

Keep America Beautiful Announces Recipients of 2021 National Awards

STAMFORD, CT, UNITED STATES, August 30, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Keep America Beautiful®, the nation's leading community improvement nonprofit organization, has recognized 26 community organizations and individuals through its 2021 National Awards program.

The Keep America Beautiful National Awards program celebrates the work of its nearly 700 community-based affiliates, millions of volunteers and participants, and corporate and community partners for their commitment to end littering, improve recycling, and beautify America's communities.

Winners were selected in the following categories:

Individual Achievement Awards -- Lady Bird Johnson Award and Sue Smith Professional Leadership Award;
Innovation Awards -- State and Local Affiliate Innovation Awards;
State Agency Partnership Recognition Awards

"Recognizing and honoring our affiliates, state agencies, and individuals each year is so important, as they are the backbone of our daily work to clean, green, and beautify communities across America," said Keep America Beautiful President and CEO, Jennifer Lawson. "These awardees exemplify putting communities first, teamwork, and a genuine desire to ensure that everyone lives in a beautiful community. Congratulations and thank you to the 2021 award recipients!"



Sammy Romero is the recipient of the 2021 Lady Bird Johnson Award. This award is a gender-neutral recognition for an outstanding volunteer. Named after the former First Lady for engaging our nation in recognizing that aesthetic beauty is directly related to a better quality of life, the award is given to a volunteer for exceptional leadership with at least 10 years of service in helping their local community to become cleaner, greener, and more beautiful. Romero is a long-time volunteer of Keep Irving Beautiful in Texas. He began volunteering with KIB in 2006. In the words of his nominator, Richard Hose: "Sammy Romero embodies the 'unsung hero,' never seeking praise or recognition for the many ways he volunteers to help make his community a better place to live. Keep Irving Beautiful is privileged to count Sammy as one of our most loyal volunteers, one who is always willing to do whatever task needed to help make an event successful."

The Sue Smith Professional Leadership Award is named in honor of the former Keep America Beautiful Director of Education & Training and current Keep America Beautiful-Chicago Director. This award goes to an Executive Director of an affiliate (for at least 5 years) who has exhibited outstanding support of the Keep America Beautiful mission and Model for Change methodology. They inspire other affiliate directors, implement innovative Keep America Beautiful programs and initiatives in all impact areas, and provide leadership at the national level. The 2021 recipient is Chris Lash of Keep McAllen Beautiful in Texas. She has been part of the KAB network since 2001. Lash has been an employee for the City of McAllen for over 20 years and is now the Program Manager for KMB. In the words of her nominator, Claudia Gutierrez: "Chris Lash has elevated Keep McAllen Beautiful to a new level. She has launched new programs that help our community with beautification and litter awareness. She has helped grow existing projects within our organization while working on new ones. Through all her hard work and dedication, Keep McAllen Beautiful has become known statewide."

"Chris is the personification of perseverance. At the local, state, and national level, she has remained on mission through challenge and change," said Sue Smith. "She is deserving, and it is an honor to recognize her work and her leadership."

The Keep America Beautiful Innovation Award salutes affiliates that have created innovative partnerships and programs to further the mission of Keep America Beautiful. The Innovation Awards are intended to honor true innovation. These are unique ideas or methods and/or creative or non-traditional approaches to solving challenges. The Innovation Awards recognize new approaches that help facilitate growth within an organization. An innovative partnership or program may be original in concept or may be the development of novel and different methods of established partnerships or programs.

Innovation Awards for 2021 are awarded to the following:

Keep Ridgeland Beautiful (MS) - Local Partnership

Keep Orlando Beautiful (FL) - Local Program

Keep Indian River Beautiful (FL) - Local Partnership

Keep Coral Gables Beautiful (FL) - Local Program
Keep Charlotte Beautiful (FL) - Local Partnership
Keep Irving Beautiful (TX) - Local Program
Keep Brevard Beautiful (FL) - Local Partnership
Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful (GA) - Local Program
Keep Indianapolis Beautiful (IN) - Local Program
Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful (PA) - State Partnership
Keep Tennessee Beautiful (TN) - State Program

The Keep America Beautiful State Agency Partnership Recognition National Award honors state Departments of Transportation, Environmental Quality, and/or other state agencies for their support of Keep America Beautiful State Affiliates.

State Agency Partnership Awards for 2021 are awarded to the following:

Caltrans - California Department of Transportation - Keep California Beautiful
Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality - Keep Oklahoma Beautiful
Oklahoma Department of Transportation - Keep Oklahoma Beautiful
Oklahoma Turnpike Authority - Keep Oklahoma Beautiful
Oklahoma Forestry Department - Keep Oklahoma Beautiful
PA Department of Environmental Protection - Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful
PA Department of Transportation - Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful
TN State Parks - Keep Tennessee Beautiful
Tennessee Department of Tourist Development - Keep Tennessee Beautiful
TN Department of Transportation - Keep Tennessee Beautiful
Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks - Keep Mississippi Beautiful
Mississippi Department of Transportation - Keep Mississippi Beautiful
Mississippi Department University Extension - Keep Mississippi Beautiful

Congratulations to the 2021 National Award winners from Keep America Beautiful, and thank you for your hard work and commitment to ensure everyone lives in a beautiful community.

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