

EVERYDAY HERO Awards

2024 Recipients

Rocksey's Young Leadership Award (Grades K-12)

The Brighton School Senior Beta Club (Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish)



Members of The Brighton School Senior Beta Club exemplify environmental stewardship for their school and the surrounding community. For the past three years, they have participated in Love the Boot Week as their April service project, removing litter and beautifying a nearby neighborhood. The club also worked with Clean Pelican and two other schools on the Map it Clean project, which involved mapping litter, analyzing data, and presenting their findings to the Baton Rouge City Council. They are tomorrow's community leaders.

Named for Keep Louisiana Beautiful's beloved mascot, Rocksey the Raccoon, this award is presented to a student or student group in grades K-12 exemplifying environmental stewardship. They are passionate about keeping their community clean and beautiful and they recognize it is every citizen's responsibility to protect the environment. Their leadership in and outside of the classroom encourages their peers to reduce waste, recycle, and pick up litter when they see it. Associated with this award is a cash prize.

Litter Enforcement Award

Corporal Kenny Robertson (Pineville, Rapides Parish)



Corporal Kenny Robertson has served the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for 14 years, and currently is a member of the Honor Guard and Litter Camera Team. Specializing in litter enforcement, Robertson apprehends violators and litter bugs using high tech equipment at problem dump sites. Robertson is making a difference and setting an example for this team, issuing 20 gross littering citations and four intentional littering citations.

The Litter Enforcement Award recognizes law enforcement officers who actively work to stop littering in their community. They go above and beyond to educate the public about the negative impacts of litter, and they work to bring justice to those who break the law by littering or dumping illegally. Eligible for this award are police officers, LDWF agents, justices of the peace, constables, judges, and code enforcement officers.

Community Improvement Award

Restore Grand Isle (Grand Isle, Jefferson Parish)



Restore Grand Isle, led by Ronnie Sampey, has worked passionately to rebuild and restore the Grand Isle community, which has been devastated by hurricanes. Joining forces with other local groups, in 2024, Restore Grand Isle planted over 200 live oaks to replace the lost tree canopy. In addition to planting trees, Restore Grand Isle has worked to plant Louisiana irises and establish a community garden. Restore Grand Isle believes in uniting the people to sustain a better community and environment for all.

The Community Improvement Award recognizes a project, program, campaign, or initiative in alignment with the mission and work of Keep Louisiana Beautiful. The effort should demonstrate innovation, collaboration, and measurable community improvement. Eligible are for-profit and non-profit organizations, Keep Louisiana Beautiful Affiliates, schools, and civic groups. Associated with this award is a cash prize.

Clean Biz Leadership Award (less than 50 employees)

Capital Area Corporate Recycling Council (Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish)



CACRC promotes environmental leadership and access to technology through responsibly recycling electronics and keeping toxic electronic waste from landfills. In 2023, CACRC recycled 1,644,365 pounds of E-Waste, completed 728 commercial pickups, and revived a total of 4,618 computers. These restored computers are offered at a low cost to those who cannot afford new computers.

The Clean Biz Leadership Award is granted to an organization that has demonstrated dedication to Keep Louisiana Beautiful's mission and has adopted operational practices to support a cleaner, greener community. The organization may have implemented policies and procedures for recycling, waste reduction, and litter prevention. The business may also support community improvement through sponsorship, volunteerism, programming, and other relevant initiatives. Eligible are for-profit and non-profit organizations with less than 50 employees.

Clean Biz Leadership Award (more than 50 employees)

LyondellBasell (Lake Charles, Calcasieu Parish)



LyondellBasell (LYB) is committed to reducing plastic waste and litter in Lake Charles, and they strive to develop sustainable solutions in their daily operations. At LYB sites last year, employee-volunteers launched a site-wide recycling program that has collected over 10,000 lbs of material. More than 30 employees also participated in a *Love the Boot Week* event. LYB also collaborated with partners to transform the Lock Park into a new all-inclusive place of play for children.

