



Report to the Board of Trustees

June 5, 2024

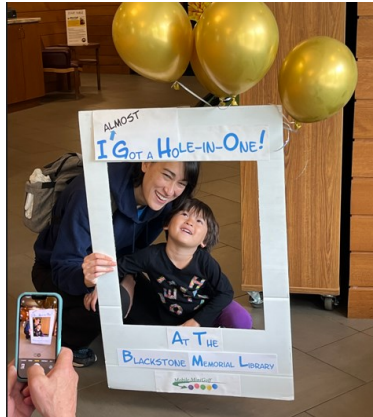
From the Director

The Friends of the Blackstone Library held their Spring book sale in their new warehouse on May 4. Congratulations to them on a successful sale, where they raised over \$3,000! All funds raised by the Friends benefits the Blackstone Library through gifts that they make to enhance and enrich our offerings. We are thankful for all the Friends do!

On May 6, Kathy and I attended the RTM Education Committee meeting and presented our FY2025 budget request. The committee reviewed and approved that request, and on May 14, presented it to the full RTM, where it was approved. Thank you to Tom Keefe (Chair) and other members of the RTM Education Committee, and members of the Blackstone Board of Trustees for all of their support in presenting this year's budget, and to Kathy for all of her work in preparing the budget and her wisdom and guidance throughout the process.

Angela and I attended "Connecting Connecticut: A Conversation with the LGBTQ+ Community" hosted by Senator Chris Murphy in New Haven's Pride Center. There were two sets of panel discussions, reinforcing the importance of building social connections and tackling isolation in the LGBTQIA+ community and creating policies that support that community.

I met with a few other LION library directors as part of an EDI



People of all ages had fun at Mini Golf @ Blackstone and Mini Golf: AFTER HOURS.

Task Force looking at best practices in hiring and supporting a diverse staff. We had an initial kickoff meeting and began drafting a survey to send to other LION library directors to better understand current practices. We will work toward creating best practices guidelines for LION libraries.

I attended the Branford Rotary Club's May meeting and spoke about the Blackstone Library and its history, our work on the Strategic Plan and how that is guiding us into the future. They asked some great questions and we had a good discussion around the issue of ebooks and libraries.

At the Town of Branford Department Head meeting, I had the chance to talk with Jennifer Sullivan, the new director for the Willoughby Wallace Library in Stony Creek. I look forward to getting to know her better and working with her to find ways our libraries can partner

to continue serving the Branford community in the best way possible.

For the third year in a row, we had a Mini Golf @ Blackstone/ Mini Golf: AFTER HOURS weekend! There were many other events happening around town (and beyond) that weekend, so we knew we were not going to do as well as last year, but we still raised over \$12,000. We will bring back mini golf again in April 2025. We think April is a better time of year this wonderful event. Thank you to Tina for planning and organizing the event, and to the trustees who sponsored holes, secured support, purchased tickets, and volunteered at the event. Thank you to all of the sponsors, auction item donors, and volunteers. And thank you to Gabel's Wine Shop, Cancion Tequila, Lenny's, Thimble Island Brewery and the other distributors for providing tastings to attendees. Thanks to everyone who came out to play!

— Katy McNicol



More pictures from the daytime Mini Golf @ Blackstone and Saturday evening's Mini Golf: AFTER HOURS. Thanks to Harvey Goldstein for taking photos of the events!

Highlights from the Youth Services Department—April

April was all about the eclipse in Youth Services! We had several special programs to celebrate the occasion and educate kids and teens about the science behind the event. Claudia from Cool-ology started the month with a Science Saturday program where participants modeled solar eclipses with a flashlight, made a solar eclipse model and a pin-hole viewer, and created corona art with chalk and black paper. We also celebrated the eclipse during our Homeschool Meetup this month. After learning about what causes a solar eclipse, we added decorative additions to our solar eclipse glasses using paper plates. Afterwards, we headed out for a viewing party on the library's grounds, where we were joined by lots of community members excited to witness this unique event together.

We also participated in several outreach events this month. Nicolette attended the YMCA's Healthy Kids Day and a Family Fun Day on the Branford Green, hosted by Mothers Against Drunk Driving. She brought the button maker to both events, allowing kids to make custom wearable art, and shared information on all of the library's upcoming programs. Later in the month, I attended the Early Childhood Fair, a part of the Week of the Young Child. Children were excited to make bedazzled reading wands, designed to help early readers keep track of words as they read. It is always great to connect with patrons outside of the library!



Kids getting ready for the solar eclipse.

Teens had a variety of relaxing and educational programs this month. A representative from Big Green College Prep offered a Zoom presentation called Competitive College Admissions: What's New for this Year? Teens and their parents learned what makes college applicants stand out and ways to strengthen their chances of admission at their dream school. Stephanie and Jared, our library's social media stars, planned and hosted a Taylor Swift Tortured Poets listening party on the album's release day, and participants got to make their own poetry bookmarks to take home. We also had a special Take-N-Make just for teens this month — bubble tea! Thirty-five teens got to take home a kit that included everything they needed to make delicious taro flavored bubble tea at home.

Kids had several fun and educational events as well. I hosted a 3D printing workshop for all ages, introducing participants to our 3D printers and the software used to design

3D images. I was busy the next week printing items for patrons, including a cat toy, a graduation gift, and a model computer mouse. We also hosted an animal program with Furry Scaly Friends that was very popular with families. Animal guests included an axolotl, tortoise, bunny, guinea pig, rat, snake, prairie dog, chinchilla, sugar glider, ferret, and more! It was wonderful to see patrons of all ages enjoy this event.

