

# Hershey School's New Hort Center Reveals Ag Program's Diversity

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HERSHEY (Dauphin Co.) — Some of the best programs at the Milton Hershey School just got better.

A short time ago, members of the school student body, staff, alumni, and board representatives broke ground on a 18,250 square foot horticulture building on the Milton Hershey School (MHS) campus.

"With this new horticulture center, hands-on activity will come to life," said Marcia W. Paterson, director of the school's Agricultural and Environmental Education (AEE) program.

The school's trademark — hands-on educational experience offered through "real world" projects that has proven so effective for thousands of school graduates — will be emphasized using some of the latest technology and techniques at the center.

The new building is situated on 131 acres on Meadow Lane just north of Rt. 322. The center is one of four MHS AEE centers scheduled for renovation or new construction, according to the school's five-year strategic plan.

The horticultural center will be one of the four centers to serve the approximately 1,100 students enrolled at MHS, according to Paterson.

The center, designed by St. Onge, Ruff and Associates, will

include compartmentalized greenhouse projects matched to the appropriate student age and grade levels, according to Warren H. Hitz, associate director, AEE. Construction is being managed by Reynolds Construction at a cost of about \$2 million.

Three separate greenhouses on cement floors each measure 100 feet long by 24 feet wide and are spaced 20 feet apart. The greenhouse environment will be completely controlled by computer. The greenhouses will be enclosed by clear lexan, said Hitz.

One section of the center, the greenhouses, will include six completely separate zones. Elementary school children will be introduced to the greenhouse environment with several "beginner" projects. In another, high school students will study the control of greenhouse lighting. They will also examine benching processes, including ebb and flow and roller benching.

According to Hitz, students will examine tropical plants and foliage systems. Still another will examine aquaculture and hydroponics projects.

A headhouse runs the full length at the end of each greenhouse.

The north section will include the AEE office, conference rooms, and administrative offices, including horticultural staff and faculty. Research and graduate program offices are part of this segment.



Recently the Milton Hershey School broke ground on its new horticulture center. From left, Paul Clark, MHS director of office of project management and Derry Township supervisor; Marcia Paterson, MHS director, Agriculture and Environmental Education program; Christopher Rand, MHS FFA president and Senior Hall Student; Dr. William L. Lepley, MHS president and CEO; and William H. Alexander, MHS board of managers chair.

The middle part of the complex will include a laboratory area with a walk-in refrigerator and refrigerated display cases. Also included will be a plant tissue culture laboratory. On the side will be a resource room with computers and a research library. The computers will have access to the Internet. The conference room would be able to accommodate 50 people.

Hitz indicated that studies will include integrated pest management in a greenhouse environment. The entire center is designed with an "open architecture" to accommodate projected student needs.

The "student-driven" design forms the basis of the hands-on concept of Hershey's AEE program, according to Hitz. "All the office space can be redesigned and reconfigured," he said. "The entire greenhouse is computer controlled, including the environment, the lighting, and other items."

The AEE plan is to combine the educational aspects of the school with the hands-on production approach to the school's philosophy. "We had to meld those together," Hitz said. What planners came up with was a greenhouse center that will adapt to the projects of the students.

"We think in terms of the educational value in each square foot of space we have," said Hitz.

Scott Seibert, instructional adviser, will be manager of the new center when it opens at the beginning of the 1997-1998 school year in September. A school-wide celebration will mark the grand opening, according to Milton Hershey School officials.

During the recent groundbreak-



Milton Hershey School students Brent Frick, left, and Amanda Estep work part-time after school at the school's dairy and food processing center as part of the school's Agricultural and Environmental Education program.

ing ceremony, MHS President and CEO Dr. William L. Lepley said, "The new horticulture center serves as an excellent example of Milton Hershey School hand-related resources, enabling the nurturing and education of today's children while incorporating the school's best traditions — such as our agricultural heritage, work ethic, and educational values."

According to Marcia Paterson, AEE director, the center is one of four centers to provide "a bridge between the school's history and the future development of our stu-

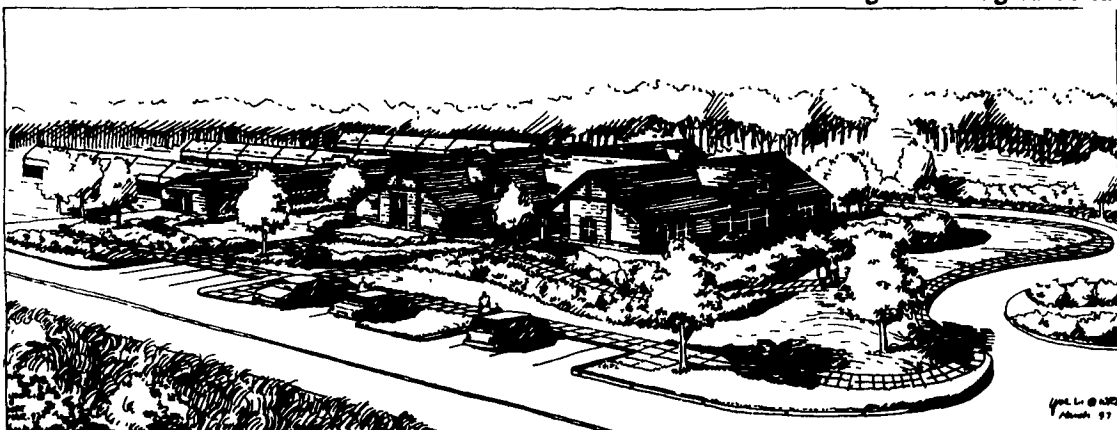
dents as productive citizens in the 21st century," she wrote in the Sept./Oct. 1996 issue of The Agricultural Education Magazine. "AEE links to the future by showing students the relationship agriculture and the environment have on life in general in various career opportunities."

At the center, projects include fruit and vegetable trials, specialty gardens, and a deciduous tree nursery. Other centers include the environmental center, located on 85 acres that include environmental landscaping and stream bank

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Terry Donaher helps with milking at the Milton Hershey School's dairy and food processing center.



Milton Hershey School  
Agricultural and Environmental Education Program  
Horticulture Center  
Ground Breaking Spring 1997

Perspective sketch of the new Milton Hershey School horticulture center on Meadow Lane north of Rt. 322.



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