Digital literacy program aims to help groups get comfy with technology

By Lauren O'Loughlen

The Atwater Library and Computer Centre's digital literacy program is there if you need a hand with technology.

The program, which started in 2007, organizes workshops for individuals, com-

Robin Kelley in the Atwater Library and Computer Centre's reading room.

munity groups and schools. Students, young and old, can learn different skills, ranging from navigating government websites, to making and editing video, to mastering photo manipulation software, to learning stop-motion animation.

Robin Kelley, the library's information society project coordinator explained, "The aim of the program is to provide workshops in new media technology to youth and community groups. Most programs are given in partnership with specific groups and tailored specifically to the group's needs."

What makes the program different from a straightforward technical class is that its workshops often have a strong social or community-building message as a theme.

Contactivity learns videomaking

An example of this is the "Sharing Stories" workshop, which was held in tandem with the Contactivity seniors' centre. Over four classes, seniors were taught to use video cameras in order to share their personal stories.

For youths is the "HipHopNoPop"

workshop, which offers participants a chance to learn about the non-violent origins of hip hop while learning to make video documentaries.

The "Media Literacy" workshop taught girls at Trafalgar School photo manipulation and creating posters while learning about gender stereotypes in the media.

Create and communicate

"The aim of the program is to give people skills to create things but also to help them communicate. ... I find the role very rewarding, and I really love doing the workshops," said Kelley, who became involved in August 2009.

The library and computer centre's program is funded by the Quebec ministry of Government Services program grant.

The digital literacy program has created workshops for other groups, including the Carrefour Jeunesse-Emploi in NDG, Head and Hands Young Parents program and Yellow Door's Yellow Ribbon Social Club.

Videos, posters, photos and animations produced through the workshops can be viewed on the program's website gallery at http://media.atwaterlibrary.ca/taxonomy/term/21.