At the end of the month, Laura, Nicolette, and I attended the Connecticut Library Association's annual conference, thanks to the Friends of Blackstone Library. This is always a great way to connect with colleagues at other libraries and share resources. Nicolette and Laura appreciated being able to swap programming ideas with other children's librarians and I found a session on supporting neurodiverse library users especially helpful. We really appreciate this chance to gain new perspectives and reenergize our work!

— Emily Yates



People of all ages loved engaging with and learning about the animals at Furry Scaly Friends.

Highlights from the Reference Department—April

The library offered a number of interesting programs in April, in addition to our usual monthly programs. We had a poetry month celebration, a solar eclipse viewing party, an author panel with Connecticut crime writers, a program on organizing your estate, a Branford Historical Society program on Lanphier’s Cove, a Land Trust program on food sustainability, a drop-in Medicare information session, a program by the Shoreline Elder-care Alliance, and a public forum with the CT Racial Profiling Prohibition Project.

The Connecticut Library Association Conference was held in April and was attended by a number of Blackstone Library staff. Jenna co-presented a program on Programming, Stop Programming by the Seat of Your Pants, with 80 people in attendance!

The keynote speaker was extremely well received by all who attended. Reference librarians attended sessions that included programs on customer service, how to deal with book bans and the associated legal ramifications, an update on the statewide digital collection, teaching patrons how to use AI technology, intellectual freedom challenges that go beyond books, promoting DEI through a change in cataloging, practical applications for achieving diversity, equity and inclusion and becoming a sustainably certified library.

Stephanie was especially impressed by the program on the wide range of AI applications available. These can provide a truly hands-on experience for patrons who want to learn about



Blackstone staff at the Connecticut Library Association Conference.

AI. Jordan felt that several programs he attended will be very useful for the Banned Book Club and for the library to review its current policies on materials reconsideration, programming and displays and bulletin boards.

Jenna was very excited by the sustainable library program and believes that there are many things that the library can do to become more sustainable and to encourage Branford residents to do so as well. Christina felt that the program on promoting DEI was very useful and thinks that there is quite a bit that we can do to make changes in how we catalog our collection so that it is more inclusive.

Overall, the conference was a big hit and gave our staff an opportunity to learn, to hear about how other libraries handle a wide range of issues, and to meet other library staff from around the state. We are very grateful to the

Friends for their support, which allowed so many staff members to attend this year.

— Deborah Trofatter



**FRIENDS OF THE
BLACKSTONE
2024 FALL TENT SALE**

Branford Town Green

**Thursday, September 19 –
Sunday, September 22**

*Friends members
get in early!*



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facebook.com/blackstonelibrary
instagram.com/blackstone_library

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

LAWN GAMES & MORE AVAILABLE TO BORROW

Planning a party this summer? Looking for something fun to do outside? Look no further than our collection of **lawn games**, part of the Library of Things!



From corn hole and ladder toss to giant tumbling blocks and giant four-in-a-row, you can gather friends and family and have fun playing together.

Visit: bit.ly/jbmiLOTlawn to see all of the lawn games and reserve your favorites today!

Thanks to the **Friends of the Blackstone Library** for making the Library of Things possible!



June 2024 Program Highlights



Learn About Hoopla, Libby, Kanopy & Palace

Wednesday, June 12 @ 2–3 pm

Summer is here which means it's time for your next great beach read or binge-worthy TV and movies! Learn about all the different digital content the Blackstone provides you for FREE with your library card.

Visit us at the Branford Festival on Saturday, June 15

We're leaving the library to have some fun at the Branford Festival! Stop by to make a button on our button maker, learn all about summer reading, and explore all the great things the library has to offer you all year round.

Check our website for more programs and registration details!

April 2024 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

Total Circulation: 8,070

April 2023: 7,223

borrowIT: 1,909

April 2023: 1,582

Renewals: 5,075

Computer Sessions: 892

WIFI Logins: 3,745

Website visits: 9,037 sessions

Facebook: 2,735 followers

Instagram: 1,341 followers

MailChimp: 8,567 subscribers

Third Thursday Movie Matinee Thursday, June 20

@ 10 am–12 pm

A monthly film screening and discussion group dedicated to (re)discovering the oldies but goodies of classic Hollywood. This month's showing is Cleopatra (1934).

Shoreline Jazz Quintet:

Celebrating the Music of Pat Metheny

Saturday, June 22 @ 1–2 pm

Enjoy the music of iconic jazz guitarist Pat Metheny as performed by the Shoreline Jazz Quintet. **Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.**

Teen Volunteer Orientation Wednesday, June 26 @ 3:30–4:30 pm

Do you need volunteer hours for school? Are you interested in volunteering at the library? Learn how to get started. Registration is required. Grades 7-12.

Summer Family Take-N-Makes Wednesdays @ 9 am–8 pm

June 26, July 31, and August 28 Drop-in event. The program with no schedule is back for another season. Each month, we're putting together a different hands-on kit. No sign up is required but kits are limited.

Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.

Intro to Pilates

Saturdays, June 29 – July 27 @ 10–11 am

In this introductory series of classes, you'll learn the basics of Pilates from certified instructor Cindy Kondziela. Whether you're new to fitness or just trying to mix up your existing fitness routine, this class has something for everyone. Please bring a yoga mat to class. **Sponsored by the Friends of the Blackstone Library.**

Lucy Hammer & Conference Room Usage: 121

Children's Programs 30 programs/780 attendance

Teen Programs (12+) 6 programs/33 attendance

Adult/All Ages programs 61 programs/1146 attendance

Average Daily Visitors: 401 Days open: 30