



YOUNG AMBASSADORS

Class of 2023-2024

Graduation: May 14, 2024, at 7:00 PM



A program of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, sponsored by PA Department of Transportation.

Agenda

Welcome and Introductions: Kylie McCutcheon, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Young Ambassadors Coordinator

Young Ambassadors 2024 - A year in Review:

- Kalub Schreiber, 11th grade, Agora Cyber Charter School, Perry County
- Hetvi Shah, 12th grade, Bensalem High School, Bucks County
- Shaunak Neogi, 11th grade, Parkland High School, Lehigh County
- Michelena DeNaples, 11th grade, Scranton Preparatory School, Lackawanna County
- Maya Lin, 11th grade, The Grayson School, Delaware County

Guest Commencement Speakers:

- Michael Carroll, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
- Phoebe Coles, Chair, Keep PA Beautiful Board

Closing Remarks: Shannon Reiter, President, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful



Young Ambassador Program Goals

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful will:

1. Guide Ambassadors through a six-step process to implement change in their community.
2. Provide education and training on such topics related to the impact of litter on roadways, litter prevention, waste management and recycling, civic engagement and related public policy, volunteer management, and social media marketing.
3. Provide networking opportunities to not only build a sense of community within the program, but also to promote professional development of the individual Ambassador.



Young Ambassadors Class of 2023-2024



Young Ambassador Program Requirements

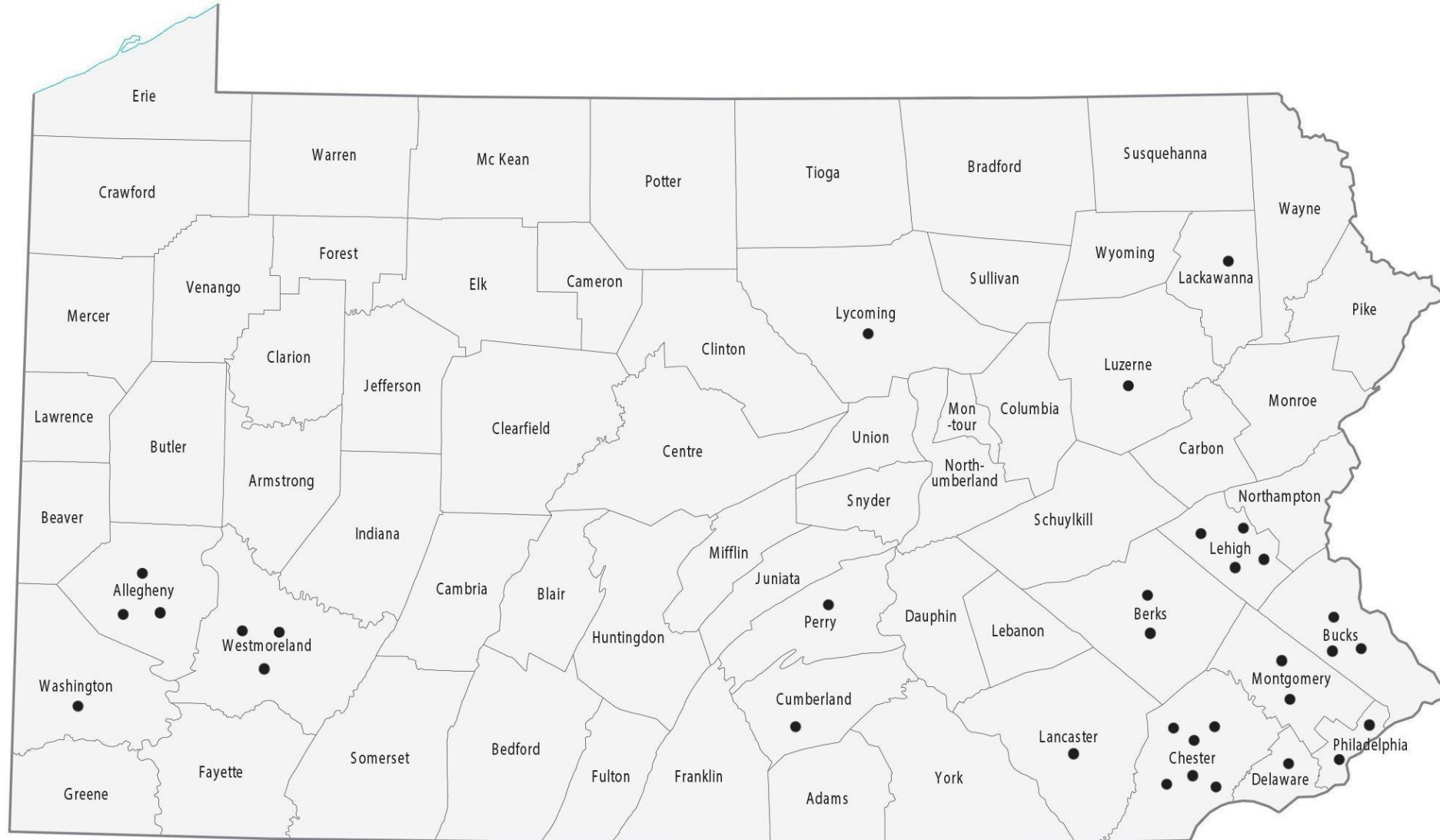
Young Ambassadors will:

