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Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Announces Recipients of 2023 Volunteer and Community Partners Awards

(February 7, 2024) Each year, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful (KPB), a statewide nonprofit that focuses on litter cleanups and community improvements, 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 2023," said Shannon Reiter, President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. "Each one is deserving of recognition."

The **Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Volunteer of the Year Award** recognizes volunteers for significant and positive impacts toward keeping local communities clean and beautiful. The 2023 volunteers recognized include:

Stacy Marinos, nominated by Allegheny CleanWays



Stacy Marinos (left in photo) has been volunteering with Allegheny CleanWays (ACW), on land-based cleanups and water-based cleanups, since 2022. Marinos volunteered a total of 54 times in the past two years and 33 times in 2023, always showing up no matter how challenging or how unpleasant the cleanup site might be. Since Marinos has volunteered with ACW so often, she is a huge asset on cleanup sites as she needs little to no instruction and helps them accomplish more than they would with just two crew members. Marinos not only volunteers with ACW but she devotes time to Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy helping to maintain

flower gardens around the city of Pittsburgh.

Kathy Frederick, nominated by Keep Allentown Beautiful



Kathy Frederick is a Litter Legend in the Lehigh Valley area. She does weekly cleanups throughout the year, usually solo, but on occasion with other volunteers. In April, she hosted her own Earth Day cleanup, Frederick and her group of volunteers fervently collected over 300 bags of trash and almost 30 tires! She also participated in Allentown's first ever competition-style litter event that was held in July. She and her group of volunteers out-picked four other teams by collecting the most trash in the Community and the Arts cleanup! In 2023 alone, she has

removed over 1,000 bags of litter from the streets of Allentown, and that's not including her cleanups in Bethlehem, Whitehall, and other Lehigh Valley areas.

Kelly McDowell, nominated by Keep Chester County Beautiful



Kelly McDowell (left in photo) began picking up litter in 2013 along a long stretch of Route 1 in southern Chester County. She coordinates the "Great American Cleanup of PA - Chester County" which hosts ongoing litter cleanups every spring on ALL weekends of the Pick Up PA timeframe from March 1-May 31. During her first pickup, she collected over 450 bags of trash, and to date, has collected over 11,114 bags of litter and 430 tires. Her cleanup season, which she has held annually since 2017, typically draws between 50-100 volunteers.

Jim Means, nominated by Keep Fayette County Green



Jim Means has a dedication and passion for recycling. Monthly, Means holds a recycling collection and a fall hard-to-recycle event for Wharton and surrounding townships, providing residents an opportunity to recycle. He has also spoken at and later launched a recycling program at the Mountain Area Senior Center. Means's leadership style fosters a collaborative and supportive environment, encouraging others to go above and beyond. His dedication and enthusiasm are contagious, and it is not uncommon to see others rally behind his recycling initiatives.

Fawn Contreras, nominated by Keep Northeastern PA Beautiful



Fawn Contreras (right in photo) is the Head of Youth Services at Valley Community Library where she uses her role to address beautification needs in her community. She regularly partners with Keep Northeastern PA Beautiful to hold cleanups in Lackawanna County and often has volunteer participants from the library. Contreras also partners with the local school to educate students about community involvement and beautification. Annually, she conducts group cleanups to celebrate Earth Day, National Cleanup Day, and even her Birthday and Mother's Day! Contreras has also participated beyond cleanups with Keep Northeastern PA Beautiful. She tables at the Lackawanna County Earth Day event and also spearheaded the Plastic Bag Recycling event recently held at the Jessup 9-1-1 Center which was sponsored by Keep

Northeastern PA Beautiful through a grant from Keep PA Beautiful.

Sante DeMichiel, nominated by Keep Perry County Beautiful



Sante DeMichiel, a resident of the Millerstown Borough, has been an active volunteer for the Perry County Conservation District since 2017. He has been a part of their 2017 Tire War, 2019 E-Cycling, 2021 Juniata River Cleanup, 2022 Shermans Creek Cleanup, 2022 Tire War, and the 2023 Tire War. DeMichiel made a huge impact and stood out at their 2023 Tire War event. DeMichiel helped take charge immediately hauling tires and was a great leader throughout the entire event. At the Conservation District, he is known as one of their favorite volunteers and is always willing to help whether it is assisting us at recycling events

or scavenging Shermans Creek for unwanted trash.

