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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local Students Collaborate with Lake Hopatcong Foundation on Digital Stories for Smithsonian

Lake Hopatcong, N.J. (January 14, 2021) The Lake Hopatcong Foundation has been selected to participate in Smithsonian's Stories: YES program. The program provides funding and resources to assist young people across the country to discover and digitally document their community's unique history.

The project will be a collaboration between students from the Academy for Environmental Science at Jefferson Township High School and the Lake Hopatcong Foundation. Academy students, Veronica Carrion, Kailey Pasquariello, and Matthew Sinchi will develop three short videos that will examine the environmental, economic, and social impacts of the widespread 2019 Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) on Lake Hopatcong. This ties in with the theme of the Smithsonian's Water/Ways exhibition, which the Foundation hosted in 2019.

"The Lake Hopatcong Foundation is delighted to provide this unique storytelling opportunity to local students about this unprecedented event," said Lake Hopatcong Foundation Grants and Program Director Donna Macalle-Holly. "We are pleased to continue to collaborate with the Smithsonian Museum on Main Street to educate the public about the importance of protecting our waterways."

In preparation for this project, the student team is seeking photographs and video of the 2019 HAB event for possible use in the digital stories. Submissions can be emailed to yesstories@lakehopatcongfoundation.org

"Stories: YES is an incredible program that motivates students to learn about their communities, document local history, and foster important discussions about their community's future," said Smithsonian's Stories: YES Program Coordinator Sydney Thatcher. "The Academy of Environmental Science students have already been hard at work on this project and I am looking forward to seeing what story they have to share."

The student project will be showcased in a virtual program hosted by the Foundation this spring and on Museum on Main Street's website, <https://museumonmainstreet.org>.

"By presenting this story in our YES video, we aim to show the full effect the HAB had on the lake and community," said Matthew Sinchi. "We hope showing the many hardships caused by the HAB will encourage people to take action to protect our waters."

Funding for Stories: YES is generously provided to Museum on Main Street (MoMS) with internal Smithsonian Institution support from the Smithsonian Youth Access Grants Program. MoMS is a partnership between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) and state humanities councils. It was created to serve museums, libraries, and historical societies in rural areas, where one-fifth of all Americans live. SITES has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for over 65 years. It connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science, and history, which are shown wherever people live, work and play. For more information, including exhibition descriptions and tour schedules, visit www.sites.si.edu.

The Lake Hopatcong Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to protecting the lake environment and enhancing the lake experience by bringing together public and private resources to encourage a culture of sustainability and stewardship on and around New Jersey's largest lake, for this and future generations. To learn more, visit lakehopatcongfoundation.org.

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