

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 14, 2008

CONTACT:

Amanda Hartle  
Moon Area School District  
Public Relations Officer  
412-264-9440 ext. 1130  
ahartle@masd.k12.pa.us

## **Moon Area Joins Effort to Secure Local Neighborhood Prestigious National Historic Designation**

Moon Area School District has joined forces with Robert Morris University, Moon Township and Mooncrest Neighborhood Association in an effort that could land Mooncrest on the National Register of Historic Places.

In its beginning stages, the partnership is a unique opportunity for district students to learn about the region's history from the perspective of local residents.

"We are excited about this partnership for several reasons. In terms of academic benefits, this project will enhance the social studies curriculum offerings at all levels and particularly in those grade levels where students address state education standards related to local and Pennsylvania history," said Dr. Donna K. Milanovich, Moon Area superintendent of schools.

"We view this project as a way to involve individual teachers and students who have an interest in conducting historical research. For our students and their families, collaborating with the people of Robert Morris University and Moon Township is a great way to build positive working relationships that could benefit them and extend into future opportunities."

Mooncrest is a seven-block community of nearly 400 brick row houses with around 1,300 residents situated on a bluff overlooking the Ohio River. Constructed in 1943, the neighborhood held some of the more than 614,000 units constructed by the Federal Works Agency under Franklin Roosevelt's National Defense Housing Act.

Mooncrest housed Dravo Corp.'s employees supporting the World War II effort by constructing Landing Ship-Tanks in Neville Island shipyards. Its homes, like the other 32,039 dwellings built across Pennsylvania in towns like Johnstown, Bethlehem and Allentown, were constructed within walking distances to industrial areas.

After the war ended, the U.S. Air Force opened Mooncrest to families from a local base and in 1958, its iconic row houses were sold to private developers, who sold the units to landlords and individuals. The neighborhood worsened and after years of neglect by some absentee landlords it is being revitalized by Mooncrest Neighborhood Association and programs by the Felician Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

With few other World War II defense housing neighborhoods remaining, preserving Mooncrest by adding it to the register that lists significant historic properties is vital, says John McCarthy, Robert Morris University assistant professor of history.

“It’s not just the buildings themselves that are historically important. It is the context in when they were built. These people were working on the homefront and they were vital. Without the homefront in World War II, the war would never have been won. History isn’t just the story of presidents or wars. It’s the story of ordinary people like those that lived at Mooncrest.

“Robert Morris is excited about this opportunity to collaborate with these community groups. This is a way for organizations in Moon Township to work together to do something great in Moon.”

Grant applications for \$10,000 to \$20,000 to offset the costs of applying to the National Register will be submitted to the U.S. Department of the Interior in December and grant announcements could be made in the following months depending upon awarded funding.

The National Park Service administers the National Register that seeks to preserve cultural, historic and archaeological resources. More than 80,000 places make up the list including all historic areas in the National Park System and more than 2,400 National Historic Landmarks. If approved, Mooncrest would be the first listing for any residential community in the West Hills. For more information on the National Register visit [www.nps.gov/nr](http://www.nps.gov/nr).

Moon Area School District  
8353 University Boulevard  
Moon Township, Pennsylvania 15108  
412-264-9440  
[www.masd.k12.pa.us](http://www.masd.k12.pa.us)