Randy Wilharm, nominated by Keep Royal Gardens Beautiful



Randy Wilharm (left in photo) is Keep Royal Gardens Beautiful newest project manager and community volunteer. Upon his arrival in July 2023, he was eager to participate in maintaining the green spaces of the community. He volunteered to manage their largest event "Villanova Day of Service" in which he supported over a hundred volunteers removing the overgrowth of vegetation throughout their flower beds. Wilharm and his wife Rebecca closed out the season by joining the "Fall -Love Your Park Event" as they honored Veteran's Day by volunteering in their memorial garden.

Robert Giron, nominated by Westmoreland Cleanways and Recycling



Bob Giron is a dedicated volunteer at Westmoreland Cleanways and Recycling. For more than two years, he has volunteered his time to help at the recycling center during their drop-off hours and has racked up hundreds of volunteer hours. Rain or shine, Giron helps unload customers' vehicles of the recyclable items they bring to the facility as well as processing the cardboard and paper items that customers drop off. He always wears a smile and greets the customer with kind words and maybe some quick wit! When Westmoreland Cleanways started accepting plastic containers for recycling, Giron was the first volunteer to

help direct their customers on what is and isn't accepted as they would drop off their plastic containers.

The **Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Community Partner Award** honors outstanding partnerships with local governments, community organizations or businesses who enhance and are essential to local community programming. The 2023 recipients include:

Public Lands Store, nominated by Allegheny CleanWays

Allegheny CleanWays (ACW) has partnered with Public Lands for the past two years. Four times a year, Public Lands sponsors a dumpsite cleanup, often bringing Public Lands employees to help, and invites ACW to share their mission and programs with customers. Public Lands also displays information about ACW with permanent signage at the store. This past Summer, ACW crew served as "models" for new products. Professional photos of ACW crew in Public Lands clothes and gear are currently used on their website (www.publiclands.com) and in promotional emails. Information about the nonprofit is featured on their website, as well. Public Lands contributed to the cleanup of 546 tires during a cleanup in February,

1,250 pounds of debris in April for an Earth Day event and 2,092 pounds of trash including 28 tires in September for Public Lands Day.

AJ Blosenski, Inc., nominated by Keep Chester County Beautiful

In August 2023, Save the Schuylkill, Litter Lifters of West Vincent, Green Valleys Watershed Association and other volunteers totaling over 100 participants and 50 watercrafts, partnered to clean a section of the Schuylkill River. AJ Blosenski, Inc. donated approximately \$4,000 worth of dumpsters and removal fees, including two dumpsters and their drop off and pick up. They also hauled 80 tires to a recycling facility for proper disposal and dumpsters full of improperly disposed of waste that was removed from the Schuylkill River and its banks across a portion of the river spanning between Chester and Montgomery counties.

Wildheart Ministries, nominated by Keep Dauphin County Beautiful

Love the Hill is an inner-city initiative of Wildheart Ministries for Harrisburg's Allison Hill. Part of their initiative is to help clean up illegal dumpsites in the City of Harrisburg. The cleanups are beneficial because they contribute to environmental conservation by removing various wastes, enhancing public safety, and fostering community engagement. These efforts will help restore the City's natural beauty, protect wildlife, and create a sense of pride and responsibility among residents. Additionally, addressing illegal dumpsites promptly can prevent further environmental degradation and potential health risks for the community. Their collective efforts have led to a significant reduction in unauthorized waste disposal across the Allison Hill neighborhood. Through community outreach and collaboration with local government, they've effectively raised awareness about responsible waste management, with the goal of improved environmental conditions and a cleaner, more sustainable neighborhood and City.

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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.keeppabeautiful.org.