



Report to the Board of Trustees

September 1, 2021

From the Director

Over the summer, our strategic planning team completed conversations with 14 groups covering 10 motivational segments. We have entered the data and Innovation Builders is analyzing it. We have two more conversations to complete—one with a group of students in the ESOL class at Shoreline Adult Ed, and one with a group of millennials focusing on learning practical skills. This will complete all of the Life Map areas.

The community survey is complete and ready to go out this month. Our work with Innovation Builders has been delayed slightly due to recruiting challenges, but on track to be finished by early November.

In celebration of the library's 125th anniversary, we are offering a choice of two new library card designs, showcasing the history and beauty of the library building. These new limited-edition cards are available to new and existing library card holders. Those wishing to replace their existing cards may do so for a nominal fee of \$1.

The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven is holding another session of the Groundwater Approach, on September 18 and all trustees are welcome to attend.



Some of our friends from SARAH Foundation enjoying the new furniture on the Cosgrove Terrace! Our wifi reaches the terrace, so you can stay connected, too!

We decided to request that the new AC chiller be installed in the fall, rather than in the heat of summer, when the entire system would have to be shut down for two weeks for to complete the project. So far the existing chiller has held up.

I took CPR training with some members of the Friends at the Fire Station in August, attended a meeting of the Advisory Council for Library Planning and Development, attended a planning session for the Community Founda-

tion for Greater New Haven, and several LION board meetings this summer.

This summer has been relatively quiet as the COVID-19 Delta variant surges on. However, it is much more active than last year—use has more than doubled over the same period and we are so happy to see our regular patrons again. We have a full calendar of programs planned for the fall with many planned in person in our beautiful auditorium.

Karen Jensen

Two Ways to Support The Library this Fall!

On-site Shredding Event
Saturday, September 18
9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Clean out your old papers, protect your privacy and confidentiality — and support the library! First box is \$7, each additional box is \$5. Or, save \$ when you buy a prepaid card: 2 boxes for \$10. Prepaid cards available for purchase at the library until September 17.

Friends of the Library Fall Book Sale On the Town Green

Preview for Members
Thursday, 9/30 5pm—7pm

General Sale:
Thursday, 9/30 7pm—9 pm
Friday, 10/1 9am—7pm
Saturday, 10/2 9am—7pm
Sunday, 10/3 12noon—3pm
(Fill a bag on Sunday \$10)

Highlights from the Youth Services Department—June & July

Our summer theme this year was “Tails and Tales,” with a focus on animals and nature. From June through August, participants received a weekly email with a nature-themed reading challenge and the opportunity to enter a raffle for each challenge completed. Prizes included gift cards to local businesses; as a special incentive we also gave out free nature journals to the first 50 participants. Journals were gone within the first week!

We also provided take-and-make kits for all ages. These kits can be used with Creative Bug, a new online subscription available to Blackstone and Willoughby Wallace library card holders that provides instructional videos for dozens of craft projects. June’s kit included all the materials needed to make macramé plant holders, even a plant! July’s kit included materials to make seed bombs.

Miss Mary and Katy set up our annual Story Walk. To participate, families stroll along Main Street, reading one page of the story in each participating shop’s window. Our book this year was *Rescue & Jessica: A Life Changing Friendship* by Jessica Kensky, a story about a service dog. Maps of the participating businesses were available on our website and at the Youth Services Desk.

Additional programs for children in June included Miss Mary’s virtual story time on Monday, Wednesday, and



Jack & Riley & Miss Mary



Friday; a special Father’s Day story time; a water conservation event; and a Virtual Pet Party for all ages, similar to show and tell, but with pets! Teens participated in a Teen Advisory Group (TAG) meeting and a group of teens worked with Miss Sarah and a teacher from Lyman Hall to create an educational virtual presentation for the community entitled “Lyman Hall Presents: A Series of Animal Events” scheduled for July.

As school let out for the summer, some families began to explore the library again for the first time in over a year. Riley (age 8) and Jack (age 4) have been visiting the library since they were brand new, and both of them fondly remember Miss Mary’s story times. They were SO excited to see her for the first time in a year!

The Marchitto family was also inspired to share some photos after their June visit to the library. When they told

Miss Sarah they were interested in cooking, she showed them our new selection of teen cookbooks. And these girls didn’t waste a moment in getting to work! Seeing photos of the empanadas and ice cream pie they made was almost as much of a treat as it was for them to eat it.

Programs continued in July with a Lion Drawing Workshop and an Animal Tails Program with special guests from the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center. The teen advisory group met and participated in our strategic planning process as one of our community conversation groups. We also brought back Dungeons and Dragons in July.

July closed with “Lyman Hall Presents” which featured community programs led by teens on topics including the lifecycle of ducks, pet snakes for beginners, unique animal careers, horse grooming, and dog ownership.

-Sarah Mallory

Highlights from the Reference Department-June/July

June's programs included our ongoing knitting group, book clubs, Game Night, poetry classes and Latin classes, as well as a program titled Bird-er on Berry Lane, a month-by-month guide to the birds that flock to the peaceful New England backyard of noted writer, birder, and naturalist, Robert Tougias; a program on summer birds presented by DEEP; a program on refugee resettlement; and a program on the past and future of Legacy Theatre, once the Stony Creek Puppet House. We continue to see interest in our programs from around the world.

