

the River School

at Milanville



a proposal

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The following is a proposal to establish a parent controlled Montessori elementary school in Milanville, PA.

The Site

The site of this school will be the dormitory building of the Innisfree Retreat complex in Milanville. This property is owned by Bud and Ann Rue who have agreed to lease the dormitory to the River School for use as an elementary school. The dormitory is a three story wood frame building of approximately 1,325 square feet per floor. The River School would rent the entire building from the Rues, but for the initial year or two would only renovate and use the middle of the three floors for active school space. In the years to come the other floors could be brought into service as the school expands.

The Innisfree complex sits on ^{13.7} 13 acres and consists of the dormitory, a home, a recreation hall, a small cottage and a small barn like building behind the a garage. Behind the structures are several fields which would be available for recreation of the school children. One of these fields is in good enough condition to be used for this purpose this coming fall. Another could be graded later to create a large level playing field.

Beside the dormitory is a garden area which Ann Rue has offered, in the finest Montessori tradition, to co-garden with the school students. In addition, the Delaware River is only a short walk from the school and could also be a resource in terms of nature walks, teaching river ecology and perhaps, for older children, boating and water safety.

Location

Milanville is situated on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River at Skinner's falls about 5 miles upstream from Narrowsburg N. Y. It is well located to take advantage of potential constituents from both Pennsylvania and the Delaware River corridor.

Because the school is in Pennsylvania, students in the Honesdale-Bethany area would be eligible for busing. In addition the school is within driving distance of the Honesdale area. As the map attached indicates Milanville is 11 road miles from Rileyville (by way of Tyler Hill); 15 miles from Rt 191 below Bethany (by way of Caulkins); and 14 miles to US Rt 6 (by way of Beach Lake).

As the attached map of the New York side indicates, Milanville is within easy distance of the towns of Narrowsburg and Callicoon. In addition Rts 52 and 17B act like spokes out to the environs of White Sulphur Springs (Liberty) and Bethel (Monticello), while Rt 97 brings Barryville and Eldred within commuting distance.

The future economic and academic viability of any new independent elementary school resides in its ability to attract in sufficient numbers committed parents and students with energy, resources and ideas. For this to occur we believe the new school must be able to draw families from both Pennsylvania and New York. It would appear that the Milanville location is ideally suited for that purpose.

Students

As now conceived the River School would begin this September with an enrollment of no less than 16 and no more than 20 elementary students representing grades 1 through 3. They would be instructed by one full-time trained teacher and at least one volunteer aide at all times. The hours of the school would be 9 am to 3 pm.

Each student would be expected to enroll 5 days a week full time. The parents of each student would be required to donate 10 hours a year toward the operation or improvement of the school. Those unable to do this can reimburse the school @ \$10 per hour for the time not donated. For those who are in need of it, tuition credit would be available for additional volunteer work such as lunch or teacher's aide

Schedule

The Milanville school would begin classes in September of 1991. For this to occur the following rough schedule must be met.

June: * agreement of parents to proceed with the project
* legal incorporation or clarification of entity running project
* negotiation and signing of lease with the Rues

July: * begin fund raising
* begin demolition of dormitory interior
* advertise for more students for coming year
* pursue legal affiliation with UU.

August: * reconstruct interior of 2nd floor
* register students
* continue to fund raise
* ready materials

FINANCES

As a new entity with start-up and construction costs the Milanville school must raise money for these purposes in a very short period of time. This it proposes to do in the following manner:

Tuition Pledges

Tuition Pledges are not a form of fund raising per se, but rather a form of borrowing from ourselves and our immediate future. By this program interested parents could pledge and then donate any dollar amount which would then be credited against their tuition bills for the coming year or any subsequent year. Money raised by this method is very short term because it shows up as a deficit when the tuition credit is claimed. The great advantage of tuition pledges is that a significant treasury could be raised with the minimum of delay and legal complications. This would give us money to move forward while we pursue the more permanent means of funding.

Grants and Gifts

It is proposed that we immediately form a committee to pursue the possibility of grants and gifts. Preliminary work has already begun on proposals to several foundations from whom we might receive assistance.

Fund Raising

Various fund raising activities would be pursued this summer and the coming year.

August Dance: to be held on August ___ and to take place at the recreation hall of the Innisfree Complex. Live music would be provided and a refreshment concession would be operated.