1. Attend six virtual workshops.
2. Conduct a Community Assessment and make a slideshow showcasing it.
3. Conduct and report on one community cleanup.
4. Conduct and report on one community education event or activity.



2023-2024 Class of Young Ambassadors of PA,

33 students across 16 counties



Sample Learning Objectives and Assignments

Sample Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the Five Step Change Management Process.
2. Learn how to Conduct a Community Assessment.
3. Understand the Benefits of Outdoor Environmental Education and age-appropriate activities.
4. Learn how to organize and lead community events.

Assignments:

1. Conduct a Community Assessment
2. Conduct a Community Education Event
3. Conduct a Community Cleanup
4. Contribute to our Graduation presentation



Trainings and Guest Speakers

Orientation

- Kylie McCutcheon, Young Ambassadors Program Manager
- Natasha Fackler, Infrastructure Implementation Coordinator, PennDOT

Conducting a Community Assessment & Environmental Education

- Shannon Reiter, President, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful
- Rachael Stark, Keep Northeastern PA Beautiful, PA Environmental Council

Professional Networking

- Darius Davenport, Tri County Community Action, Community Planning Coordinator
- Lauren Pearman, Allegheny CleanWays, Education Coordinator
- Rob Dubas, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, Program Coordinator

Cleanup Safety Training and Sustainability at NiSource

- Sue Urchek, Program Coordinator, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful
- Carla Parkes, Senior Public Affairs Specialist, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania and Maryland
- Jesse Killosky, Natural Resources Permitting Coordinator, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania



Trainings and Guest Speakers

Networking with Texas and Florida Young Ambassadors

- Kylie McCutcheon, YAP, Affiliate Coordinator
- Corinne Pierce, YTA, Affiliate and Youth Programs Manager
- Karla Camacho, YTA, Communications Coordinator
- Bianca Ferrara, KFB YA, Program Manager

Leave No Trace Overview and networking with Texas, Florida, South Carolina and Virginia Young Ambassadors

- Kylie McCutcheon, YAP, Affiliate Coordinator
- Corinne Pierce, Affiliate and Youth Programs Manager and Karla Camacho, Communications Coordinator Keep Texas Beautiful
- Bianca Ferrara, Program Manager, Keep Florida Beautiful
- Cristi Lawton, Executive Director and Beckey Watson, Development Director, Keep Virginia Beautiful
- Mary Hannah Feeley, Public Relations & Outreach Manager, Keep South Carolina Beautiful

Invasive Species

- Maggie Hoover, Penn State, Wildlife and Fisheries Science Major
- Tim Byan, Whetzel Land Steward, Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania

Policy and Practice

- Michael Hartman, Chief of Staff, Office of State Senator Carolyn Comitta
- Natasha Fackler, Infrastructure Implementation Coordinator, PennDOT

