



Wissahickon Valley  
*historical society*

## **Wissahickon Valley Historical Society Continues Renovations at 1858 School**

### **For Immediate Release**

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Blue Bell, PA The Wissahickon Valley Historic Society has completed the first phase of its renovations to Whitpain Township's Franklinville School, and the society is seeking donations for further work.

The 1858 Franklinville School is the only remaining one-room schoolhouse in the area that will be open to the public. Others have become private residences or have been torn down.

The school is located on Morris Road and was once part of the historic Normandy Farms.

The Franklinville School is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its role, not only as a school, but as an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century community center. Thousands assembled there each summer for community picnics.

The start of the renovation project, which began earlier this year, included a new electrical panel, improved drainage, and waterproofing of the foundation.

Initial funding was obtained primarily through a \$20,000 PA legislative grant, offered by the Keystone Communities Program, and made available through Representative Liz Hanbidge. Individual donors have also supported the project.

Several essential renovations are still planned for the school, including rewiring, a new roof, new HVAC, rebuilding the front and back porches, and painting, inside and out.

The work is important to ensuring the integrity of the structure and to making it accessible to visitors. When all the renovations are complete, the building, furnished as a 19th century, one-room classroom, will be used to educate students and the community about the history and customs of our area.

To complete the renovations, fund-raising continues. “We certainly appreciate every donation, large or small, and we will make sure each one is recognized publically,” said Joe Langella, WVHS vice president. “The contributions are important because we still have much costly work to do! In addition, when we preserve historic buildings, we enhance our neighborhoods.”

Donations of any size can be made online at [www.WValleyHS.org](http://www.WValleyHS.org) or by mail to WVHS, P.O. Box 96, Ambler, PA 19002.

The Wissahickon Valley Historical Society promotes and preserves the history of Ambler Borough, Whitpain Township, and Lower Gwynedd Township. Its headquarters and museum are located in Blue Bell at the historic 1895 Public School. The society welcomes new members.



The Franklinville School in the 1990s after its last renovation. Note the white stucco and red trim, mirroring the structures at historic Normandy Farms. (Photo from the WVHS website.)