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**Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Announces Litter Hawk Youth Award Program Winners**  
~ Over 500 entries submitted ~



*Photo: Litter Hawk Youth Award winners recognized at a ceremony at the PA State Capitol Building.*

(April 7, 2025) Winners of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful’s Litter Hawk Youth Award program were recognized at a ceremony at the PA State Capitol Building on April 3.

Winning students, their parents, guardians and teachers, and legislators with winning students in their district, were invited to attend a ceremony honoring the Litter Hawk Youth Award winners and participants. Over 60 people showed up to support and celebrate the winners and their efforts. Shannon Reiter, President, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful; Phoebe Coles, Chair, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful; Ramez Ziadeh, Acting Executive Deputy Secretary, PA Department of Environmental Protection; and Christian Cassidy-Amstutz, Strategic Initiatives and Grants Manager, America250PA, provided remarks about the importance of educating youth about litter and antilittering behaviors.

The program, funded by the PA Department of Environmental Protection, provides a way for students in kindergarten through grade 6 to express their concerns about litter through art, words or video. Each participant completed a project specific to their grade level.

“Litter is gross. It pollutes streams, dirties our parks and highways, and it’s a problem that affects all of us – but it’s also something we can all do something about,” said Acting DEP Secretary Jessica Shirley. “The Litter Hawk Program is great because it is engaging kids to be good stewards and encouraging their friends, families, and neighbors to also be good stewards and help keep Pennsylvania beautiful and litter free.”

This year’s theme was *Join the Greatest American Cleanup! Show us how you can keep your community litter free for America’s 250th birthday*, in support of the Greatest American Cleanup, Keep America Beautiful’s 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. Program judges were excited to see so many thoughtful submissions illustrating positive changes towards reducing the amount of trash found in our parks, school grounds and along our roadways. Over 500 students participated in this year’s program.

First and second place winners in each grade level received certificates and a Litter Hawk decal.

**First Place Winners:**

Saffron Koch, Kindergarten – poster, Trumbauersville Elementary, Bucks County

Paislee Pliska, Grade 1 - poster, West Hempfield Elementary, Westmoreland County

Lili Dessler, Grade 2 - poster, Rowan Elementary, Butler County

Tanesha “Gia” Iyer, Grade 3 - poster, Queen of All Saints Academy, Lehigh County

Meradith Dillaman, Grade 4 - poster, Saegertown Elementary, Crawford County

Olly Declan-Kemmerer, Grade 5 - essay, Green Woods Charter School, Philadelphia

Olivia Levan, Mariah Posey, Aislyn Schultz, Grade 6 - video, Twin Valley Middle School, Berks County

**Runners-Up Winners:**

Abigail Kalista, Kindergarten - poster, Bishop Guilfoyle Academy, Blair County

Shaina KaPoor, Grade 1 - poster, West Vincent Elementary, Chester County

Maddie Griffin, Grade 2 - poster, Rowan Elementary, Butler County

Faith Hanusa, Grade 3 - poster, Ancient Paths Homeschool, Lancaster County

Cecilia Polvino, Grade 4 - poster, South Lebanon Elementary, Lebanon County

Anna May, Grade 5 - essay, Green Woods Charter School, Philadelphia

Juliet Reiter, Grade 6 - video, Upper Perkiomen Middle School, Montgomery County

“Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful extends a heartfelt thank you to all the students who participated in this year’s Litter Hawk Youth Award program. It has been incredibly rewarding to witness the thoughtful and inspiring messages in the hundreds of entries we received. Each project uniquely reflects the students’ experiences, values, and concerns. With over 500 entries, it’s clear that our youth are passionate about creating a cleaner, safer, and more beautiful Pennsylvania. A

special thank you to the families and educators who traveled to the state capitol, making the awards celebration truly memorable. Congratulations to this year's Litter Hawks! We look forward to seeing everyone again next year," said Shannon Reiter, President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.

Winning entries will be displayed in the East Wing Rotunda of the Pennsylvania State Capitol Building in Harrisburg through April 30. See photos from the awards ceremony at Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's [Flickr](#) page.

The Litter Hawk Youth Award program is offered annually. Pennsylvania students can participate individually or as part of a lesson initiated by schools, environmental clubs, scout groups or other organized groups.

To view winning entries and for more information about the program, visit <https://www.keppabeautiful.org/grants-awards/awards/litter-hawk/>. Winners will also be featured on Pennsylvania Beautiful's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/keppabeautiful/>.

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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 162 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](http://www.keppabeautiful.org).