Film at the Tusten Theatre: Fund raising showing of some suitable and generally unavailable (probably foreign) film at the Tusten Theatre in September or October.

"Give a Can": Using the ground floor space of the dormitory the school could collect, sort, compress, bag and reclaim deposits for aluminum beverage cans. This project would also be in the best Montessori tradition in that it would involve the students in sorting and counting on a project with very practical objectives--recycling and fund raising. If organized and publicized properly this could be a significant source of raised money for the school.

Revolving Capital Loan Fund

It is proposed that as soon as the River School is officially established we create a revolving capital loan fund. The fund would cover the costs of renovating the school building and other start up costs and would work in the following manner. Parents, or persons affiliated or unaffiliated with the school would be asked to lend to the school money in increments of \$1,000 (with a maximum cap of \$3,000 or \$4,000) on which they would receive an annual interest rate to be decided (either 2% above bank rates or a flat 10%).

The money would have to be put into the Revolving Capital Loan Fund for a minimum period (2 years has been suggested) with interest being paid annually. After the minimum period a subscriber would be entitled to leave the money in or receive the money back after appropriate notice. In the latter event the money would then be replaced by that of a new subscriber. In future years it is assumed that with expansion the Milanville school would be in a position to gradually replace and phase out the Revolving Capital Loan Fund.

It is proposed that the Milanville school raise \$20,000 by this method (\$10,000 for the renovation and \$10,000 for contingencies). \$2000 for the interest carry of this money appears on the 91-92 budget presented below.

Budget

teachers salary	\$17,000
social security contrib	1,500
health insurance	650
heat	1,850
telephone	500
electric	500
new materials	3,000
rent	- - -
insurance	2,500
repairs & maintenance	1,500
supplies & miscellaneous	3,000
debt service	2,000
total	\$34,000

Tuition

210 per month X 9 months = \$1890 per student

16 students = \$30,240

18 students = \$34,020

20 students = \$37,800

Lease of School

A committee representing the River School is presently holding discussions with Bud and Ann Rue concerning the lease of the proposed school building. Many details, of course, still have to be worked out. A general outline of the terms of the lease as now understood are as follows:

*The River School would lease only the dormitory building, but would, on occasion have use of the recreation hall for events and fund raising.

*For the time when the school is not using the third floor of the dormitory Bud and Ann Rue would have the right to use the space for occasional family gatherings or the like.

*The school would have the right to use the grounds for recreation purposes and with some restrictions would have the right to reconfigure the contour of the land to create level playing areas.

*the school would be responsible for all repairs and maintenance of the school building and would be responsible to keep same in reasonably good condition.

*the school would be responsible for either paying for its own insurance or its share of the insurance carried by Innisfree or the UU.

* all heat and utilities attributable to the school building would be paid by the school.

* in the event of sale the lease would provide the school with the right of first refusal.

The rent for the buildings would be as follows;

year 1 - rent abated

year 2 - \$2,400

year 3 - \$4,800

year 4 - \$4,800

year 5 - \$4,800

years 6 thru 10 - a formula for determining rent during this period is still under discussion

Renovation

The middle floor of the proposed elementary school comprising 1325 square feet is currently divided down the center by a narrow corridor with rooms to each side. The renovation plan contemplates the removal of these partitions and the creation of a large open area with perhaps a foyer area with space for coats and overshoes and some moveable partitions to divide the space as needed for instruction.

The demolition of this space is labor intensive and involves the removal of the homosote wallboard and its disposal in dumpsters. The demolition task, fortunately, is made easier and cleaner by the absence of any plaster and lath.

The exposed ceiling and wall cavities would then be subject to rewiring and insulation while the plumbing for the 2 bathrooms will be redone. 200 amp electric service will insure safety and convenience. Electric baseboard and electric off-peak ceramic storage are being explored as possible heat sources. Present budget predicated on standard electric baseboard, with a maximum of insulation.

Other present budget allocations include safety equipment such as fire extinguishers exit signs above doors and panic hardware. The rear entry door is wheelchair accessible from the parking lot and also provides egress to the play and garden areas. The proposed wall and ceiling finish is taped and painted drywall with the existing chestnut window and door trim reapplied.

The estimated cost reflects foremost material expenditures with concerned parents constituting the work force.

200 amp electric	2,500
demolition	1,000
safety equipment	1,000
insulation	2,000
drywall	1,250
plumbing	1,000
misc	1,250
est total	\$10,000