

Director's Report to the Board of Agents

Silas Bronson Library

November 16, 2020

Raechel Guest, Director

National Medal Nomination

The library was nominated for the Institute of Museum and Library Service's National Medal by Congresswoman Jahana Hayes. We submitted our application at the beginning of this month; finalists will be announced in March. Our application included three letters of community support which I have included with this report – the letters are a beautiful testament to the work being done by our staff.

Everybody Learns Initiative

We are in receipt of the \$74,190 in grant funds. Our draft budget proposal was approved by the State Library on November 4. We are now hurrying to get final quotes and make adjustments as needed. Once we have all of the final quotes, we will resubmit the budget to the State Library for final approval. All funds must be spent by the end of December.

We are using the funds for four basic purposes:

1. Basic Safety Supplies and Improvements: PPE, cleaning/disinfecting supplies, and automatic faucets & soap dispensers. *Approximate Cost: \$12,500*
2. Furniture & Equipment which will allow us to reopen the entire building: Plexiglas dividers, HEPA air purifiers, easy-to-disinfect tables for the Main Reading Room, and book trucks for quarantining items that have been handled. *Approximate Cost: \$28,000*
3. Popup Library Furniture & Equipment: tents, mobile hinged bookcases, seating, tables, patio heaters, charging station. *Approximate Cost: \$14,500*
4. Technology Improvements: Samsung tablets for patron use; credit card readers to minimize cash handling at main library at popup library; laptop, wifi, scanner wand & receipt printer for popup library; upgraded wifi at main library to support patrons with their own devices. *Approximate Cost: \$19,500*

Staffing Changes

The addition of a popup library to our services has necessitated a change to our staffing structure. A popup library is a type of branch library, and the operation of a branch library is a Librarian 3 job function. We currently have two Librarian 3 positions: one is responsible for the Bunker Hill Branch Library, and the other is responsible for the Technical Services Division.

The City's Cost Containment Oversight Committee has approved my request to convert our vacant Librarian 2 position to a new Librarian 3 position in charge of the popup library. We are now waiting for HR to send us the list of Librarian 3 candidates for both the popup library position and the Technical Services position (which has been filled by an interim since last summer).

Library Vehicle

Many years ago, we were issued a four-door passenger vehicle for library use. The car is used almost exclusively by the Maintainers when they go to the Bunker Hill Branch. While the car is able to transport four people, it is unable to transport any of our equipment. The Head Maintainer uses his personal vehicle, a pickup truck, to transport the lawn mower, snow blower, snow shovels, and other equipment to the branch. The Maintainers have found that the library car is not suited for travel between the two libraries during or immediately after a snowstorm.

The addition of a popup library to our services increases the need to replace the library car with a more practical vehicle for transporting equipment.

Former Director Stanford Warshasky frequently urged me to add a bookmobile to the library's services. I believe that he would be pleased if we used a portion of his bequest to purchase a van for the popup library, and the van could also be used for transporting the lawn mower, etc. to the Bunker Hill Branch. I respectfully request that the Board consider making this purchase.

Circulation Division

October Statistical Reports: Main Library

Total Collection Size: 256,791
Total Items Added to Collection: 806
Total Items Circulated: 2,858
Total Circulation In-House: 2
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 1,476
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 414

Total Active Patrons: 41,336
Total Expired Patrons: 2
Total Patrons Added: 101

OverDrive Circulation: October

Audiobooks: 139
Ebooks: 286
Total Checkouts: 425

October Statistical Reports: Bunker Hill

Total Collection Size: 15,062
Total Items Added to Collection: 22
Total Items Circulated: 325
Total Circulation In-House: 0
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 134
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 210

Total Active Patrons: 1,337
Total Expired Patrons: 0
Total Patrons Added: 2

Adult: 60
Teen/YA: 41
Children: 288

Museum Pass Usage, October 2020

American Clock & Watch Museum: 0
Barker Comic and Cartoon Museum: 0
Beardsley Zoo: 0
Children's Museum/Roaring Brook Nature: 0
Connecticut Forests & Parks: 0
Connecticut Science Center: 0
EverWonder Children's Museum: 0
Harriet Beecher Stowe Center: 0
Imagine Nation: 0
Institute for American Indian Studies: 0
KidsPlay Childrens Museum: 0

Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk: 0
Mattatuck Museum: 0
Mystic Aquarium: 0
Mystic Seaport: 1
New Britain Museum of American Art: 0
New England Air Museum: 1
New Haven Museum: 0
Old Sturbridge Village: 0
Peabody Museum of Natural History: 0
Wadsworth Atheneum: 0
White Memorial Conservation Center: 0

Online Presence

Facebook Followers as of 11/14/2020: 2,442
Facebook Reach October 17 – November 13: 7,750
Facebook Post Engagements October 17 – November 13: 1,493

Instagram Followers as of 11/14/2020: 793
Bronson Teens Instagram Followers as of 11/14/2020: 237
Twitter Followers as of 11/14/2020: 435

Wowbrary Active Subscriptions October 1 – October 31: 74
Wowbrary Webpages Viewed October 1 – October 31: 297
Wowbrary Clickthroughs to Catalog October 1 – October 31: 49
Wowbrary Customized Newsletters as of 10/31/2020: 4

Website Visitors October 1 – October 31: 1,742
Website Sessions October 1 – October 31: 2,882
Website Pageviews October 1 – October 31: 6,400

Most Visited Website Pages (October 1 – October 31):

Home Page: 2,732	Bunker Hill Branch: 90	News: 26
Programs: 422	How to Get a Card: 85	New Movies: 22
Program Registration: 353	Research: 77	Friends: 20
Take Out: 319	Borrowing Questions: 67	Hall of Fame: 16
Genealogy/Local Hist.: 295	Museum Passes: 47	Business Resources: 15
Digital: 262	Library History: 46	Directions: 13
How to Find Books: 213	Book Sale: 43	Computer Classes: 11
Ask A Librarian: 190	Newsletters: 42	Board of Agents: 9
eBooks: 182	Teen/YA: 40	Requests: 9
Children's Division: 130	Calendar: 34	Email Signup: 3
About Us: 125	Geekdom: 28	



The Ungroup Society

Warren Leach | theungroupsociety@gmail.com / Rhonda Hunter Gatling / theungroupsociety@gmail.com

Warren Leach
The Ungroup Society
77-79 Bishop St
Waterbury CT 06704
Oct. 28, 2020

To the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services

My name is Warren Leach, I am the founder of a grassroots organization called The Ungroup Society. Over the past 8 years our organization has been serving the Waterbury CT community, during that time we have partnered with The Silas Bronson Library on a number of community engagement efforts, educational series and informational events.

I write this letter in support of the library as well as the dedicated individuals employed there who work tirelessly to cultivate all aspects of learning in our city

Under the leadership of Director Raechel Guest the entire staff at SBL is completely committed to providing the very best in educational access for the citizens of Waterbury and surrounding communities. SBL is a vibrant nexus of information, culture, entertainment and research that enhances the lives of all who live in this community both young and old.

The SBL is a perfect melding of a traditional library with the most innovative in 21st century technology. On one hand this library is a casual, inviting place packed with leather-bound volumes of classic literature, reference materials, fiction and nonfiction offerings. At the same time, it is a technologically advanced and progressive space full of the latest in hardware and software to engage both young and old. There is something for everyone at the SBL. Meeting all where they are in their journey of learning

The SBL is a vibrant and lively educational eco system where people from different backgrounds and cultures converge to connect in a clearinghouse of ideas and philosophies. The SBL is an absolutely integral part of this community serving as a meeting place for different organizations and groups to hold forums, educational events, cultural celebrations and so much more

Specifically, in the time of the Covid-19 pandemic The Silas Bronson Library is an absolutely vital community resource that provides relevant health information, education, programs, services and innovative access for all in the community who need to stay connected on all virtual formats and platforms. SBL has made the pivot from consistent in person interaction to employing a very successful hybrid model of safe socially distance in person access with comprehensive virtual platforms. Whether in person or virtual SBL is taking the lead in the

sharing of knowledge and stands at the ready to keep our entire city connected through information and shared sense of community

As a community organizer I cannot begin to express my appreciation for SBL and the seemingly limitless resources this institution goes the extra mile to so willingly provide. The Silas Bronson Library is place for everyone, a place for all things. They care and there is no substitute for that

I would be honored and privileged to speak on behalf of The Silas Bronson Library at any time. Please feel free to contact me at your convenience

Warren Leach / Director
The Ungroup Society – (203) 510-8730



October 24, 2020

Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services:

I write this letter to express Brass City Gamers' support for the Silas Bronson Library's nomination for the National Medal for Museum and Library Services. We unequivocally believe the Silas Bronson Library is deserving of the nation's highest honor for institutions that make significant and exceptional contributions to their communities.

