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Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Hosts Community Stewardship Summit in Scranton: Bridging Action, Infrastructure, Policy, and Innovation

(October 21, 2024) Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, in coordination with PA Department of Environmental Protection, PA Department of Transportation and PA Department of Community and Economic Development hosted affiliates, volunteers and community partners for a Summit for Community Stewardship.



Left to right: Natasha Fackler, PA Department of Transportation; Joy Beckish, Young Ambassador 2025; Grace Beckish, Young Ambassador 2023; Shannon Reiter, President, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful; Kristine Zeigler, CEO and Co-founder of Planet Women and keynote speaker; Kylie McCutcheon, Young Ambassador Program Coordinator, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful; Hannah Harvey, Young Ambassador 2025; Elijah Majocha, Young Ambassador 2023; Kalub Schreiber, Young Ambassador 2024 and Phoebe Coles-Wetzel, Board Chair, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.

The two-day event began with a walking tour of Scranton. Stations included stops at one of the city's 130 sidewalk planters to discuss year-round greening, the county's Gateway Building to discuss recruiting for long-term projects, Courthouse Square to observe two effective urban pollinator gardens, Christopher A. Doherty Park, a brownfield turned community asset and the Bee Mural by Matthew Wiley, to discuss the importance of art in urban areas.

The tour was followed by an evening reception where Scranton Tomorrow, an affiliate of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and America250PA partner, hosted Mayor Paige Cognetti for

a declaration signing supporting the Greatest American Cleanup, a national three-year campaign to motivate, educate and celebrate communities to clean up and green up ahead of the Country's 250th anniversary on July 4, 2026.

Keynote Speaker, Kristine Zeigler, CEO and Co-founder of Planet Women, examined the current leadership model in the U.S. and urged attendees to redefine leadership and tell newer, truer stories that are an antidote to inequality, despair, and environmental destruction. Zeigler was joined by three Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Young Ambassador alumni who shared their views on environmental leadership within their communities.

Other special guests included Dave Forsell from Keep America Beautiful, who spoke to the power of beauty as a means to addressing environmental quality, public safety, and job creation. Additionally, Bob Anderson from Closed Loop Partners provided insights on the evolution of community recycling infrastructure.

The Summit also featured breakout sessions on litter in waterways and marine debris infrastructure, an audit of volunteer litter control programs, education and economic levers to improve communities.

“We extend our heartfelt gratitude to state agencies, community leaders, affiliate partners, and stakeholders from across the state for participating in this year’s Summit for Community Stewardship. Celebrating our collective successes serves as a powerful reminder that each of us plays a vital role in maintaining the cleanliness and beauty of our communities. Through collaboration and the sharing of ideas, we can achieve so much more. It was truly inspiring to learn about the diverse perspectives, initiatives, and approaches aimed at enhancing our communities,” said Shannon Reiter, President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. “I hope it inspired everyone to continue the fight against litter.”

The 2024 Litter Summit was funded in part by PA Department of Environmental Protection and sponsored by Marathon, Sheetz, Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau, Pennsylvania American Water, Republic Services, Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds, Penn Turf, Inc., EarthPlanter, Scranton Area Community Foundation and SSI Schafer.

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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 158 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.