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BUCKS COUNTY

Courier Times

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2025 | PHILLYBURBS.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

The Bucks County Peace Center in Langhorne which has promoted nonviolence education and activities in schools and the community since 1982 has announced it will not be closing operations after all. BUCKS COUNTY COURIER TIMES FILE

Bucks County Peace Center to remain open

Jo Ciavaglia
Bucks County Courier Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

A long-time Bucks County organization dedicated to promoting nonviolent solutions to conflicts has announced it will not close its doors following an outpouring of community support.

The Bucks County Peace Center in Langhorne announced Wednesday, Sept. 24 that it has rescinded earlier plans to begin phasing out its operations this month after more than 40 years.

The outgoing board of directors also announced that former Peace Center Executive Director Barbara Simmons will step back into the role starting Oct. 1. Simmons served as director for 29 years before retiring in 2020.

Simmons, who will serve on a voluntary basis, said on Wednesday that after the center's closure announcement last month she submitted a proposal to the outgoing board showing her plan to keep the center from closing and it was accepted.

She has already started fundraising and is looking at revamping some programs to expand interest including pivot to afterschool programming and offering continuing education credits for professionals.

Another goal for Simmons is dispelling misinformation about nonviolence education.

"These peacebuilding skills are interpersonal skills that will help (children) as they grow into adults," Simmons said. "If we are going to reduce violence in this country we need these programs for our children."

Simmons will be supported by a new incoming board of directors led by Barry Truchil, who has a long history with The Peace Center as a former board president and current member of the organization, the release said.

Outgoing Executive Director Danny Thomas notified supporters in August a "gradual phase out" of The Peace Center operations was set to start in September citing impending federal funding cuts for programs that "build peace."

Following the closure announcement, the Gene and Marlene Epstein Humanitarian Fund offered to match every donation to the Peace Center up to \$10,000 to continue its operations, through its "Building Peace: One Person, One School, One Community at a Time" campaign.

See PEACE CENTER, Page 4A

Ex-head of special ed sues Central Bucks district

Jess Rohan
Bucks County Courier Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

Alyssa Wright, the former director of pupil services at Central Bucks School District, has filed a federal lawsuit, alleging wrongful termination, discrimination and whistleblower retaliation in the wake of the Jamison Elementary child abuse investigations.

Wright was fired in August, having been placed on leave in May pending a third-party investigation into the allegations at the Warwick school. Central Bucks officials accused Wright of failing to report child abuse concerns and inadequate participation in the district's internal investigation.

No criminal charges have been filed against any Central Bucks employees related to the abuse allegations, and none are expected following investigations by law enforcement.

Two independent reports concluded that students were improperly restrained, and that those restraints weren't properly reported as required by state law. Staff with both the Pennsylvania Department of Education and nonprofit Disability Rights Pennsylvania, which has federal access authority to investigate public agencies on behalf of people with disabilities, investigated the Jamison claims and made findings.

**Ex-head of special ed
accused of failing to report
abuse in Central Bucks**

Central Bucks officials alleged that Wright failed her duty as a mandated reporter by not reporting child abuse concerns Nov. 14 after the support staff union president called her about concerns from personal care assistant Alyssa Kline, who worked in a special needs classroom at Jamison.

According to school officials' rationale for Wright's firing — included as an exhibit in her lawsuit — Wright was made aware of some of Kline's allegations on Nov. 14, and additional concerns on Nov. 15.

Wright was accused of failing to report abuse concerns to the state hotline, as school employees are legally required to do, and of failing to "alert Human Resources of the seriousness of the abusive techniques Teacher was utilizing against the students" to "assure the safety of students" in the classroom.

See ALYSSA WRIGHT, Page 2A

Proposal may replace Buckingham warehouse development plan

Michele Haddon
Bucks County Courier Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

Plans for the development of a new warehouse in Buckingham could soon be shelved.

Township officials announced that an alternative plan is under review that could end a years-long contentious battle over the redevelopment of the 58-acre DiGirolamo Tract.

The latest proposal would make way for the development of 40 single-family

homes, along with the preservation of 26 acres along Cold Spring Creamery Road — replacing the developer's original push to construct a 150,000-square-foot warehouse with 30 truck bays.

"This will be far less impactful on our roads and on our community," township Supervisor Paul Calderaio said in a statement posted on Instagram following the announcement. "While this proposal is in its early stages, I believe it's a positive step forward and more in line with the nature of our community."

For more than a year, plans for the

proposed warehouse moved through the land development process, meeting fierce criticism from members of Stop the Warehouse, a group formed by neighboring residents largely concerned about its impact on traffic, safety and the environment.

The warehouse plans was struck down in July of 2024. Township supervisors at the time voted 2-1 to deny the application.

Within a few short weeks of the decision, appeals were filed with the Bucks County Court of Common Pleas by Stop

the Warehouse and J.G. Petrucci Co. against Buckingham Township.

These filings have since been merged into one lawsuit. In August the three parties met with Judge Denise Bowman and agreed to explore alternatives, leading to discussions over the land's potential use for housing and open space.

Township solicitor Craig Smith said the new proposed option is currently in preliminary discussion stages and will require several steps for an agreement

See DEVELOPMENT, Page 2A

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