

South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative

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NEWS RELEASE

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Libraries receive \$40,000 to develop special 'Teen Space'

The South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative (SJRLC) has selected The Atlantic City Free Public Library and the Camden County Library to receive \$40,000 each in funding to create a special Teen Spaces as part of the SJRLC's "A+ Teen Space Demonstration Project".

The libraries will begin working on their Teen Spaces immediately with anticipated grand openings of September 2009.

"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," according to Karen Hyman, Director of the South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative, which provided matching funds for the project. "At SJRLC, we were tremendously impressed with the libraries' proposals for the outstanding spaces and services that they planned for their teen communities."

"We are excited to have this opportunity to expand services for teens in Atlantic City," Atlantic City Free Public Library Director Maureen Sherr Frank said. "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."

The Atlantic City Library will be fashioning a 985-square-foot Teen Space which will have a vibrant, colorful and modern look. One of the most visually dramatic aspects of the space will be a large mural designed by graffiti artist Stephen Stuart-Gibson, who will seek teen input and participation in creating a design. There will also be a wall for a teen art gallery.

The Camden County Library will be converting 1245 square feet for use as the Teen Space. "The space encompasses a significant area of the Vogelson Branch's first floor," said Linda Devlin, Director of the Camden County Library. "We're excited about expanding our teen services and giving the teens more of the technological tools they need to learn, explore and hone their skills, all in a safe, stimulating space."

At both libraries, the Teen Space will be a casual, teen-only area for teens to gather, and it will include work stations, modern lounge furniture, meeting and program space, music, video and animation technology as well as a quiet zone designed for teens to read, study, or use computers for homework or research.

The SJRLC's public library members were invited to submit proposals for this project. The SJRLC will give \$40,000 in funding, including \$10,000 of a special grant for their A+ Project from the New Jersey State Library. The Atlantic City Library will provide a match of \$35,000, bringing the total devoted to their project to \$75,000. The Camden County Library will provide a match of \$35,900 bring the total devoted to their project to \$75,900.

The A+ Teen Space Project was made possible with funding from the Atlantic City Free Public Library, The Camden County Library, The South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative and New Jersey State Library, which is responsible for the coordination, promotion and funding of the New Jersey Library Network.