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Grade: 5

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Celebrate America250 – Keep It Beautiful!

In 2026, America will turn 250 years old. When I think about that, I imagine how many people have lived here before me and how many will live here after me. I think the best way to celebrate America's 250th birthday is by taking care of the places we share every day.

I live in Pennsylvania, and I have seen litter in many places. I have picked up trash in my community, at the bus stop, at train stations, inside and outside the library, and at John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, Longwood garden, Museums, Campground. Sometimes the trash is easy to see, like plastic bottles or food wrappers. Other times it is small things, like straws or paper stuck in the grass.

One time at the bus stop, I noticed trash blowing around because there was no trash can nearby. At the library, I found cups and napkins left behind after people finished snacks. At John Heinz park, I was surprised to see trash near the water, where birds and animals live. Picking it up made me think about how litter can hurt wildlife and pollute the environment if no one helps.

Programs like Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful teach people that littering is not just messy it is harmful. The Litter Hawk reminds kids like me to look out for litter and take action, even when no one is watching. I like that the Litter Hawk is not about blaming people, but about protecting our communities.

I always try to throw away my trash, recycle when I can, and remind my friends to do

the same. Sometimes people walk by and say thank you when they see me picking up trash. That makes me feel proud and reminds me that small actions can inspire others. As we celebrate America250, we should remember that a clean country does not happen by accident. It happens when people care. If we want America to be beautiful for its next 250 years, we need to start now.

Keeping America beautiful starts with me, and I am proud to help keep Pennsylvania clean.