

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

Bids for Burroughs' window replacement and first floor renovation are in process. Purchase orders for paving the East Side parking lot and Newfield's exterior lighting have been issued. Flooding at Black Rock continues to be watched. The most recent flooding occurred on Friday, August 18, when up to three inches of rain fell in the morning hours. Photos of flooding in the basement of Black Rock Branch are included in this report for review.

A construction grant for the East Side Branch Phase II Renovation Project is being applied for, with the initial Notice of Intent sent to the State Library before the June 30 deadline, and the full application now being completed. We anticipate that the application will be submitted by the September 1 deadline, and all accompanying documents submitted by the September 30 deadline.

The State Library Annual Report for 2022-2023 is currently being completed. While reporting is in the initial phase, I am pleased to report an increase in many of our tracked indicators: library visits, library card owners, computer and Wi-Fi use are among the areas where we will see increases from last year's report.

The library participated in several outreach events in July, including Puerto Rican Day Parade. Other events that the library attended in July were: East Side Day, back to school events at Columbus school, and the Downtown Special Services District's (DSSD) Farmer's Market at McLevy Green. Upcoming events include the City Hall Backpack Giveaway, which the library participated in last year. In addition, the Barnum Museum will celebrate its inclusion on the National Registry of Historic Buildings and has asked the library to participate in their outdoor celebration.

In addition to our Summer Program currently taking place at all library locations, staff are planning for National Library Card Sign-up Month and National Voter Registration Day activities in September.

Incidents involving patrons remain at a constant, with situations involving unhoused (homeless) individuals increasing. What is concerning is that we are now seeing that these incidents are occurring at our library branches, whereas pre-Covid the majority of incidents involved the Burroughs Library almost exclusively. I have provided links for articles that reflect how public libraries in diverse urban settings such as ours are addressing this issue. Library administration met with Carmen Colon, Vice President of the Bridgeport WMCA's Alpha Community Services to discuss how the library can partner with them to serve some of our most vulnerable library patrons. The outcome of this meeting is that Ms. Colon will be sending a proposal for social work services that will benefit Bridgeport Public Library and the community in many ways. I will present this proposal to the Library Board of Directors once it is received.

The Digital Navigator Pilot ended on June 30. We are now gathering data and accomplishments to report to all stakeholders. The immediate result of our Pilot is that our digital navigators, located at all of our locations, will continue to work with the public one-on one with their technical needs, and plans are being made to add group computer classes and a popular online learning module, NorthStar, to the library's digital navigation offerings.

The Connecticut State Library won the IMLS grant for a digital navigator regional sharing program. This good news will be officially announced shortly, and Bridgeport Public Library, a partner in this grant, will participate in the planning meetings that will occur soon. Libraries in the grant include, Woodbridge Public Library, Hamden Public Library, Wallingford Public Library, West Haven Public Library and New Haven Free Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine Braithwaite
City Librarian
August 21, 2023