

## **Summary of the Project**

The Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission has designated the stone schoolhouse located at 1060 Second Street Pike in Richboro, PA as eligible for National Register Recognition. In 1913, the facility was Northampton High School; today it's referred to as Richboro Elementary School. Last used in 1989, Northampton Township currently owns the 4,000 square foot building with six original classrooms and offices is sitting on 2 acres of land; most of the functional land is retention basins for flood control. There is also an established parking lot to accommodate sixty vehicles. The Friends of Historic Richboro School proposes to purchase and restore the facility and maintain it as a non-profit center for education for the community.

**Description of the Organization and Its Work:** Friends of Historic Richboro School formed in January 2008 to acquire, refurbish and manage the property of a stone schoolhouse located at 1060 Second Street Pike, Richboro, PA. The Friends are community, business and governmental leaders dedicated to preserving this property, which began its life in 1913 as Northampton High School; the first consolidated school in the region.

- In *acquisition*, the Friends are pursuing investment from public and private funding agencies, businesses, individual, and public fundraising initiatives to purchase the property for \$575,000, above its appraised value of \$530,000
- For *refurbishing*, the Friends will be working with PHMC, local contractors, trade unions and companies specializing in new green technologies to make this property a unique example of 20<sup>th</sup> century history melding with 21<sup>st</sup> century measures for heating, cooling, and powering a building. The building was relocated on the property, and thus is lacking power, plumbing, heating and cooling equipment, etc. During its vacancy since 1989, it has also been vandalized, requiring corrective restoration of the interior
- As property *manager*, the Friends have secured a major tenant, Children's Cultural Center of Bucks County, and a commitment from the Northampton Township Historical Society to make its home in the building. Other similar educational, historical, cultural and artistic tenants are being sought to fully populate the 4,000 square foot building while maintaining it as a center for education.
- Uses by proposed tenants:
  - Children's Cultural Center The most obvious constituents would be the 5 municipalities which constitute Council Rock School District; Northampton Township: population 41,194; Newtown Borough population 2,312; Newtown Township population 18,206; Upper Makefield Township population 7,180; Wrightstown Township population 2,839. The student population will be served directly by a Children's Cultural Center's ground breaking program – Alternative to Suspension Program, fully supported by the Administration of the School District. ASP is designed as a school-day opportunity for at risk youth to participate in such activities as self esteem building and self-control in a safe haven environment. As the only official Bucks County sponsor of the Congressional Youth Award, the organization mentors high school students as they participate in the CYAP; one student will receive his Gold Medal in Washington DC on June 25, 2009. The

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- organization also accepts previously utilized computers, ensures their functioning capacity, and donates them to worthy youth and or their families; more than 300 units have been donated since 2002. Other educational programs offered focus on the rich historical and cultural heritage of the communities.
- Northampton Township Historical Society Membership in the Society includes a population well beyond the physical geography of the 26 mile Township. The Society attracts a significant number of non-members through providing high quality guest speakers at their quarterly meeting, which will be held at the School. They also have a wide range of historic artifacts and archival materials which will enhance the permanent and revolving historic exhibits featured in the Gallery room of the main floor of the School.
  - Artists By creating a generic arts studio, the Friends will welcome a variety of artistic disciplines to utilize the basement space for the creation and teaching of the arts. The Gallery room on the main floor can serve as space for revolving exhibits. The Friends will initially work with members of the Arts & Cultural Council of Bucks County who would seek space use.
  - Musicians The generic music studio can attract musicians, who wish to rehearse, teach or record their specialty. The Gallery Room on the main floor and/or the large meeting room in the basement level can serve as performance/concert spaces for small audiences. The Friends will initially work with members of the Arts & Cultural Council of Bucks County who would seek space use.
  - Non-Profit Incubator Small, often grass roots non-profits need a 'starting' location, and what could be more perfect than a Center for Education which houses a variety of established entities. There is also the opportunity for existing non-profits to utilize space occasionally or on a regular basis for training and meetings for their staff and constituents.
  - Coalition for Healthy Youth (CTC) The CHY in collaboration with the Children's Cultural Center had established a homework center in a recreational facility in Northampton Township. The space is no longer available, so the Friends will be proud to welcome this activity to the School site.

### **History of the Facility**

In 1819, there were one-room schoolhouses in Northampton Township, Bucks County, PA., and serving first through eighth grades. By 1871, nine were scattered throughout the township.

The schoolhouse in Richboro was most centrally located and in 1896 a two-year high school was started. In 1913, a larger stone building was built at 1060 Second Street Pike. Additional schools have been erected and the stone schoolhouse became Richboro Elementary School. In 1988. It was sold by Council Rock School District and has changed hands several times but never developed for active use.

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The current owner is the government of Northampton Township. The Township had the property appraised (\$530,000) and contracted with the Bucks County Redevelopment Authority to facilitate the sale. The sale is to be concluded in the summer of 2009.

**Plan of Action**

Investments in-hand and sought to purchase the property:

- Grant application - PA Department of Community and Economic Development
- Private foundations and financial institutions.
- Cash and pledges from former graduates of Northampton High School and families of the Richboro Elementary era.
- A contribution is expected from the Northampton Township Historical Society.
- Annual fundraising event in October – Revisiting the Walking Purchase.
- Sale of prints of a watercolor painting of the School, created by an artist for fundraising opportunities for the purchase and refurbishing process.

**Project Schedule, Key Milestones and Dates**

Approval of contract for purchase ..... fall, 2009  
Transfer of ownership .....winter, 2009  
Architectural Engineering..... April 2010  
Initiation of Interior Renovations .....Summer 2010  
Occupancy of Building .....Spring, 2011