

Photography inspires students at Hudson Library

By Rachel Ohm
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Students in Carlin Thomas' photography classes will be developing more than just film this summer.

"I hope to provide a place for kids to explore ideas and develop the confidence to express their needs and opinions," said Thomas, a 2006 graduate of Bard College and Hudson resident.

Thomas is the founder of Visual Seeing, a photography program funded by the mid-Hudson Library system and a grant Thomas obtained through Do Something, a web-based organization that encourages young people to volunteer and provides social networking opportunities to do so.

"Our goal is to inspire

young people to take action, to do something in their communities," said Emily Luke, grants coordinator for Do Something. "What we look for are really incredible youth projects that look like they have the potential to be sustainable."

Thomas, who applied for a GameStop grant at dosomething.com, was awarded \$500 to launch Visual Seeing. Although Do Something evaluates grant applications and selects recipients, the project is funded by Gamestop, the national videogame retailer. An estimated \$48,000 will be awarded in GameStop grants through Do Something in 2007.

"In Carlin we saw a budding social entrepreneur and passionate artist," said Luke. "She saw that there

weren't many artistic curricular programs for underprivileged kids in Hudson and her project gives them something to be engaged in during the summer."

"I thought about how I could give back to the community and bridge my interests with social justice," said Thomas, who is an avid photographer herself. "Photography was a major avenue by which I learned to see with both the mind and the eye and a way in which I learned and grew."

Thomas, who currently interns at Time and Space Lmtd., a community arts center in Hudson, also loves kids. She has taught English as a second language to

children in Guatemala and babysat in addition to tutoring kids at Time and Space.

In her photography classes, the first of which will be held Saturday at the Hudson Library, Thomas will introduce her students, all of which are between the ages of 11 and 18, to basic concepts of photography and encourage them to use the medium as a means of self-expression.

Topics addressed will include framing and the role of chemistry in photography. Thomas plans to introduce the students to a local professional photographer who specializes in landscapes. She will also take them on field trips around

Hudson to photograph the city with disposable cameras.

As part of the Hudson Library's Summer Reading Program, Visual Seeing will also incorporate poetry and writing exercises to encourage use of imagery and metaphor as a springboard for picture taking.

In the future, Thomas said she would like to see Visual Seeing grow to include digital photography, graphic design and after-school classes. Obtaining access to a dark room would further enhance the program and allow students to experience what Thomas labeled as a "very organic" part of photography.