



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 22, 2025**

## **FAYETTE COUNTY RECYCLING VOLUNTEERS HONORED FOR THEIR EFFORTS**

**Uniontown, PA** – Fayette County Recycling Coordinator and Stormwater Manager Sheila Shea got to shine a light recently on a group of her most dedicated volunteers and was herself honored for her efforts.

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and its local arm, Keep Fayette County Green, recognized Dave Rice, Luke Hamaker, and the Fayette County Association of Township Supervisors and Fayette County Boroughs for their work toward keeping the county a clean and beautiful place to live.

Rice was honored as a Volunteer of the Year for his recycling work in Wharton Township.

Shea, who nominated the Fayette County awardees, said Rice has lived in the county for only a few years but has managed to make an impact with his dedication to his community.

“It was very appreciated,” Rice said of the award. “It’s just a little part of giving back to my community.”

Rice said he and his wife moved to the county in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. He had helped with recycling in his small town in Colorado, so he opted to continue his efforts here. He dedicates four hours a month to recycling in Wharton Township, also volunteering during the township’s cleanup day and the annual Hard to Recycle event.

“It’s not a huge chunk of time, and it does help out the community I live in,” he said.

Hamaker received a Stewards of Tomorrow Youth Award. Shea called the Smock 10-year-old “an amazing little boy” and said he has a love of recycling.

Luke’s mom, Melissa, said her son has been recycling for “at least three years,” with no prompting from family members.

“That’s just all Luke. He just found a passion for it,” she said.

Last year, Hamaker partnered with Keep Fayette County Green and Franklin Township to enter the NexTrex Challenge, which entails collecting plastic bags that recycling company NexTrex can then turn into benches. According to the NexTrex website, it takes about 1,000 pounds of plastic bags to create a single bench. With the help of donations from people and organizations around the area, Hamaker collected about 7,000 pounds of plastic and donated six benches for the community.

Melissa said her son's fascination with recycling "started with his love for garbage trucks at age 5." A tour of a recycling center for his 10<sup>th</sup> birthday only fueled his passion further. Melissa said Luke enjoys recycling everything and also collecting scrap metal. He also helps his neighbors with yard work and snow removal, and Melissa said he is looking to start a Smock Clean-up project soon to dispose of some discarded tires.

County townships and boroughs were honored as Community Partners for such efforts as their partnership with Keep Fayette County Green for four mountain area cleanups that yielded 1.5 tons of household recyclables, six tons of scrap metal and more than eight tons of televisions and other electronics.

"I nominated all of the townships and boroughs," Shea said. "If it wasn't for their partnerships, we wouldn't be getting the numbers we have with all these green bins. I'm so thankful for them, and I appreciate all they do to help keep the county green."

They appreciate her right back – so much so that North Union Township Supervisor Ron Landman and Bullskin Township Supervisor Chris Ohler spearheaded a campaign to get Shea some recognition of her own. They contacted local representatives and presented her with citations recognizing her recycling work.

"I was totally shocked. I was just doing my job, you know," she said. "It made me cry. Just knowing they appreciate me – I was a ball of emotions."

To learn more about Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, visit [www.keppabeautiful.org](http://www.keppabeautiful.org).

To learn more about the Fayette County recycling program, including upcoming events, follow "Fayette County Recycling Convenience Center" on Facebook.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit [www.fayettedcountypa.org](http://www.fayettedcountypa.org).

###

*This communication is part of the Fayette County PR Initiative, which is funded through the Fayette County Local Share Account (LSA) and Hotel Tax Grants in cooperation with the Fayette County Board of Commissioners, Fayette Chamber of Commerce, The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Fayette, The Redstone Foundation and other partners. This funding has been designated for the continued promotion and marketing of Fayette County, PA.*

For more information, contact Kristi Kassimer Harper, Public Relations Specialist, at 724-437-4571, [kkassimer@fayettedcountypa.info](mailto:kkassimer@fayettedcountypa.info) or Jamie Rankin, Journalist, at 724-437-4571, [jamierankin13@gmail.com](mailto:jamierankin13@gmail.com).