



April 2, 2025

Engaging Community • Expanding Minds • Enriching Lives

# Report to the Board of Trustees

## From the Director

Tickets for the **Gail & Alan Rosen Memorial Mini Golf at Blackstone Library** fundraiser kicked off in March, and have been steadily selling ever since. This could be another sell-out year! We are thrilled to have a title sponsor for the event for the first time ever—thank you to Amy Rosen! The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven is this year's silver sponsor, and Coastal Wine & Spirits are coming back to sponsor the tastings portion of the After Hours event. Rhea has been working to secure the last remaining sponsorships. While most holes are sponsored—thank you to all of our new and returning hole and scorecard sponsors!—there are still a few holes left for organizations or individuals to sponsor and decorate! See you on the (mini) golf course!

We are making progress on the library's forthcoming app. We had a training session on creating functionality within the app and are working on those final details. The hope is that it will complement the redesigned website and allow people to easily place holds, book a meeting room, register for an event, and more, all from your phone. The launch of the app is anticipated to happen in May.

The Seed Library is up and running for the planting season, thanks to Jenny in Reference who took this on. This year, in addition to our usual big supply of flowers, vegetables, herbs,

Tickets are selling fast for the Gail & Alan Rosen Memorial Mini Golf @ Blackstone events.

Come out Saturday, April 26 and Sunday, April 27 during the day for a round of mini golf. Tickets are \$5 per player.

Saturday night is just for adults with Mini Golf: AFTER HOURS. For ages 21+, tickets are \$30.

and lettuces, we have a smaller selection of native and near native seeds to offer. Come in to the back entrance lobby and take a look. Thanks to Natureworks, UConn Master Gardener, Ocean State Job Lot, Herman's Garden Program, Seed Savers, CT Wild Ones and Park Seed and for their generous donations.

We hosted a private rental and it was great to see a fundraiser for a different organization happen in our space. It helps to see how other groups make use of the space, and by all accounts, the event was a success.

I joined the CLA Career Development Committee and attended a meeting to begin planning a leadership conference for CT library staff later this summer. The committee is dedicated to helping support career devel-

opment for library staff across the state. I will also participate in a resume review session at the upcoming CLA Conference at the end of April to help review resumes for people looking to advance their careers in libraries. For this year's CLA conference, we are sending 10 staff members to attend, thanks to funding from the Friends.

Thank you to Kathy, Janice, and Larry for joining me at the Board of Finance budget hearing on March 20th to present the Blackstone's FY2026 budget request. The presentation went well, and I look forward to presenting to the RTM Education Committee on Monday, April 7.

We began working with a new book vendor for our print book collection. The first couple of orders are in and things look good.

— Katy McNicol



The seed library is stocked and ready to help your garden grow!



Stephanie (Reference) and Jared (Circulation) joined forces to offer a well-attended watercolor workshop inspired by CreativeBug, our subscription service featuring all kinds of arts and crafts classes.

## Highlights from the Youth Services Department—February

On the first of the month we celebrated Take Your Child to the Library Day, a global initiative that encourages families to take their children to their local library. We collaborated with the Willoughby Wallace Library to offer an incentive to families who visited both Branford libraries that day; people who got a booklet stamped at both locations were entered into a drawing to win a prize! We also had our button maker out that day with special themed buttons to celebrate.



A quilt from the take-and-make project (above); a quilt from the homeschool meetup (below).



Our homeschool meetup this month centered around the artist and children's book author, Faith Ringgold. We learned about her life and then read her famous book, *Tar Beach*. After researching how Ringgold used quilts in her work to tell stories, we created story quilts illustrating a moment from our lives using patterned paper as the "fabric" edge. We also had a quilt themed take-and-make craft to celebrate Black History Month. Kids learned about the famous quilts made in Gee's Bend, Alabama and had the chance to design a paper quilt of their own.

Our Science Saturday theme was Leonardo Science, inspired by the interests and creations of Leonardo DaVinci. DaVinci was fascinated by the science of vision, so participants learned which of their eyes is dominant by looking at objects in the distance. Kids also learned about DaVinci's interest in optical illusions, such as the ones in the *Mona Lisa*, by making thaumatropes using index cards and straws.



