

A new trail connects Kennett Square attractions

-- By Sandy Farnan
For The Inquirer



AKIRA SUWA / Inquirer Staff Photographer

The new Red Clay Trail is a highway of enjoyment for a group of friends. From left, the strollers are Pablo Flores, 22; Anayely Segura, 18; Isaias Saucedo, 22, and Edwin Yair Saucedo, 1.

On a sunny Saturday in Kennett Square, a mother can drop off her toddler at the YMCA for T-ball and head to Nixon Park on foot. After her mind-clearing jog along the Red Clay Creek, she can return to the Y, pick up her child, and walk to the Kennett Pool.

Just last summer, this mother would have had to drive to all of these points, which are less than two miles apart. But now, with the Red Clay Trail, all residents have a new way of traveling through and connecting with their township.

The multipurpose gravel trail starts in Anson B. Nixon Park; crosses State Street; passes the YMCA, the Kennett Fire Company and the Kennett History Station; ends at the Kennett Pool; and leads to Kennett High School a block past the pool, all along a meandering branch of the Red Clay Creek on the east side of town.

"It's a great way of physically connecting the community," said Al Schmidt, president of the **Rotary Club of Kennett Square**. "It gives residents a way to traverse those areas in a safe environment. It's a nice leisurely walk through the hot spots of Kennett activity."

The **local Rotary Club** initiated the trail project as a centennial effort and committed \$10,000 to it. The club joined forces with the Red Clay Valley Association and the Kennett Area Park Authority, and also enlisted the help of three municipalities and various groups like the Brandywine Conservancy, Kennett Fire Company, Kennett Lions Club, and Kennett Masons, to form the Trail Committee.

The committee worked to acquire trail rights of way, to raise funds, and to engineer and build the trail. It also obtained easements for use of the land, some of which was privately owned, and permits to construct four bridges. They also had to move a sewer line and build a sewage pumping station.

The Red Clay Valley Association helped raise funds from Kennett Square, Kennett Township, and other public and private agencies and foundations toward the overall cost of more than \$900,000.

When the project started six years ago, a group of 25 or 30 volunteers spent their weekends building the trail. They scooped five or six feet of earth, layered bigger rocks underneath smaller rocks, and topped it off with a limestone dust that hardens when wet. The limestone-dust surface is believed to be softer for joggers than asphalt, and it was less expensive.

"We then covered the trail with fine gravel so that it maintains the rural and rustic character of the town," said Robert G. Struble Jr., executive director of the Red Clay Valley Association. He noted that the limestone path will need to be replaced every three to four years.