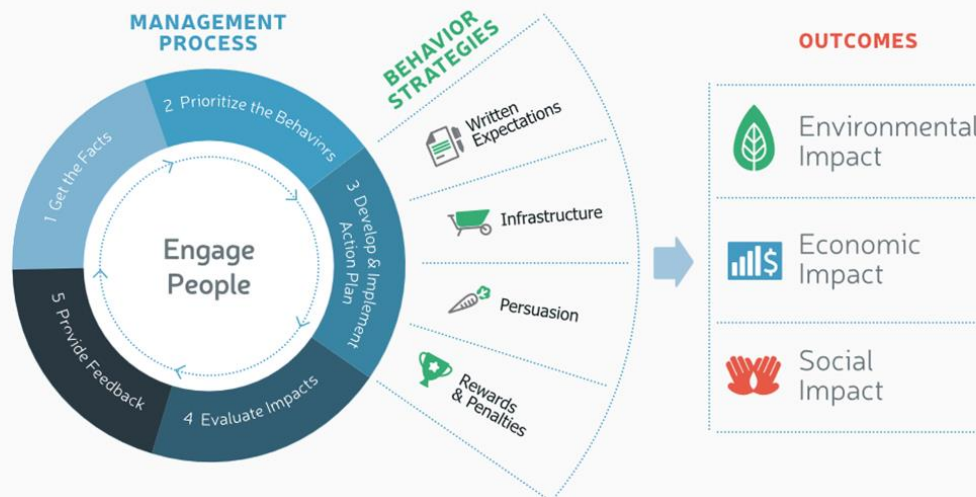


We Learned About and Conducted Community Assessments

Through a Community Assessment, Young Ambassadors began the five-step process of bringing about change in their communities. The first steps in the process is **ENGAGE PEOPLE** and **GET THE FACTS**.

Keep America Beautiful Model for Change

An Integrated Approach to More Beautiful Communities



Academically developed with decades of validation in the field, our behavior change system engages people at every step and results in sustainable change for the greater good.

Sample Community Assessments:

- **PennDOT's Adopt and Beautify Program**, Emilee Koch, 10th grade, Berks County
- **Greening and Beautification in Chester County PA**, Macie Burt, 11th grade, Chester County
- **Recycling in Parkland School District**, Tushar Mehta, 10th grade, Lehigh County
- **Invasive Species and Waterways Beautification** Cy Dixon, 11th Grade, Lycoming County



We Presented and Accepted Feedback on our Community Assessments from Policy Professionals

Policy Professionals

Michael Hartman, Chief of Staff, Office of State Senator Carolyn Comitta

Natasha Fackler, Infrastructure Implementation Coordinator, PennDOT

What did we Learn?

- I really enjoyed the community assessment in my school district. **It gave me a chance to investigate the current Recycling state in my school district** and opportunities for improvement. ~Tushar M.
- The community assessment was my favorite assignment this year, because it gave me insight about the incentives and stakeholders in my area. By evaluating these measures and providing ways that my town could improve, **I gained a sense of responsibility towards my town encouraging me to take action** even if its by simply contacting the stakeholders. ~Hetvi S.
- The work I completed on this assignment, was my favorite. **It opened my eyes to the major problems that can arise from something as simple as the clogging of storm water drains**, something I had never even considered before while I was out on the road. ~Shreyas T.
- Making a community assessment was interesting due to the research that went behind its creation. **Very interesting to see various of sources and studies on the topic of environmental harm by litter**, along with the discovery of more programs catered to break down litter. ~Nina H-D.
- My community assessment was very **enlightening for me as I was able to learn about my community** and their own personal efforts in understanding environmental issues. ~Michael H.



Community Assessment Example

Waste Reduction and Recycling in Bucks County Pennsylvania

The improper handling of waste can lead to pollution, health hazards, and ecological damage that could be remedied by stricter enforcement of laws, adequate infrastructure, and education about its solutions/sustainable alternatives.

Recycling can help maximize environmental and economic benefits, however only if the correct measures are taken to separate the recyclables, access to education on what exactly is recyclables based on regions, and increased availability of facilities that provide these services.



Target Community:
Voters, administrators, and
Stakeholders of Bucks
County, Pennsylvania

Stakeholders

Bureau of Waste management provides support and administers department's Solid Waste Advisory Committee, and manages the Recycling, Solid Waste Abatement and Waste Transportation and Safety Funds. Locating in Harrisburg, they have influence over various programs that manage municipal and residual waste planning and recycling programs.

