

[« Back](#) | [Print](#)

Atlantic City Free Public Library to Open New Teen Space

By Debra Lau Whelan -- School Library Journal, 5/15/2009

When teens enter the **Atlantic City Free Public Library** in New Jersey this September, they'll have a special place to call their own. Thanks to \$40,000 from the **South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative**, the library is creating Teen Space, a 985-square-foot state-of-the-art area devoted to 12-to-18-year-olds.



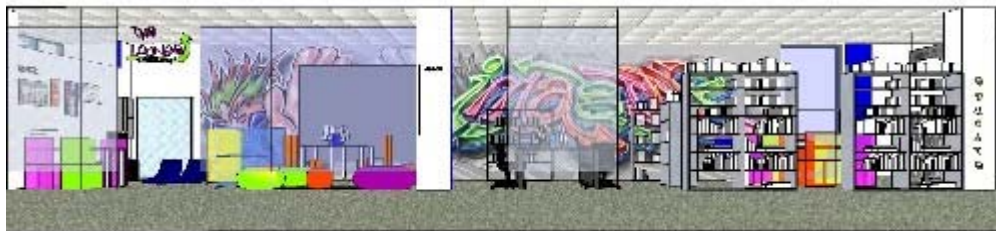
Interior designer Shaina Horton (left) with a group of teens.

Shaina Horton, an interior designer, came up with a vibrant, colorful, and modern look in her Teen Space design. Located on the library's second floor, the area will house comfy lounge furniture, computers, a large screen TV, a video gaming area, a CD listening station, work stations, and space to hold meetings and special programs. Another section will be devoted to reading, studying, computer use and homework.

"We are excited to have this opportunity to expand services for teens in Atlantic City," says library director Maureen Sherr Frank. "We are looking forward to developing a special area with new technology and educational resources in the main library to encourage learning, exploration, and creativity."

Located in an economically disadvantaged urban neighborhood just one block from the million dollar casinos that dot the Atlantic City boardwalk, the library attracts an average of 70 teens a day, says Jennifer Boyce, the library's coordinator of teen services.

"Teens can't be asked to wait, especially in tough financial times, for a fun, free and safe space with access to new and creative technology, room to collaborate, and the kinds of things they want to read," says Karen Hyman, director of the South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative.



And the library has made every effort to make sure teens were included every step of the way. Take, for example, the 100 foot long mural designed by graffiti artist Stephen Gibson, which runs

along one wall of Teen Space. Boyce says she went to nearby **Atlantic City High School** and recruited volunteers from the graphic and design class to help with the concept and with the painting.

The Atlantic City Library will provide a match of \$35,000, bringing the total price tag of the project to \$75,000. Teen Space is expected to open to the public in September 2009.

[« Back](#) | [Print](#)

Advertisement