



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stephanie Larson, Program Coordinator  
Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful  
Tel: (724) 836-4121 x104  
Email: [slarson@keeppabeautiful.org](mailto:slarson@keeppabeautiful.org)  
Web site: [www.keeppabeautiful.org](http://www.keeppabeautiful.org)

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## Young Ambassadors of Pennsylvania Program Graduates the Inaugural Class of 2023



(May 12, 2023) Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful celebrated the inaugural class of their Young Ambassador of Pennsylvania program during a virtual graduation ceremony. The program graduated its first class of 35 Young Ambassadors who committed to eight months of service, while representing and upholding the mission and values of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. Commencement speakers included Michael Carroll, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and Phoebe Coles, Board Chair of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. In attendance were Young Ambassador parents/guardians, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Directors, representatives from PA Department of Transportation and trainers and presenters from the various workshops including representatives from both Senator Rosemary Brown's and Senator Carolyn Comitta's offices.

The eight-month long program offered students opportunities for training and networking with industry leaders on topics related to the impacts of litter, litter prevention, waste management and recycling, civic engagement and related public policy, volunteer management and social media marketing. Students gained valuable experience by participating in Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's Litter Summit, the Keep America Beautiful National Conference, local media and more.

Young Ambassadors were required to conduct a community inventory and coordinate a litter cleanup and an educational program based on their community inventory results. In addition to building a sense of community among program participants, the Young Ambassadors also gained presentation and leadership skills, problem-solving experience and learned the value of partnerships and networking.

Here is what a few Young Ambassadors had to say about the program:

- I felt very proud to represent Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, but I also felt that I was a part of a community of students with diverse beliefs and backgrounds that all have a great desire to improve and beautify their community and environment. - Naomi Tzoanos, Grade 11, Owen J. Roberts High School
- My favorite session was the Policy Workshop because I learned about the inner-workings of environmental law and the plethora of career paths related to it. - Brady McNamara, Grade 11, Central Columbia High School
- It allowed me to dive deeper into the problems in my community and to find ways to solve them. - Corben Conklin, Grade 11, Athens Area High School
- I've gained skills in presenting and public speaking, as well as confidence in myself. I felt proud and accomplished. - Jaden Nixon, Grade 12, St. John Neumann Regional Academy
- I learned what it is like to become a leader. Being able to allow my community to learn more about our environment really opened my eyes on the fact that there is so much more that I can do. - Rese Schlameuss, Grade 11, East Stroudsburg High School South

"These students have shown the importance of local stewardship and engagement in improving our communities," PennDOT Secretary Mike Carroll said. "I commend these ambassadors not only for their work but also for the example they provide for Pennsylvania's next generation of leaders."

“Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is proud to honor our first class of Young Ambassadors. This program seeks to build community stewards and civic leaders by inspiring, engaging, and empowering young Pennsylvanians and I want to thank the students for sharing their ideas and allowing us to support them on this journey. I look forward to following their progress as they continue to implement change, locally and beyond, and wish them great success in their future endeavors,” said Shannon Reiter, President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. “I also want to thank the PA Department of Transportation for supporting the program. Their investment in this innovative program will have lasting impacts as these Young Ambassadors are the future.”

The program was recommended in the commonwealth’s Litter Action Plan announced by the Governor’s Office in November 2021 and is funded by PA Department of Transportation. Students were chosen through a competitive application process.

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful will be accepting applications for the 2023-2024 school year August 1. Visit [keppabeautiful.org](https://www.keppabeautiful.org) for information.

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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 155 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](https://www.keppabeautiful.org).