

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Hill School priorities

Work has begun on a \$15.1 million renovation of The Hill School's Dining Hall, to be finished in January 2019. The project will add 60 additional seats and provide many upgrades, including modernizing the kitchen.

Money for the improvements will come from a \$175 million fundraising campaign, started in 2014, called The Strength of All.

Other priorities, including a "transformational" STEM center called the Quadrivium, are shown in the chart, below.

As part of its campaign, The Hill School has earmarked \$5 million — less than 3 percent of its fundraising goal — to endow and underwrite an initiative to revitalize the neighborhood surrounding the school property.

The targeted area, called "Hobart's Run," consists of about 600 mostly residential parcels, plus Edgewood Cemetery, lining the perimeter of the campus.

So far, the school has purchased security cameras, organized some trash pick-ups, and sponsored once-a-week summer outdoor gatherings. Earlier this year, the school announced it will donate \$100,000 in 2008 and in 2009 to the borough to

purchase police cars.

While police cars are needed, the donation reinforces the perception that The Hill School is fearful of Pottstown and established Hobart's Run as a buffer zone between the campus and the rest of the town.



Commentary by
Tom Hylton

In recent weeks, as community leaders, including the NAACP, vigorously contested the closing of the Pottstown YMCA, The Hill School was notably silent on the issue.

Ironic that The Hill's institution-building headmaster, John Meigs (1876-1911), founded both the Pottstown YMCA and the Bethany

Mission (now the Ricketts Community Center) to uplift disadvantaged youth.

Obviously, it's important for The Hill School to upgrade its facilities, improve staff salaries, and provide student aid to stay competitive with its prep school peers.

But given its non-profit status, which allows it to avoid \$2.2 million in real estate taxes annually, and its \$162 million endowment, the school could do more to strengthen the community.

This summer, Pottstown property owners will be asked to pay nearly \$1 million in higher public school taxes to make up for the borough's steadily declining tax base.

The Hill School can — and should — do more to help.



Hobart's Run area consists of about 600 mostly residential parcels, plus Edgewood Cemetery, located around the perimeter of The Hill School campus.

Strength of All campaign

Dining Hall	\$15.1 million
Quadrivium Center	\$26.2 million
Student Aid	\$50 million
Faculty Salaries	\$30 million
Hobart's Run	\$5 million
Hill Fund	\$30 million
Other projects	\$18.7 million
TOTAL	\$175 million



TEMPORARY FACILITY has been set up at the former hockey rink to serve meals as the school's historic dining hall is closed for renovations.