

GREAT TEEN SPACES YOU COULD HAVE RIGHT NOW

NJLA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 4/27/10

The South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative (SJRLC) 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 began working on their Teen Spaces in December, 2008 with grand openings in the Fall/Winter of 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," says 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. The results are stunning."



The Atlantic City Library fashioned a 985-square-foot Teen Space which has a vibrant, colorful and modern look. One of the most visually dramatic aspects of the space is a large mural designed by graffiti artist Stephen Stuart-Gibson, who sought teen input and participation in creating the design.

The Camden County Library converted 1245 square feet for use as the Teen Space which has a grittier, urban style. "The space encompasses a significant area of the Vogelson Branch's first floor," says 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 provides a casual, teen-only area for teens to gather, and includes work stations, modern lounge furniture, meeting and program space, music, video and gaming technology, as well as a quiet zone designed for teens to read, study, or use computers for homework or research.

All SJRLC's public library members were invited to submit proposals for this project. The SJRLC gave \$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 provided 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.

See: <http://sjrlc.org/teenspace> for more information.
See: <http://njlaconference.ning.com> for photos, discussions and more!

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 The New Jersey State Library, which is responsible for the coordination, promotion and funding of the New Jersey Library Network.