Acting Bureau Director: Larry Holley (Phone: 717-787-9870)

- also oversees the division of waste minimization and planning

Program Development: Laura Henry (Phone: 717-787-9870)

Hazardous Waste Program: Tom Mellott (Phone: 717-787-6239)

At the Department of Environmental Protection, working on efforts to implement programs to prevent pollution and restore natural resources is being led by individuals such as:

Special Deputy Secretary Environmental Justice: Fernando Trevino

Deputy Secretary Waste, Air, Radiation, and Remediation: Ali Tarquino Morris

Director of Office of Environmental Justice: Justin Dula



Current Positive Aspects

Currently, some of the laws under Pennsylvania waste management bureau include Covered Device Recycling Act, Act 108 of 2010; Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act 108 of 1988; Household Hazardous Waste Funding Act 155 of 1994; Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste reduction Act, Act 101 of 1988 and Act 24 of 2010; and the RCRA (Resource Conservation and Recovery Act)



Recycling is a symbol of our dedication to a cleaner, healthier world. To be a mindful consumer of the natural resources gifted to us, we need to take care of them as a community. This can be done through following and spreading awareness about the already implemented laws dealing with the issue. Through the enforcement of these laws, we can ensure proper waste management and recycling systems.

By Hetvi Shah



Environmental Education Training Prepared Us for Our Events

Rachel Stark helped a lot! I was kind of clueless on how to start but I had plenty of ideas after the meeting. Teaching others about ways to start up a garden was super fun! It was surprising when others mentioned their knowledge on the topic and that they too have a garden themselves. **I'm excited to show my progress on the Pollinator Garden I will be creating soon with the others and cannot wait to use the knowledge given from everybody**, including all of you!
~ Kathryn B.

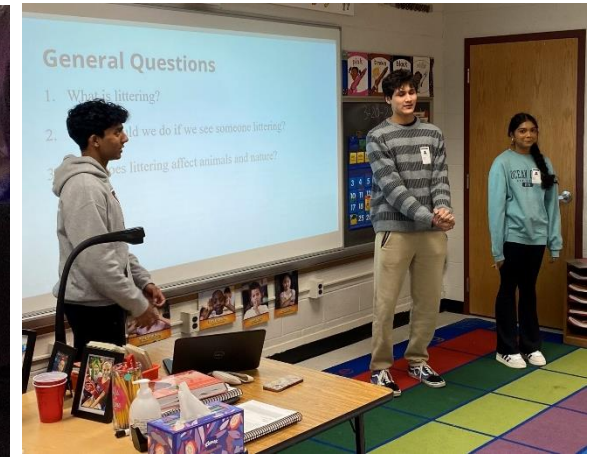
Rachel's advice on how to best interact and teach younger kids really helped me plan my event and execute it effectively. While planning this event I was surprised at all the positive feedback I received from everyone involved and during the event, other parents and volunteers were eager to participate which was awesome! **The kids really learned a lot and enjoyed the hands-on activities. It was a great, collaborative experience and Rachel's advice really helped me make it the best it could be.** ~Amelia D.



Lessons Learned from Conducting Education Events

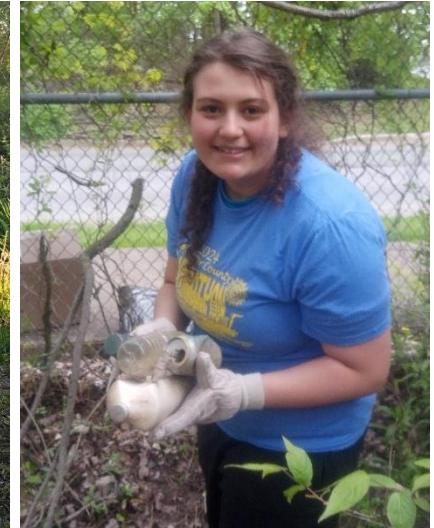
The education event was one of the most fun parts of being the Young Ambassador this year, because **I wouldn't have considered going to a fifth-grade classroom to teach more 70 students about ways to help the environment, otherwise.** It was quite eye-opening that opportunities to educate our communities can be so easily found. Also, the meeting with Rachel Stark proved to be especially beneficial in helping form an engaging presentation and even more engaging activity for the kids. ~ Hetvi S.

