital age in September and we are expanding our Tech Thursday offerings and our Job Seekers page on the website.

Events and programs this month included Monday night Hatha Yoga, Spices of the World, 3D Printing class, Ask-A-Lawyer, Tilde Café, Saturday Cinema and Bestsellers Book Club.

With the popularity of our T-Mobile hotspots, we decided to add 3 hotspots provided by Sprint, through a discount offered by the CT Library Consortium. Our goal was to eventually replace the T-Mobile units, but we encountered an issue soon after we began using the Sprint units. Apparently Sprint had a tower with hardware issues near Starbucks. Because there were Ospreys nesting in the tower, Sprint was unable to fix the issues. We had to recommend that patrons who live in the center or west of town check out the T-Mobile hotspots.

We are working on putting ideas discussed in our Aspen Institute meetings into practice as best we can. We have begun to develop our new Blackstone Library Learning Commons page to bring quality instructional materials together for our patrons.

One of the rewarding aspects of our jobs here at Blackstone is the sense of familiarity that we develop with many of our regular patrons. Our patrons talk to us about books they have read and liked and movies they have seen and enjoyed and we share our thoughts with them. They call us by our first name, both in the library and out in the community, when we see them. We know which patrons are here to use the computer and might need help, who comes in to make copies of crossword puzzles, and who is looking for the New Haven Register or NY Times Book Review. It is truly one of the most enjoyable aspects of working in a small town library.

Did You Know...

One of the things that we all agreed on while working through the Aspen review exercises, was that we often encounter patrons who are not aware of our services, even though they have been visiting the library on a regular basis, and we have offered many of our services for quite some time. In order to highlight some of the most commonly overlooked resources, Debby was able to dedicate an area in the news section of our homepage to focus on a new resource every few weeks.

For instance, did you know that the library checks out WiFi hotspots? We have three T-Mobile and three Sprint hotspots available for a one week checkout. You can connect up to ten devices at a time. You can place a hold online (keyword search: hotspot) or call the Reference desk at 203-488-1441, ext. 318.

Did you know that the library has access to databases and websites to help with job searching? Be sure to check out the library’s page with links to many job search websites. It’s under our Research tab, linked from Websites by Subject.

Did you know that you can download magazines for free? With your library card and the Zinio app, you have access to more than 200 magazines every month. There are no restrictions on how many you can read and they are yours to keep until you no longer want them.

Highlights from the Reference Department—August

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Debby Trofatter
October 2016 Program Highlights

Hatha Yoga
Mondays @ 5:15 - 6:30 pm
Join yoga teacher Helen Lespier every Monday evening. Free and open to all ages.

VNA Flu Clinic
October 14 @ 12:30 - 2 pm
Details TBA. Please visit blackstonelibrary.org for more information.

Yours in Words: A Staged Reading**
October 15 @ 1:30 - 3 pm
A story of two women from different backgrounds, of different generations, at a turning point in history for women and invention. Written by Laura Thoma.

The Art of Edgar Degas
October 16 @ 2 - 3:15 pm
Learn about the art of Edgar Degas, a French artist famous for his paintings, sculptures, prints, and drawings. Presented by Joy Pepe. Lecture held in memory of Blackstone Friend, Fred Biamonte. Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.

A Supernatural Evening with Trance Medium Chrystyne McGrath**
October 25 @ 6:30 - 7:30 pm
Ever wonder about the difference between ghosts and spirits? Hear about Chrystyne’s experiences with ghosts, spirits, clearings of homes and businesses around Connecticut. Bring your photos, objects and questions to this fun event!

Genius, Grit, & Sacrifice: Connecticut in the American Revolution
October 26 @ 7 - 9 pm
CT soldiers and civilians were key to winning the war for American independence. Presented by Diana Ross McCain. Books will be available for purchase and signing after the program. Sponsored by Branford Historical Society.

TECH CLASSES
iPad Basics**
September 1 @ 2 - 3:30 pm
Intro to 3D Printing**
October 8 @ 2 - 4 pm
Intermediate 3D Printing**
October 18 @ 6 - 8 pm
Computer & Email Basics**
October 6 @ 2 - 3:30 pm
Intro to Arduino**
October 11 @ 6 - 8 pm
Bestsellers Book Club**
October 29 @ 3 - 4 pm
The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead

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

August 2016 Statistics—Deirdre Santora & Gennett Grinnell

Total Circulation: 16,412
August 2015: 17,071

ConnectiCard: 3,850
August 2015: 3,451

Renewals: 3,322

Downloadable Circulation:
Overdrive ebooks: 688
Overdrive audiobooks: 289
Zinio: 187

Interlibrary Loan
Borrowed 8 Loaned 38

Children’s Programs:
Babies (0-2)
14 programs/350 attendance
Preschool (3-5)
11 programs/158 attendance
School-age (6-11)
10 programs/170 attendance
All Ages
2 programs/104 attendance

Total Children’s Programs: 30
Total Attendance: 782

Teen Programs (12+)
2 programs/12 attendance

Adult programs
16 programs/191 attendance

Lucy Hammer Room
52 meetings/230 attendance

Computer Sessions: 2598

Facebook: 1340 Likes

MailChimp: 5329 subscribers

Average Daily Visitors: 641
Days Open: 27