



July 1, 2026

Report to the Board of Trustees

From the Director

We started June with the Shred-A-Thon event, which was very well-attended and raised almost \$2,000 after expenses. The truck shredded over 8,000 pounds of paper!

Ryan Keeler and I attended the CLC Annual Meeting. We are both CLC Roundtable chairs of different groups and received flowering plants as thank-you gifts for the roundtable hosting we did over the past year. It was a nice year-end celebration of the wonderful work that CLC does to support libraries across the state.



This year's Shred-A-Thon was well-attended!



At the CLC Annual Meeting.



Families enjoying the summer learning kickoff!

We received our large-format poster printer and many staff attended a training on its use. The Friends will be able to use it to supplement printing needs for the coming book sale, and staff will be testing and learning. We're planning to use it for in-house needs for now, and are not yet ready to make it available to the public. We hope to eventually make that happen.

Nicolette, Emily, and Jordan put together a wonderful Summer Learning Kickoff on the library lawn. Many people were in attendance to check out the summer reading programs, enjoy free ice cream, face painting and sand art, and listen (and dance) to live music. We may just have to make this an annual event!

I attended the Friends Annual Meeting, where I received 'the big check' showing that the Friends will have given us \$90,000 this fiscal year! Most was for the items they fund on a monthly



The Friends have given the library \$90,000 this fiscal year, for enrichment and enhancement of the library's offerings and to ensure that robust programming can be continued into the future.

reimbursement basis: programs, special collections, staff development, special printing, etc. The rest is for a rainy day fund that will support programs and more in the future, in the event of lean income years. The Friends work so incredibly hard all year long to raise enough funds to continue to enhance everything the Blackstone offers to the community. Thank you, Friends! They also announced that this year's fall book sale will take place at the Branford Train Station, on September 17-20.

We held a staff inservice training and all staff in attendance got to tour the Friends warehouse, where they sort and store book sale books and ship books purchased through their online stores (Amazon and eBay). We then had a discussion of our Emergency Plan protocols and

walked the building so everyone could get familiar with emergency items and exits. We then did departmental shares so staff better understand what's happening in each department. Everyone came away feeling more knowledgeable and empowered.

We had the front and back parking lots re-sealed and repainted. The lots look fantastic (and the parking spaces are so much easier to see now!)

We had our balcony enclosure kick-off meeting with the architect and contractor. It was a productive meeting and we have a better understanding of when activity will begin later in the year. We're looking forward to getting this work done in a timely manner and having 2 new meeting rooms available to the public by the new year.

— Katy McNicol

Highlights from the Youth Services Department—May

We kicked off the month with a Science Saturday program about biomes and the animals that live in them. Kids created their own biomes using Legos, designing forests, grasslands, deserts, tundras and aquatic environments. Afterwards, they gave amazing presentations to the class about the biome they designed.

Our Homeschool Meetup group this month learned all about the seeds we eat, including beans, nuts, and grains. We dissected a soaked bean, identifying the embryo, cotyledon, and seed coat. We learned that popcorn is also a seed and that the water trapped inside is what causes it to burst when heated. We watched the seeds popping using an air popper and then enjoyed some freshly popped popcorn!



A LEGO biome.



Bald eagle take and make activity.

We had a representative from CTrail lead an All About Trains program, teaching the audience about trains and the places you can take them in Connecticut. The presenter cleared up some misconceptions about trains and provided lots of facts. We learned that trains can go up to 100 mph and that the train conductor is the person who checks tickets and helps passengers while the train engineer is the person who operates the vehicle. Patrons were so excited after the program that they looked for train books to take home!

In addition to our regular storytimes this month, Rodcel offered a special sensory storytime that was adapted to be a calmer and more predictable environment for kids. She read *We Are the Dinosaurs*, sang



Science Saturday program happening in the auditorium

songs, and incorporated finger plays and scarves.

Teens enjoyed another pizza and board game event in May, playing *Liar, Liar*, *Apples to Apples*, and *Chameleon*. I also hosted an Oreo taste test for teens! We tried eleven different flavors of Oreos, including s'mores, cinnamon bun, lemon, mint, and dark chocolate. We tried to guess the varieties based on their flavor and appearance, and ranked our favorites on a scorecard. It was so much fun hearing everyone's opinions on the different cookie varieties.

We enjoyed welcoming visitors from the community this month for library tours! A class from Branford High walked over to learn about our resources and programs and explore the building. We made sure all of the students have library cards so they can access our resources. I also led a tour of students from Shoreline Adult Education's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) class.

Most of the students were already active library users, so it was a great opportunity to feature some of our more unique services, like the Transparent Language app and the library of things. We love connecting patrons with our resources and programs, and can't wait to see you at the library this summer! We had two great outreach opportunities this month. I attended the YMCA's Healthy Kids Day event and brought the library's button maker, which was a fun way to connect with kids and families while sharing information about our resources. Nicolette also led a special storytime during the Week of the Young Child celebration at the Community House. In addition, Rodcel participated in a book repair workshop this month and has already begun putting her new skills to use. With warmer weather on the way and summer approaching, we're excited about all the learning experiences we're planning for you at the library.

— Emily Yates

Highlights from the Reference Department—May

Jordan has been working with Emily and Nicolette on planning our summer reading kickoff which will feature Ashley's ice cream, face-painting, crafts, lawn games, and music by the Keith Cooper Trio. Attendees can pick up their summer reading challenge cards for all age groups for a chance to win prizes.

