

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

A winning idea

Pottstonians are sick and tired of trash all over town, and the people at Hobart's Run have galvanized them into action.

With a simple little thing like a free trash bin.

Hobart's Run is a non-profit organization established by The Hill School in 2016 to revitalize an area originally consisting of about 600 mostly residential parcels located around the perimeter of the school. It has its own self-perpetuating board.



Commentary by
Thomas Hylton

For years, The Hill School recognized its major handicap recruiting students and faculty is not the school itself, but Pottstown.

Unlike its peer institutions located in idyllic villages, the Hill School abuts a low income neighborhood in an older industrial town.

The Hill School owns the most valuable real estate in Pottstown, assessed at more than \$43 million. It avoids an annual \$2.3 million real estate tax bill because of its

tax exempt status.

The school serves an affluent population. Two-thirds of its 540 students' families pay full tuition (\$66,420 for boarders).

The Pottstown School District, on the other hand, is coping with a declining tax base and a student population that is two-thirds low income.

When current Hill headmaster Zack Lehman was appointed in 2012, one of his top goals was to improve community relations. Thus, Hobart's Run was born. The school originally talked about endowing Hobart's Run with \$5 million, but that never materialized.

Instead, Hobart's Run was incorporated with \$260,000 in assets. The Hill School/Hobart's Run has purchased 11 security cameras for \$100,000 and bought a fixer-upper house on Edgewood Street for \$44,500. The school donated \$200,000 to the borough to purchase police cars.

But its biggest success, by far, is its "Adopt-a-Hobart's-Run-Trashcan" project. Property owners can apply on the Hobart's Run website for a free trash can. Businesses can sponsor trash cans for \$200 each and have their logo attached to the can.

People love them. There are more than 60 distributed all over town at a cost of perhaps \$12,000.

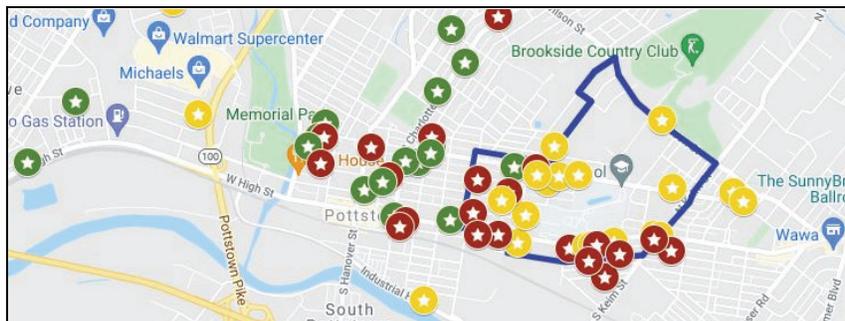
It's been a public relations bonanza for the Hill School. It shows you don't have to spend a lot of money to make a big impact.



HOBART'S RUN trash bin on High Street. They've spread like wildfire.



DOWNTOWN POTTS-TOWN is inundated with trash. The 400 block of High Street, above, is particularly bad.



HILL SCHOOL/HOBART'S RUN TRASH CANS permeate the borough. To date there are more than 60 of them, as shown on this map taken from the Hobart's Run website. The colors reflect different levels of sponsorship.