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Chamber Clean Biz Leadership Award

Jeff Davis Chamber of Commerce (Jennings, Jeff Davis Parish)



The Jeff Davis Chamber of Commerce has championed the Clean Biz Partnership, promoting a culture of environmental responsibility among their business community. Currently, 18 of the chamber's members have joined KLB's Clean Biz Partnership. This past year, their chamber had the highest percentage of their membership sign up as Clean Biz Partners compared to all 38 participating chambers.

The Chamber Clean Biz Leadership Award is presented to a Chamber of Commerce for their dedication and involvement in Keep Louisiana Beautiful's Clean Biz Partnership. They have worked diligently to promote the program and recruited the largest percentage of members. Through their work, they emphasize the importance of keeping Louisiana clean and beautiful to support healthy economic development and an exceptional quality of life.

Outstanding Community Affiliate Award

Keep Livingston Beautiful (Albany, Livingston Parish)



Keep Livingston Beautiful (KLB), led by Lynda Gardiner, and the parish work diligently to combat litter and illegal dumping on roads and waterways, devoting an entire paid department to the effort. KLB mobilized 1,091 volunteers to remove 200,082 lbs of litter from roadways and waterways. The organization also recycled an impressive 500,000 lbs of materials. During a parish dump day, 180,000 lbs of litter and debris was collected in just eight hours.

The Outstanding Community Affiliate Award is presented to a Keep Louisiana Beautiful Community Affiliate that has made significant strides in the past year in making their community a cleaner, greener place to live. The recipient organization demonstrates strength in leadership by engaging key stakeholders and volunteers in collaborative initiatives with a measurable impact. The community served by the Affiliate is a better place to live thanks to the ongoing efforts of the organization. Associated with this award is a cash prize.

Outstanding University Affiliate Award

Keep UNO Beautiful (New Orleans, Orleans Parish)



Keep UNO Beautiful, led by Carol Lunn, has been growing sustainability efforts on campus year after year. The Affiliate is committed to planning Earth Day events, organizing litter cleanups, sponsoring campus mural projects, planting native gardens, working to reduce campus waste, and maintaining UNO's status as an Arbor Day Foundation "Tree Campus." Keep UNO Beautiful also received KLB grants to install water bottle refill stations and to mark storm drains.

The Outstanding University Affiliate Award is presented to a Keep Louisiana Beautiful University Affiliate that has demonstrated strong leadership and a growing presence in their campus community. Not only have the efforts of the Affiliate resulted in visible and measurable changes, but they've also led to a cultural shift, with more students, faculty, and staff committed to reducing waste, preventing litter, and improving the appearance of their campus. Associated with this award is a cash prize.

Collegiate Environmental Steward Award

Katie Buc; Loyola University New Orleans (New Orleans, Orleans Parish)



Over the past two years, college student Katie Buc has been committed to reducing waste and litter on the Loyola University campus, volunteering over 114 hours. With Food Recovery Network, she supported the diversion of 1,620 lbs of food from the landfill to the New Orleans Mission. She also helped the university become a KLB Affiliate and secured a KLB trash receptacle grant for ten trash receptacles to reduce litter on campus. These are just a few of her many contributions that have left a lasting impact.

The Collegiate Environmental Steward Award is presented to a college student or student group going above and beyond to make their campus community clean, sustainable, and beautiful. Their campus involvement and leadership have led to measurable change and inspired others to volunteer. The recipient embodies vision, leadership, determination, and collaboration. Associated with this award is a cash prize.

Leaders Against Litter Award

Dr. Gretchen L. Vanicor & University of Louisiana at Lafayette Sustainability (Lafayette, Lafayette Parish)



For over 10 years, Dr. Gretchen L. Vanicor has served as Director of Sustainability at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, implementing a zero-waste strategy, improving recycling diversion by over 1,200%, and creating an award-winning Green Infrastructure Master Plan. In 2021, along with KLB, she helped secure a \$500,000 EPA grant to create the KLB University Affiliate network, and she has served on the KLB board of directors since 2022. Dr. Vanicor has left a lasting impact on not only her university, but the state of Louisiana.