We had an out-of-town genealogy researcher visit the library recently, hoping to find information about her grandmother and great-grandparents. She knew that they had lived in Branford in the early part of the 20th century, but was not exactly sure when. We prepared some material for her before she arrived and directed her to a number of in-house and online resources. As always, the numerous indexes that our Town Historian, Jane Bouley, have created were a big help in helping this patron in her search. What really

"Marble" Columns

Did you know some of the library's columns are hiding a well-kept secret? It's easy to assume *all* the columns are made of marble, but those with gold painted tops are actually made of scagliola.

made her day was our finding a photograph of the boarding house her great-grandparents ran in Branford, with a number of children and adults pictured in front; among them were her great-grandparents! Needless to say, she was thrilled. We were pleased to welcome a new Reference Assistant, Brendan Galvin, this month. Brendan is working part-time in the Reference Department while he completes his MLS degree. We are excited to have him join the team and look forward to having our patrons meet him.

July featured our usual book groups, Latin and Poetry classes, knitting group and virtual Game Night as well as a lecture sponsored by the Branford Historical Society called "An Education in the Grotesque: The Gargoyles of Yale University", a program by Reference Solutions (one of our databases) on how to Start, Manage & Grow Your Business with Reference Solutions and a program presented by DEEP called Ovenbirds and Wood Thrush, Research, and the CT Bird Atlas.

Christina had an especially busy month, with 13 individu-

Scagliola is a type of fine plaster that is mixed with glue and dyes to imitate the appearance of marble and then polished to a shine. While it was popular in the 17th century as a marble alternative, the

al tech appointments on topics that included unemployment (x3), Tracfone, Twitter, job searching (x3), using Hoopla and Libby in the car, Facebook, logging into online accounts, using the Gmail app, and AOL navigation as well as six additional appointments at her Senior Center drop-in tech help session.

Jenna completed our Pine Orchard hurricane album for the Digital Archives. She also took over managing our obituary index, after the departure of our Reference librarian Anne. She is organizing our Fall programs and continues to work on our 125th anniversary facts and our library card project. Jenna is investigating different ways to gauge patron interest in our programs so that we can continue to offer diverse, engaging programs every month.

We heard from Deirdre about a positive encounter with a patron regarding our WiFi this month. Our patron does not have a fast Internet connection at home and when she found out that she can access the Internet everywhere in the library, she was very happy. Then she saw the connection speed and she was thrilled.

-Deborah Trofatter

use of scagliola had begun to decline by the 19th century, making our columns a later example of the technique.

-Jenna Anthony



We all know the library is an old building, but it's easy to forget how old until you're confronted with the day to day reality of it. For example, a handful of doors in the building are still opened with their original skeleton keys circa 1896.



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203.488.1441
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facebook.com/blackstonelibrary
twitter.com/blackstonlib
www.blackstonelibrary.org

...more than books

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

September 2021 Program Highlights

Drop-in Tech Session

September 9 @ 2 - 4:00 pm
Confused about your new iPhone or iPad? Need help formatting a Word document? Not sure where to begin your job search? Drop in for answers to your tech questions! **In person—first come, first served.**

Awakening to Change: A Social Justice Book Club

*Thursdays 9/9, 16, 23
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm*
The series continues with *So You Want To Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo which guides readers of all races through subjects ranging from intersectionality and affirmative action to “model minorities” in an attempt to have honest conversations about race and racism, and how they infect

almost every aspect of American life. Please be sure to **register for all three sessions individually to receive the link to this online event.**

Home Composting Basics

September 13 @ 6 - 7:00 pm
Join Uconn Master Composter, Kim O'Rourke, for a lively discussion about backyard composting. Learn about why composting is important, different ways to compost, how to set up a system with minimal effort, and the many benefits of compost! **Registration is required to receive the link to this online event.**

Meet and Greet Book Signing with Tony Renzoni

September 18 @ 12 - 4:00 pm
Join us for a meet and greet book signing with local Bran-

ford author Tony Renzoni! Tony is the author of three books on Connecticut history, and he'll be sharing and signing his two most recent titles: *Connecticut Softball Legend Joan Joyce* and *Connecticut Bootlegger Queen Nellie Green*. **In person—no registration required—drop in anytime between 12—4.**

Tales From the Desert: Instrumental Guitar

September 19 @ 2- 3:00 pm
Peter Biedermann will perform selections that meld elements of European and American folk with blues and jazz shadings; underpinned by ambient electronics and looping. CDs will be for sale after the concert. **In person—registration required.**

Check our website for more programs and registration details!

June/July 2021 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

Total Circulation

June: 7,631 July: 8,425
*June 2020: 3,123
July 2020: 3,756*

borrowIT

June: 1,426 July: 1,431
*June 2019: 740
July 2019: 668*

Renewals:

June: 3,639 July: 4,617

Computer Sessions

June: 367 /July: 446

Facebook: 1989 Likes

Instagram: 1052 Followers

MailChimp: 7641 Subscribers

Downloadable Circulation:

Overdrive ebooks
June: 1,595 /July: 1,654
Overdrive audiobooks
June: 742/July: 659
Overdrive Magazines
June: 124/ July: 125
HOOPLA
June: 954/July: 1,028
Kanopy
June: 327/ July: 403
Pronunciator
June: 568 /July: 568

Lucy Hammer Room 42/53

**Conference Room 15/10
Average Daily Visitors: 233 (July)**

Children's Programs

*June:
16 programs/87 attendance
July:
19 programs/391 attendance*

Teen Programs (12+)

*June:
5 programs/88 attendance
July:
7 programs/47 attendance*

Adult programs

*June:
15 programs/277 attendance
July:
29 programs/306 attendance*