

**BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY
REPORT OF THE CITY LIBRARIAN
For the Month of April 2023**

The month of April was very busy for library staff. The Beardsley Branch grand opening and ribbon cutting, and in fact the entire day of Saturday, April 22, was a high point of the month. The day was a success with a great turnout from the community, city employees and officials, and our partners from Antinozzi Associates and Downes Construction Company.

For the grand opening event, alerted the Mayor's communications department and extended an invitation to the Mayor to attend the day's events. He graciously sent his media team to cover the entire grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony, and live-streamed it on social media. News12CT also provided great coverage of the event and interviewed Anna Knorovska, the Beardsley Branch Manager and me. CT Post reporter Brian Lockhart, who could not make the opening, promised to visit the branch later in the week so that he could feature the new branch in a newspaper article. The Beardsley monthly report provides more details on the opening and activities that took place at the branch during the month of April.

Programming at the library continues with a hybrid model: some programs that do well with a virtual format remain so after Covid-19, and we are getting attendance at in-person programs as well. Black Rock held a genealogy presentation. We are building book club attendance at various locations looking at bringing book clubs into the community in an effort to increase our visibility to underserved demographics such as Millennials. Computer usage remains strong at all locations as does requests for digital navigation support. Branches including North and Newfield hosted an event with the CT Bar Association, Lawyers in Libraries. All locations provided programs for children and teens, including a poetry program for National Poetry Month.

During Spring Break, DIG USA sponsored a five-day spring break chess camp for middle and high schoolers at no cost to the library. This camp was featured in a CT Post article.

U.S. Senator Chris Murphy visited the East Side on Saturday, April 15 to announce new funding summer youth programs. He thanked us for allowing him to use the library branch for his announcement.

Requests for passport acceptance services are increasing with the warmer weather, and requests for free Notary Public services remain strong.

Ten staff members and I have registered for attendance at the Connecticut Library Association Conference 2023. Many of our attendees are will be first-time members. We will compile reports on the knowledge gained from the sessions, meetings and exhibits.

Approval Requested: The partnership between the American Heart Association and the City's Department of Health to provide the library with approximately 40 blood pressure monitors for loan to the public and an educational component for staff and the public, including tabling at library locations on a regular basis for public health education and follow-up is ready to begin pending approval from the library board.

For correspondence, I have shared an invitation from Saint John's Parish, 768 Fairfield Avenue, to help them celebrate their 275th anniversary (1768–2023) on August 12 and September 9-10. Members are visiting BHC to obtain photographs and historical documents about the church in preparation for their anniversary celebrations. The library will certainly participate, as we have been developing a great relationship with Reverend Jean Baptiste Rock, JD and his parishioners.

Details have been finalized for the USPS sponsored Toni Morrison Commemorative Stamp Unveiling at Newfield Branch on May 23 at 10 am. We are pleased to have local historian, author and book seller Michelle Black Smith as the guest speaker, and musical selections provided by the students of the Dunbar School.

Staff Development Day, which was held for the first time in-person on Friday, April 28, was a very productive day. We were able to schedule a session for Strategic Planning, following the model of the library board's retreat in March. These suggestions and ideas from staff are being compiled for presentation to the library board for use in developing the new strategic plan.

Hiring continues, with the selection of Tanarha Smith-Dixon, currently at West Haven Public Library, as the new Head of Burroughs Library Public Services. Her start date is Monday, June 5, 2023. We are all very excited to have this position filled and are looking forward to working with Tanarha.

Photos for many of the events of April are included in your library board packet.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elaine Braithwaite
City Librarian
May 17, 2023