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Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Announces Recipients of 2021 Awards Program

(January 11, 2022) Each year, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful (KPB), a statewide nonprofit, announces the recipients of their recognition program for individuals, government, organizations and businesses whose efforts support and strengthen the mission of a clean and beautiful Pennsylvania.

“We are grateful for our volunteers and partners across the state whose dedication, commitment and exceptional contributions helped advance our mission and strengthen community improvement efforts statewide in 2021”, said Shannon Reiter, President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. “Each one is deserving of recognition.”

The **KPB Legacy Award** recognizes individuals who have made significant and tangible contributions to the organization’s mission. This year, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful honored **Ellen Keefe**, Westmoreland Cleanways and Recycling, for her personal and professional recycling and waste reduction contributions to the Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful organization and to the Westmoreland County community. Keefe retired in 2021 after 23 years of service.

The **KPB Volunteer of the Year Award** recognizes volunteers for significant and positive impacts toward keeping local communities clean and beautiful. The 2021 volunteers recognized include:

Larissa Gula – nominated by Allegheny CleanWays for her positive attitude, persistence and spirit of teamwork and community. Larissa has been a volunteer with Allegheny CleanWays since June of 2019 and has participated in 30 dumpsite cleanups with the DumpBusters program and 13 riverfront cleanups with the Tireless program. Additionally, she's taken part in several large group volunteer events to clean up litter from riverbanks and sidewalks of public rights-of-way.

Mike Kester – nominated by Keep Huntingdon County Beautiful for his sustained commitment to the affiliates recycling efforts. Mike has volunteered with each Tire Collection Challenge since 2017, bringing a positive, energetic attitude and relentless work ethic. Since Mike joined the Keep Huntingdon County Beautiful team, more than 7,500 tires have been successfully collected and recycled.

Jamil Rivera – nominated by PA CleanWays of Mifflin County for his continuous efforts to make the world a better place, including litter pickups and tire recycling. Jamil has been a valued volunteer of the affiliate for several years and enjoys finding rogue tires and recycling them. He enjoys the outdoors and takes pride in keeping it leaving it better than he found it.

Roger Austin – nominated by Keep Perry County Beautiful for his commitment, foresight and passion for the local community. Roger began volunteering with PA CleanWays in 1989 by lending a hand with a roadside illegal dump clean-up through the Adopt A Highway initiative and then the affiliate since its inception in 2009. He further propagates stewardship efforts by inviting Keep Perry County Beautiful into his classroom to give presentations and has supported the student sports teams as they complete their road-side litter clean-ups as part of the academic community service program.

Nancy Thorne – nominated by Westmoreland CleanWays & Recycling for her expertise, passion, energy, and excitement. Nancy removed a colony of bees from one of CleanWays' buildings to an apiary she built on the Westmoreland CleanWays & Recycling grounds. Nancy continues to provide supervision and maintenance of the bees and their hives and plans to assist the affiliate in developing bee related educational programs.

The **KPB Community Partner Award** honors outstanding partnerships with local government, community organization or business who enhance and are essential to local community programming. The 2021 recipients include:

Duquesne Light Company (DLC) – nominated by Allegheny CleanWays for being a valuable partner for more than ten years. This partnership provides support, through volunteer time and financial donation for The Tireless Project, the affiliates signature river cleanup program. For Duquesne Light Company it is an opportunity to fulfill their corporate social responsibility goals, provide team building for their employees and give back to the local community.

Evergreen Farms – nominated by Keep Huntingdon County Beautiful for supporting the 2021 Annual Juniata River Cleanup. In addition to donating their own time and money, Evergreen Farms contacted other local businesses and organizations to seek donations for the cleanup event. As a result, \$2,000 in donations were received to help cover the costs of trash and tire disposal as well as food and water for the volunteers. Thirty hardworking volunteers participated, removing 1,660 pounds of trash and 15 tires from a 2.5-mile stretch of the Juniata River.

Capital Region Water – nominated by Keep Harrisburg-Dauphin County Beautiful for their valuable nine-year partnership. Capital Region Water prioritized the construction of practical ways to address issues of storm water and litter accumulation, provided drivers and trucks to round up accumulated litter during the Great Harrisburg Litter Cleanup and provides street sweeping for the City of Harrisburg. Additionally, CRW advocates for the vision in the Heart of the Hill Community Action Plan which includes numerous physical improvement projects, green spaces and cleanups.

“It’s inspiring and humbling to learn what’s being done locally to improve neighborhoods and change behavior. Without our affiliates, volunteers and partners, our programs would not be possible. A big thanks to all of you! Your help and support is essential to our work,” said Reiter.

Award winners and their programs can be found at [keppabeautiful.org](https://www.keppabeautiful.org) under Grants & Awards. For volunteer opportunities choose Calendar of Events.

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About Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's vision is a clean and beautiful Pennsylvania. Since 1990, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful has worked with hundreds of thousands of volunteers across the state to pick up nearly 148 million pounds of trash from Pennsylvania's roadways, waterways, greenways, vacant lots, forestlands and other community spaces. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's core programming focuses on litter and illegal dump prevention, cleanup, community greening, and proper waste handling and sustainable practices. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful works with many partnering organizations on the state and grassroots level to accomplish our goal of a clean and beautiful Pennsylvania. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is the state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, Inc., the nation's largest volunteer-based community action and education organization. To learn more about Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, visit www.keppabeautiful.org.