



## The James Blackstone Memorial Library 2018—2019

The renovation project went out to bid at the beginning of the fiscal year. Three areas of the project (sitework, drywall/plaster and architectural millwork) were re-bid with proposals due in October. The new bids were then sufficiently within budget to allow the project to begin, although any funds for furniture and equipment were eliminated from the project budget. Groundbreaking was held at the beginning of December and the project officially began in January 2019. By end of June, the new entry was almost complete, as was most of the work on the first and second floors. The remaining phases which included the new children’s space and new fiction area, were scheduled to be completed by the end of the calendar year.

In October 2018, the Campaign for the Blackstone was awarded a \$75,000 grant from the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven. This grant allowed the campaign to exceed its goal of \$800,000. The campaign continued to raise funds throughout the fiscal year; in February 2019, Marlene and Shepard Stone were notified that they held the winning ticket for naming rights to the Upper Rotunda Art Gallery.

The Board of Trustees Development Committee hosted a very popular *Evening with the Spirits* which combined whiskey tastings and sessions with mediums. In the spring, they organized a paper shredding event – combined, these two events earned \$11,000.

Donations and direct appeals earned over \$62,000. The auditorium remained unavailable throughout the year for regular programs and after-hours events.

Library staff continued to develop and host a variety of programs this year, including technology classes conducted at Evergreen Woods, the First Friday game group, book discussion groups, and more.

*Uncover Branford* has become a regular program, introducing residents to new people and places in town.

In May 2019, we were fortunate to hire a full-time teen librarian. Sarah Mallory has been very successful in developing new programs for this age group and we hope to involve them in planning future programs and choosing materials for the collection.

The Friends of Blackstone Library held their annual book sale in September 2018 with gross receipts in excess of \$60,000. These funds supplement our materials budget, allow for unique public performances and workshops, and provide professional training for staff. Additionally, the Friends are the sole funder of HOOPLA and Kanopy, two services that offer digital access to books, audiobooks, music and movies—resources that have become essential to libraries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the upcoming year, as the renovation reaches completion, we are looking forward to holding programs in the renovated auditorium, offering expanded meeting space to the public, opening our new children’s and teen spaces, and helping our community navigate new technology in the computer lab.

### 2018-2019 Statistics

Registered Cardholders	10,288
Material Circulated (Physical/Online)	228,239
Reference Questions	70,142
Children’s & Teen Program Attendance	4,363
Adult Program Attendance	2,215
Lucy Hammer Room Bookings	2,296
Average Patrons Each Day	463

### Library Materials\*

Books, CDs, Audiobooks, DVDs	63,058
Newspapers/Periodical Subscriptions	135
Electronic/Digital collection	28,349
Total Collection	91,542

Karen Jensen  
Library Director

\*does not include access to over 500,000 HOOPLA titles

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Moira Healey  
Noor Issa  
Michael Lipcan  
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Jill Thomas  
Alex Van Gelder  
Rachel Wells  
Diane Whelan

**Evening with the Spirits Volunteers**

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Emily McDowell  
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