I felt as if the tips on presence and how to talk with your target audience came in handy. I also got asked questions that I had no idea about and we simply looked them up together. With my group we were all close in age so I did not feel pressure to know everything. I heard some great thoughts from other and overall it became educational for both them and me. Snacks also really helped reel them in attendance-wise!.~Fadila N.



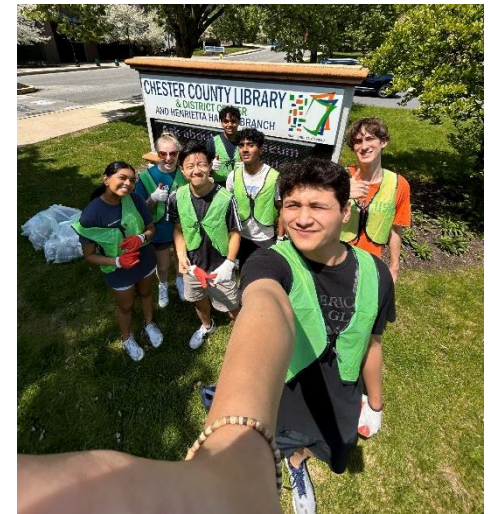
Cleanup Training Prepared Us to Host Safe Events

- My cleanup event gave me and others a fantastic opportunity to connect with one another. **We got plethora of types of work done (planting trees, flowers, cleaning up debris and trash) and it allowed all the different students to find something enjoyable to them!** ~Michelena D
- Ms. Intoccia guided me so much and taught me how to bring the importance of cleaning the side of the highways, especially near waterways, to the attention of the township. Sue Urchek really helped me to think about connecting to people in my community that can support me. **I realized you can't save the world by yourself, but if everyone worked together to a solution to help our trash problem, we can make a difference.** ~Kaelyn S.
- **Communication on what to remove and what not to remove was vital to my event**, as while litter removal was part of my event, the disposal of fallen limbs was also, which required communication with the land trust as to not over collect. ~David M.



Lessons Learned from Hosting Cleanup Events and How We Felt Afterward

- Hetvi and I had a difficult time planning this event as well as coordinating with other clubs, so it was a huge relief when everything worked out at the end. **I would have never considered scouting out the area we wanted to clean before hand, if it weren't for Sue Urchek.** Additionally, I didn't realize there were restrictions on disposing trash. ~Oluseyi O.
- Our cleanup event was very **engaging as well as educative** as we saw in person how much trash was truly around us. Normally, in day to day life, it's easy to glance over trash like this but this forced us to actually see it and fix the problem. ~Vedant B.
- From the pavement to the benches, we were able to transform the entire space to a more enjoyable area. **Due to its transformation, it turned out to be my favorite event.** The meeting with Sue Urchek was helpful in solidifying my ideas. ~ Michael H.
- I learned how to work better with others from this event! **The tire cleanup was something I could have not done alone, so having so many wonderful people come out and take part was amazing!** I felt so accomplished seeing the numbers after of everything we collected! Sue Urchek's knowledge was in the back of my mind, so I was always aware of what I should be doing. ~Kathryn B.
- The clean up event taught me a lot. When brainstorming with my friends how and where we specifically wanted to do our clean up event, **I realized how much our region had been affected by littering.** From parks to neighborhoods, all of us had an idea for a place that could use some help. This showed me that every clean up, from one piece to a million, is crucial. **After the event, I personally felt more motivated to change my own lifestyle to positively affect my environment's condition.** ~Shaunak N



Cleanup and Education Event Statistics

Cleanup events:

- Volunteers Engaged: 377
- Number of Bags of Litter Collected: 807
- Number of Tires Cleaned Up: 1172
- Number of Appliances Cleaned Up: 15
- Number of Greens Planted: 77
- Number of Invasive Species Removed: 275

Education events:

