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Unionville Sports Council Announces “Get On The Wall” Campaign

The Unionville Sports Council (USC) has announced their “Get On The Wall” campaign in order to assist the district in completing the High School renovation, which includes new fields, locker rooms and gym space. At a school board meeting on April 20th, 2009 USC gave the Unionville-Chadds Ford School District \$100,000 in support of the Synthetic Surface on the Stadium Field. The deadline for contributions targeted towards the Field is August 1. An Entrance Wall will contain the names of those that have contributed towards the Field.

Now that the entire renovation has been approved, it is the intention of the Sports Council to continue raising money in order to ensure that no other parts of the school budget are affected during the renovation, and that the school stays on schedule to complete all the needed renovations, including sports and physical activity. Due to revenue limitations in the past, it has been the extra-curriculars that have been left behind in both budgeting and facility development, and the USC’s goal is to avoid that from occurring again.

A new flier will be distributed to homeowners in the district that list the Top 10 Reasons to Get on the Wall. Since the USC has started research in the area of tax revenue and the specifics of the renovation, they uncovered facts that they feel that the general population was not aware of. These facts, and some new findings, are included in the brochure. The Unionville Sports Council believes that the lack of investment in the high school campus and building by the community has resulted in a high school education that is ranked lower than others when compared to the other 11 neighboring districts:

- PSSA state test scores have decreased 13% from elementary school to high school to rank 6th from the bottom among the other Chester County School Districts.
- The high school has failed to make US News and World Reports’ Top 75 list of academic high schools in Pennsylvania for 2 years running.
- Conestoga & Great Valley made the Top 75. Their ‘College Readiness Index’ score was better than UHS.

At the same time, the community has a wealthy base (#1 in the state in household income), yet contributes public school tax revenue at a far lower rate than their county neighbors:

- The residential millage rate is 4th lowest in the county
- The average tax bill, as a percentage of average home value, is 3rd lowest in the county.

“The kids and the school district are very appreciative of those that have supported our fund-raising efforts to-date,” says Joe Carney of USC. “We knew that the residents would become part of this once the facts were clear, in regards to how inadequate facility was affecting education, safety, and student potential. For residents that support the renovation, the Field’s Entrance Wall is a great opportunity to advertise that support.”

Opponents of the renovation had cited the Gym Space improvements as not being needed. The Sports Council has provided square footage per student data of the other 14 Chester County Public High Schools. Overcrowding metrics in the Gym Space area showed UHS last in the county currently, and then moving only to 6th in the student count analysis and 10th in the athlete count analysis, once the planned renovation is complete.

The mission of USC has not only been to demonstrate the potential that lies in an all-around education of a student, but also to emphasize the need to change the way in which the community approaches public education. USC believes that the current high school campus with the unsafe fields, the cramped locker rooms, the trailer modulars, and the resulting academic rankings should serve as a testament for all school districts to never allow the all-around education of a student to ever be short-changed again, especially when the community has the adequate resources.