Amy relabeled/reclassified the American history Dewey section 973 to organize books about decades chronologically. Gilligan continues their work on scanning scrapbook photographs and creating finding aids and indexes for the Archives Room. Jenny had a very successful season with our seed library, giving away

thousands of packets of seeds to community gardeners. The Seed Library table is now full of information to help patrons start saving seeds this Fall.

Ryan and Debby worked on the Library of Things, adding a photo scanner, acoustic guitar, net for racket sports, a portable jump starter, and new lawn games, including some for children. Ryan reviewed the entire collection, making sure that the online information was up to date and matched our cataloging records.

Reference librarians are frequently tasked with helping patrons who have unusual problems. Recently, a child accidentally let go of their birthday balloon in the rotunda.

Luckily, an act of fate stopped it at the entryway ceiling instead of floating all the way up into the dome. Jordan and Gilligan dropped everything to jump into action and bring the largest ladder they could find from the Auditorium. They carefully crept up the ladder to ensure that no wind blew the balloon to the higher ceiling, and successfully returned the birthday balloon to the crying yet resilient child.

— Deborah Trofatter

Friends Annual Fall Book Sale Update

The Friends Annual Book Sale will be held this year at the Branford Train Station, 35 Maple Street, Branford.

September 17th -20th

- Thursday, September 17th • 5 pm – 7pm
- Early admission for Friends members only
- Thursday, September 17th • 7 pm – 9 pm
- Friday, September 18th • 9 am – 7 pm
- Saturday, September 19th • 9 am – 7 pm
- Sunday, September 20th • 10 am – 3 pm
- Last Day Sale \$10 a bag – Friends supply the bag

Mark your calendars! Same wonderful selection at the same great prices.





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NEW ITEMS ADDED to the Library of Things:

- * Acoustic Guitar
- * Adjustable Net (for racquet sports/volleyball)
- * Bag Toss Game Set
- * Home Energy Assessment Kits
- * A new Karaoke Machine
- * Kubk Game Set
- * Lawn Darts (Nerf)
- * Lawn Domino Set
- * Portable Jump Starter
- * Washer Toss Game
- * Photo Scanner

Visit the **Library of Things** on
our website or scan below to
reserve your items today:



Made possible by:



July 2026 Program Highlights

The Russ Becker & Stephen Roane Duo present Music of Horace Silver

Saturday, July 11 @ 2–3 pm

Longtime professional musicians Russ Becker and Stephen Roane present a program exploring the history of Connecticut native, innovative jazz composer, pianist, and band leader Horace Silver. It features performance of some of his classic jazz compositions and his ascent to becoming one of the most revered and influential composers and performers in jazz history, and his continued influence on musicians and music lovers worldwide.

Sponsored by the John Loeb Lecture Fund.

Shakey: An Evening with Neil Young... Almost

Saturday, July 18 @ 2–4 pm

Musician Briz will be performing his Neil Young tribute show, "Shakey." Songs include Cowgirl in the Sand,

The Loner, Heart of Gold, and many more. In addition to the music, Briz includes narratives about the songs and a "Journey Through the Past" of Neil's career. **Sponsored by the Friends of Blackstone Library.**

Music Bingo

Tuesday July 21 @ 6:30–8 pm

Drop-in event. Test your music knowledge with a librarian-hosted music bingo game! Identify clips of songs and mark them on your bingo card for a chance to win prizes. Prizes sponsored by NEBCO. *This event will be held off-site at New England Brewing Company. No purchase necessary to participate.

A Storyboard Artist Talks About His Career in Movies

Thursday, July 23 @ 6–7:30 pm

Join storyboard artist Brick Mason for an informative discussion on what it is like to work in the film industry. Brick has worked in the

industry for decades and has worked on multiple films with M. Night Shyamalan. He will show samples of his storyboards as well as a video presentation comparing the original storyboards with the finished movie.

Uncommon Instrument Awareness Day Featuring Kahlil Kwame Bell on Slapaphone

Friday, July 31 @ 2–4 pm

Grammy Affiliated percussionist Kahlil Kwame Bell presents a dynamic and interactive performance centered on the rare and captivating slapaphone. This observance highlights the vast world of lesser-known instruments and invites communities to expand their musical curiosity and creativity. **Sponsored by the David J. Hughes Memorial Fund.**

Check our website for more programs and registration details!

May 2026 Statistics—Circulation Department

Physical Items Circulation: 6,304
May 2025: 8,112

borrowIT: 2,449
May 2025: 2,381

Renewals: 4,516

Computer Sessions: 643
WIFI Logins: 3,790
Website visits: 8,821

MailChimp: 7,426 subscribers
Facebook: 3,143 followers
Instagram: 1,799 followers

Downloadable Circulation:

Libby ebooks: 1,482

Libby audiobooks: 1,533

Libby magazines: 849

Palace App: 45

HOOPLA: 1,298

Kanopy: 365

Transparent Languages: 32

Ancestry Library: 6

New Haven Register: 32

Branford History Scrapbooks: 0

Lucy Hammer & Conference Room Usage: 142

Children's Programs
25 programs/468 attendance

Teen Programs (12+)
8 programs/59 attendance

Adult/All Ages programs
48 programs/1309 attendance

Average Daily Visitors: 611
Days open: 29