We can attest to the Silas Bronson Library being an exceptional supporter and essential to the growth of our grassroots, Latinx, service-disabled veteran owned nonprofit organization. As a grassroots nonprofit organization, we currently do not have the capacity to incur the overhead expenses to teach our STEM courses. The library director, Raechel, welcomed our organization with open arms to provide us a space in their newly renovated computer lab. With the support of the Silas Bronson Library, we have been able to provide over 50 students free STEM related educational opportunities since September 2018.

Through our partnership with the Silas Bronson Library, we were able to teach community members coding, web design and development, social media management and digital content creation, and live broadcasting. Due to the generosity of the Silas Bronson Library, we have managed to teach students as young as 5 years of age to 50 + years of age from different backgrounds, majority of them being from an underserved community.

The Silas Bronson Library has always displayed their commitment to meeting the community where they are and doing all that is possible to engage and help during these difficult times. During the pandemic, we had the opportunity to teach library staff members how to effectively communicate and engage with the local community through social media. Staying in touch with our community has never been more important than it is today. Silas Bronson Library have effectively shown their commitment and dedication to serving the community even at a time where physical interaction is limited.

We can proudly say that the Silas Bronson Library is a keystone in the City of Waterbury, and we are proud to have an organization that welcomes and helps develop grassroots nonprofits like ours.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 203-805-7684 or hnavarro@brasscitygamers.com.

Sincerely



Hector Navarro
CEO/Founder
Brass City Gamers Tournament, Inc.

November 1, 2020



To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter in support of the Silas Bronson Library. As someone who grew up in Waterbury, I have very fond memories visiting Silas and spending hours with my mother and sisters playing with puzzles, reading books, finding books on cassette (which were my favorite go-to), and renting the old school projector to watch educational films at home (I remember watching a children's cartoon on how babies were made, which was my first introduction to sex education in the 80's.). Silas wasn't just a place to find resources, but it was also a space I would accompany my mother to attend community events and grassroots organizing meetings. These experiences as a child sent a message to me at a young age that the library is a safe space where families and community members are welcomed and supported. It's the reason why when I became a mom and decided to home educate my children, that Silas became the first resource I turned to to support our new journey.

At the time I began to dive into home education (which was 5 years ago), Silas was the only public space in my area that hosted homeschooling information sessions and events. It is there that I was able to meet other homeschoolers, learn about homeschooling laws in our state, and learn through books and homeschool workshops about the various forms of home education and styles. My children's first classes and play dates were experienced at Silas, which included but were not limited to Yoga, literature, phonetic reading, science through magic, African American history in CT, art, music, animal care, and the list goes on. As founder of My Reflection Matters Village--a local, grassroots cooperative supporting Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) choosing to home educate their children, Silas has served as an integral component to our development and growth. Before establishing our co-op, it is at Silas that we were able to host some of our first meet ups and series of culturally relevant programming to our community at no cost to families, such as Tinga Tinga art, a painting style originating from Tanzania. Prior to COVID our co-op was meeting once a week at Silas to run two classes for our kids: Bitsbox Coding and Djembe drumming. Not having to pay for space that has access to computers for our coding class and a private room where our kids could drum was a huge savings for our families as it increased accessibility to programming for families with smaller budgets.

Silas has been more than just a place my family visits, but it is a community that is part of our family. I love that when we walk into Silas, there are people my kids and I have relationships with--people we can trust and turn to for help. When I co-authored my first children's book, Raechel, reached out to me to have me read my book, The ABCs of the Black Panther Party, in the children's library. When faced with a racist, hate message from an angry community member about Silas supporting my book, Raechel publicly stood by my side by writing an open letter stating the need for more spaces to support the histories of marginalized communities.

Although my family resides in Watertown, we still choose Silas as our go-to. I love the cultural diversity that exists at Silas. The fact we can find staff members that look like our family, events that speak to various cultures and lifestyles, books that are bilingual and are more culturally diverse than in the Watertown library, community organizing events I've been able to participate in to support my own learning, and easy access to a physical space we can use at no cost to host culturally responsive events and learning experiences are all the reasons why I love this space and can't imagine our home education life without it!

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions about my experiences at Silas.

Sincerely,

Chemay Morales-James

Chemay Morales-James