The Leaders Against Litter Award recognizes individuals in public service who go above and beyond the call of duty to support Keep Louisiana Beautiful's mission to clean up and beautify our Sportsman's Paradise. The recipient of this award inspires and empowers others to follow their lead and work towards achieving a cleaner, greener Louisiana. To be eligible, an individual must work in public service: police officer, firefighter, educator, librarian, government employee, elected official, etc.

Let Louisiana Shine Volunteer Award

Frances Guillory (St. Landry Parish)



Frances (Fran) Guillory has been a board member of Keep Eunice Beautiful for ten years. She has helped plan and participated in every event, including litter cleanups, recycling events, beautification projects, and outreach events. Additionally, Fran has been active with the Eunice Community Garden, helping to maintain and grow the garden. Fran goes out every day to pick up litter, take down illegal signage, and weed/water gardens downtown and at local parks.

The Let Louisiana Shine Award, named in celebration of Keep Louisiana Beautiful's statewide litter prevention campaign, is presented to a passionate volunteer who has dedicated their time and energy to community enhancement efforts. They may contribute by collaborating with community organizations and stakeholders to clean up litter, beautify spaces, and contribute to an improved quality of life for their fellow residents. Associated with this award is a cash prize.

Let Louisiana Shine Volunteer Award

Devin Schexnayder (St. James Parish)



After seeing plastic bags, glass, and other waste in local wetlands, Devin reactivated the Society of Wetland Scientists at LSU and subsequently started GEAUX RECYCLE, a drop-off recycling initiative on both LSU campuses and in St. James Parish. Starting with glass recycling, Devin formed a partnership with Glass Half Full. With stakeholder support, he expanded the program to collect plastic and aluminum. During his leadership of the project, 8 tons of glass, and 1,000 lbs of both plastic and aluminum were diverted from landfills.

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Alice Foster Award

Venise Ortego (Lafayette Parish)



Venise Ortego has been a constant ally and advocate for Keep Louisiana Beautiful (KLB) over the last 15 years. Her guidance and leadership helped KLB become the movement that it is today. As the environmental educator for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), Venise was tasked with monitoring KLB's contract for the state. It was a job Venise took very seriously. What might have started as a simple contract monitoring task developed into a personal passion and a huge investment of her time and focus. When the litter abatement mandate moved between state departments, Venise was there to guide KLB. She donated countless hours of her time counseling and offering advice that ultimately resulted in the litter mandate being placed in the Office of Lt. Governor. Venise served as a member of the KLB Advisory Board until she retired from the state, and at that point, she joined the KLB Board of Directors.

Serving as Chair of the KLB Board Education Committee, Venise was instrumental in helping KLB create and implement the litter education program and lesson plans, as well as leading efforts to expand youth education. In addition to the work Venise did for KLB, she led the state's environmental education efforts, serving as Coordinator of the Environmental Education Commission. In this role, she conducted an environmental education symposium every year for hundreds of science teachers, awarded and managed a grants program, and coordinated a youth art contest in an effort to elevate the importance of caring for our environment and the creatures living in it. Her work has directly impacted hundreds, if not thousands, of students and teachers.

Venise's other achievements include bringing the U.S. Department of Education's "Green Ribbon Schools" program to Louisiana and starting the Green Schools Grants Program. She also secured multiple grants to support environmental education from organizations such as EPA and B-WET. She led the creation of the first Environmental Literacy Plan for Louisiana. She also chartered the Louisiana Coastal Fellowship project, which began engaging teachers in generating and sharing environmental phenomena with others in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Education. Venise's contributions to the State of Louisiana are endless and we are indebted to her for her years of tireless servitude.

This is the most prestigious Everyday Hero award named in honor of our state's former First Lady, Alice Foster, who played a significant role in establishing the Keep Louisiana Beautiful organization for a cleaner, greener Louisiana. The Alice Foster Award is presented to an individual who embodies the mission of Keep Louisiana Beautiful through their advocacy and leadership, and whose life's work has left a legacy in their community. They are well respected by their peers, and they have influenced others to support their mission-driven work.