- Number of People Educated: 767



We Partnered with Many Different Community Groups

Cleanup Event Partners

- Rider Park Management
- Muncy Historical Society
- Lycoming County Audubon Society
- Allegheny CleanWays
- United by Blue
- School Clubs
 - FBLA
 - Red Cross Club
 - Community Service Club
 - Environmental Club (EcoOwls)
- Valley Forge National Historical Park
- Olive Leaf Sunday School
- Litter Lifters of West Vincent, Beth Intoccia
- The Westmoreland Land Trust
- Lackawanna Heritage Valley NHA Headquarters
- Perry County Conservation District
- Friends of the Wissahickon

Education Event Partners

- Various Schoolteachers and Board Members
- Litter Lifters of West Vincent
- Senator Comitta
- Upper Main Line YMCA
- Green Valleys Watershed Association
- Muncy Public Library
- The Bharatiya Temple - Bharatiya Cultural Committee
- Lackawanna Heritage Valley Association

Education Audience

- Students from Preschool to Grade 12
- Community Members



We Had Three Specific Networking Opportunities

- Professional Networking
- Peer Networking Sessions with Ambassadors from Texas, Florida, South Carolina and Virginia

The meeting about career networking was my favorite meeting to attend. Every speaker really brought their best forward and created a good space for questions. **This is a meeting where I realized the importance of connections.** I have heard people say small friends in big places and I now fully grasp that saying. ~ Fadila N.

My favorite session was when we got to hear from young ambassadors from other states. I enjoyed hearing the different topics and environmental issues compared to the ones where I live. I also liked to hear what they have accomplished.
~ Sophia P.



We Made Connections in Our Communities

- I'm thankful for the connections I've made and the good I've done through the YA program. **I'm making a difference in my community, and it feels great!** ~Kalub S.
- The program not only helped me gain recognition in the local newspaper and school, but it really made my close ones quite proud of me. **It was one of my best memories when my parents would flaunt my recognition with their friends and family.** The variety of education sessions were informative for me because it showed me ways to build my resume while learning. ~Hetvi S.
- **I trained with the National Park Services to become a certified trash-pick up leader.** I am now certified to conduct cleanup drives at Valley Forge National Park. I am looking forward to conduct many cleanup drives in this historic park! ~Tanisha A.

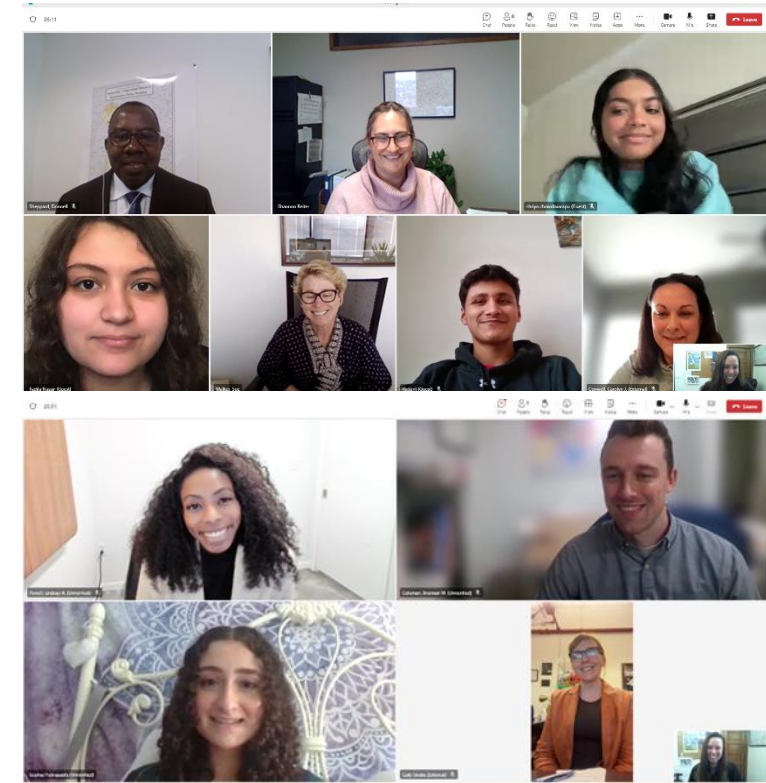


Representative Cooper and Senator Pennycuick gave citations to Young Ambassadors in their district. Khiết Lương from Valley Forge National Historical Park connected with Tanisha!



