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Beyond the Classroom

Library Invites Teens to Be Designers of New Space

By Ashley T/8th grade Howard Middle School

In case you haven't heard, the downtown library will be adding a teen section to their facilities. They are building it, so that teenagers have a place to and well...be teens. The library and its designers plan on taking out the west wing on the first floor and building it into a teen section. When the teen section is complete it will be a welcoming place for teenagers to come and stuffy, or just hang out with friends and play games.

The downtown public library decided to build a separate place for teenagers to go, because so many teens from local schools go there after school and nowhere to go to be themselves. They either have to climb up flights of stairs to find what they need, or they go on the computers that the library offers to do interesting searches for books and other resources. But if they have a place they can go with everything they need, just for them, not only is it convenient, but it is also gives them a sense of belonging. The library even discussed getting together with some of the local schools are trying to find out what projects are going on and what resources are available to them in the teen section, so that they don't have to go look all over the library for the different books they need.

The library plans on making the teen section based on teenagers and their likes. To try to achieve a place that teenagers would like most, the library had teenagers from schools all over downtown come in and talk with an architect and 2 interior designers about what they think the teen section should look like. They suggested things like splitting the section into two different halves, one for studying and one for games and fun. Then they thought about what should be in those sections. For the studying section they came up with things like more natural lighting, subtle colors, a quite environment, and even less comfortable chairs, so that you're more likely to stay concentrated and think. For the fun part of the teen section they suggested things like more vibrant colors, florescent lighting, comfortable chairs, music centers, a few TV's to show previews of books or movies, and games. They also talked about splitting up the computers, so that in the

studying section you could have computers to do research and things, and in the fun section have computers for surfing the internet and playing computer games. With all the ideas that the designers gathered, it is bound to turn into an interesting project.

When the teen section is done it should be everything a teen hoped for and never expected in a library. It will be a fun, welcoming place where teenagers can go to be themselves. Once the section is built the library is discussing having things like poetry bashes, story telling, and even opening the library after hours so that teens can come and hang out. They also talked about maybe having a lock-in or two. Whatever the final product is like, it is destined to be enjoyed by many teenagers, because it will be created from ideas from other teenagers with similar likes and interests.