Teens created these chocolate-dipped cookies pops for Valentine's Day!



Among other animals, a snake joined Laura and Nicolette for the Furry Scaly Friends program.

Other special programs for kids included a Valentine's Day Slime making event and a visit from Furry Scaly Friends, who brought a snake, hedgehog, bunny, hamster, axolotl, chinchilla, ferret, and tarantula for our patrons to meet.

Teens had lots of fun this month making chocolate dipped cookie pops for Valentine's Day. Using pink, red, and white candy melts, Oreos, and decorations, teens made beautiful and delicious creations to share with their friends. We even had goodie bags to package them up to give as gifts. We also hosted another Nintendo Switch Super Smash Bros tournament this month and the competition was fierce! Teens battled it out for a prize and the honor of being called the tournament champion!

Nicolette and I both did outreach this month in Branford Public Schools. Nicolette visited the kindergarten classes at Tisko Elementary School to read a picture book and give the students library card ap-

plications. She also attended Tisko's Family Night with our button maker. While kids designed buttons and used the button maker, Nicolette shared information with parents about the library's programs and services. I also visited Branford High School for their annual volunteer fair. There were lots of local organizations in attendance, and it was great to connect with high schoolers to share information about our volunteer opportunities for teens.

Nicolette also attended a summer symposium this month led by the State Library to prepare for our summer learning program. The major focus was on equity and accessibility and how libraries can adjust what they are already doing to make summer programs more inclusive for all patrons. We can't wait to welcome the warmer weather and share our summer plans with you soon!

— Emily Yates

## Highlights from the Reference Department—February

The Reference Department staff have been working on a number of new and ongoing projects. Stephanie is planning a small update to our Library of Things collection and has reorganized the storage of these items and color coded the collection for ease of retrieval. She is giving three new Creative Bug crafting classes with Jared in March, April and May.

Stephanie and Jenny have been handling the bulk of our tech appointments, both the drop-in sessions and one-on-one appointments. These appointments can be as simple as helping a patron install an app on their phone to much more involved interactions. Stephanie recently helped a patron receive their food safety certification which involved booking a study

room for them, facilitating borrowing a laptop and assisting them to log into the course. This patron was very unfamiliar with technology and was extremely grateful.

Jenny has taken over the management of our seed library and has added a new feature - native seeds that need to be "cold stratified". She has reached out to four seed companies and has received donations from three of them. The seed library is located in the ground floor lobby, next to the self-checkout.

Jordan is joining the Board of BCTV and is working to strengthen our partnership with them. We hope that BCTV will be able to film some of our programs and Jordan will be working with them to help promote some of their programs, including a loaning library of video

equipment. He visited them on-site and was able to see the equipment, their recording studio and their upcoming podcasting studio.

I have been working with the staff at LION to upgrade the PCs in the Computer Lab. We added an additional four 24-inch monitors, which our patrons definitely appreciate. Our next big project is the installation of a new overhead scanner, which is just about ready to be made available in the Computer Lab. I will provide more details on the new scanner in my March report.

— Deborah Trofatter

### SAVE THE DATE

The Friends of the Blackstone Library present their spring book sale. Taking place in the Friends Warehouse, you can find adult and children's fiction titles, puzzles, literature, DVDs and boating books. All items are previously loved and affordably priced. All funds raised by the Friends supports the enrichment and enhancement of Blackstone Library offerings.



FRIENDS  
OF  
BLACKSTONE LIBRARY

## Spring Book Sale

**Saturday, May 3rd**

**9:00 AM to 2:00PM**

**Friends Warehouse**

**20 Thompson Rd, Branford, CT**

#### Included in Sale

- FICTION (Adults and Children's Books)
- PUZZLES
- LITERATURE
- DVD\$
- BOATING BOOKS (building, repairing, navigating, etc.)