We Met and Spoke with Legislators

- I was able to meet Senator Comitta through the YA program and **I was able to schedule time to talk about future environmental legislation.** ~Emilee K.
- Because of the YA program I was offered the opportunity to meet with State Rep. Lindsay Powell to talk about the work I have done as a YA. ~Sophia P.
- I found out who ran things in Chester County and now feel more educated on the policies in place within Chester County. ~Fadila N.



State Senator Carolyn Comitta, U.S. Representative Chrissy Houlahan and State Representative Lindsay Powell spoke to students from their counties.



Job Shadowing with Columbia Gas, a NiSource Company

I think one of the best things I received from this program was the job shadowing opportunity I got to do at Columbia Gas! It was wonderful to get out and experience a day in the life of others who continuously work with their community and environment!! ~Kathryn B.

Students met with Environmental Coordinators and Engineers and visited active work sites. Young Ambassadors Riley Lepley, Maya Lin and Kathryn Boidock participated in this job shadow opportunity.



KPB received a Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence



“This year’s Environmental Excellence honorees showcase the innovative ways we can protect our environment and shape a more sustainable future here in Pennsylvania. Together we will spur the next generation of environmental stewards and these projects represent our ability to work together and preserve Pennsylvania’s natural resources.”

Jessica Shirley, DEP Acting Secretary

Photo, left to right: Tom Gilbert, President, PEC, Shannon Reiter, President, KPB, Jessica Shirley, Acting Secretary, PA DEP, Natasha Fackler, Infrastructure Implementation Coordinator, PennDOT and KPB Board Member, Kylie McCutcheon, Young Ambassador Coordinator, KPB, Brady McNamara, 2023 Young Ambassador Program graduate, Cindy Adams Dunn, Secretary, PA DCNR, Andrew Tubbs, VP of External and Customer Affairs, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania and Maryland and KPB Board Member attended the awards recognition dinner.





Congratulations Young Ambassador Class of 2024 and all the best for the future!



Tanisha Agrawal, Grade 12, Conestoga High School

Vedant Bedekar, Grade 12, Henderson High School

Kathryn Boidock, Grade 11, Bentworth Sr. High School

Macie Burt, Grade 11, Henderson High School

Shriya Chowdavarapu, Grade 11, Owen J. Roberts High School

Michelena DeNaples, Grade 11, Scranton Preparatory School

Amelia Depaul, Grade 10, Manheim Township High School

Cy Dixon, Grade 11, Muncy High School

Julia Gardone, Grade 12, Highlands High School

Yasmell Gonzalez-Perez, Grade 12, Parkland High School

Michael Harris, Grade 11, Penn-Trafford High School

Nina Harris-Drumwright, Grade 11, Agora Cyber Charter School

Mackenzie Hines, Grade 11, Springside Chestnut Hill Academy

Sareena Jackson, Grade 11, West Mifflin Area High School

Eric Jin, 12th grade, Parkland High School

Emilee Koch, Grade 10, Wilson High School

Katie Krieger, Grade 11, Greater Nanticoke Area Sr. High School

Riley Lepley, Grade 11, Mechanicsburg Area Sr. High School

Maya Lin, Grade 11, The Grayson School

Tushar Mehta, Grade 10, Parkland High School

David Muchoney, Grade 10, Franklin Regional Sr. High School

Fadila Nassir, Grade 10, B. Reed Henderson High School

Shaunak Neogi, Grade 11, Parkland High School

Oluseyi Oduntan, Grade 12, Bensalem High School

EzaBella Piccione, Grade 12, Boyertown Area Sr. High School

Sophia Pietropaolo, Grade 10, Plum Borough High School

Kalub Schreiber, Grade 11, Agora Cyber Charter School

Emelia Schwulst, Grade 12, Pottsgrove High School

Hetvi Shah, Grade 12, Bensalem High School

Kaelyn Stek, Grade 11, Villa Maria Academy

Shreyas Trivedi, Grade 11, Central Bucks High School South

Aaron Varghese, Grade 12, B. Reed Henderson High School

Scarlett Vesely, Grade 11, Norwin Sr. High School

