incredible. In the space of a few hours we took or scanned hundreds of pictures and got to meet the real multicultural face of the city. E-mail destinations covered the world: China, India, Lebanon, South Africa, Ghana, Germany – and it was rare to find someone who did not know the e-mail addresses of their friends and family. One entire spindle of CD-R blanks was consumed as people took the high quality digital versions of the photos home.

A very hesitant mother was finally coaxed by her young son and posed with him for some pictures. Seeing her pictures appear on screen brought smiles and she had her son quietly ask how much this was going to cost. The boy interpreted for us and told her this was truly free. The smiles turned to profuse thanks as she realized we really would help her to e-mail the photos to family back home.

One enterprising young man, after learning how to scan the wallet snapshot of his wife and newborn daughter, verified how long we would be there. He showed up again an hour later with a manila envelope of precious wedding photos to scan and e-mail them home as well!

It was infectious. A pack of giggling 13-year-old girls tried us out as a model shoot opportunity. Their high energy level, cheerful experiments with the editing software and hilarious comments on the unexpected results soon drew more people in to give it a try!

THE OUTCOME?

Technology we had taken for granted was being greatly appreciated by people who did not have such free access. Skills we had taught our students were being fully utilized and validated. True community was being built.

By the end of the afternoon when we were ready to pack up, requests were already coming in to do it again – requests from the public who had found this community service invaluable, requests from the students and volunteers who were aglow from the compliments received, requests from the public library staff who had loved the great, lively public involvement we had generated.

Will we do it again? Plans for 'Get Your Mug Shot 2' are already underway. ❚