#### Great prices!

- Hard Cover \$3
- Trade Paperback \$2
- Mass Market Paperback \$0.50
- Children's Books start at \$0.50
- DVD\$ \$2 each or 3 for \$5

Sorry, **OTHER Non-Fiction IS NOT** Available at this Sale





James Blackstone Memorial Library  
758 Main Street  
Branford, CT 06405

203.488.1441 | [blackstonelibrary.org](http://blackstonelibrary.org)  
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## 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/jbmlLOTlawn](http://bit.ly/jbmlLOTlawn) to see  
all of the lawn games and re-  
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Thanks to the  
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## April 2025 Program Highlights

### Local Poets Fair

**Saturday, April 5 @ 1-4 pm**

April is National Poetry Month!  
Celebrate and get to know your  
local poets. There will be  
readings, book-signings, music,  
conversation, and  
refreshments.

### War Dog Documentary Screening

**Saturday, April 5 @ 1-4 pm**

Join us for a screening of the  
feature length documentary  
War Dog. The film examines  
consequences of the war in  
Ukraine, especially on the  
nation's animal life. The  
screening will be followed by a  
Q&A.

### Musical Arts Society Presents: Pablo Martinez

**Sunday, April 6 @ 1-4 pm**

Join us for a musical afternoon  
presented by the Musical Arts  
Society, featuring pianist Pablo  
Martinez, who will be

performing a selection of  
Spanish pieces. Funded by the  
DARO Foundation.

### DOOX of Yale A Cappella Concert

**Sunday, April 13 @ 2-3 pm**

The all-gender, award-winning,  
tenor and bass a cappella  
group, Doox of Yale, will join us  
for an afternoon of music. Their  
repertoire includes nostalgic  
rock ballads, soulful jazz  
standards, classic folk tunes  
and even some catchy pop  
songs. Registration required.  
Sponsored by the Friends of the  
Blackstone Library.

### The Twenties Roar Again! With The Modernistics Trio

**Monday, April 14 @ 6-7 pm**

The Modernistics Trio will  
perform a festive show  
featuring swinging songs, tap-  
dance numbers, and jazz  
instrumentals of the 1920s to  
celebrate the 100th

anniversary of F. Scott  
Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*!  
**Sponsored by the David J.  
Hughes Memorial Fund.**

### Branford Land Trust Speaker series

**Tuesday, April 22**

**@6:30-7:45 pm**

Forest Health and Climate  
Change with David Irvin.

### Center Cemetery Presentation Series with town historian, Jane Bouley

**"Dust & Shadow Here I Leave  
with Thee"**

**Thursday, April 24th @ 5-7 pm**

This discussion will focus on the  
family members buried within  
the cemetery. Jane will share  
her findings and stories of loss,  
celebrations of life, and the  
creation of community.  
Registration required.

**Sponsored by the Branford  
Center Cemetery Association &  
the Branford Historical Society.**

*Check our website for more programs and registration details!*

## February 2025 Statistics—Deirdre Santora

**Physical Materials Circulation:**  
**7,511**

February 2024: 7,673

**borrowIT: 2,037**

February 2024: 1,634

**Renewals: 4,347**

**Computer Sessions: 806**

**WIFI Logins: 2,810**

**Website visits: 6,668**

**Facebook: 2,838 followers**

**Instagram: 1,478 followers**

**MailChimp: 8,598 subscribers**

**Downloadable Circulation:**

**Overdrive/Libby ebooks: 1,285**

**Overdrive/Libby audiobooks: 1,117**

**Overdrive/Libby magazines: 726**

**Palace App: 40**

**HOOPLA: 1,084**

**Kanopy: 426**

**Transparent Languages: 74**

**Ancestry Library: 392**

**New Haven Register: 42**

**Branford History Scrapbooks: 28**

**Creative Bug: 78**

**Lucy Hammer & Conference  
Room Usage: 165**

**Children's Programs**  
31 programs/855 attendance

**Teen Programs (12+)**  
5 programs/26 attendance

**Adult/All Ages programs**  
40 programs/693 attendance

**Average Daily Visitors: 424**  
**Days open: 26**