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Students to premiere digital stories on Lake Hopatcong HAB for Smithsonian

Lake Hopatcong, N.J. (May 20, 2021) The Lake Hopatcong Foundation will premier three student short videos during an online program on Tuesday, May 25, at 7 pm.

The videos examine the environmental, economic, and social impacts of the widespread 2019 Harmful Algal Bloom on Lake Hopatcong. They were created by Academy for Environmental Science students, Veronica Carrion, Kailey Pasquariello, and Matthew Sinchi in a collaborative effort with the Lake Hopatcong Foundation. The project was supported by the Smithsonian *Stories: YES* program, which encourages young people across the country to engage with their communities to discover and digitally document their unique history.

"Working on the *Stories: YES* project has been an incredible experience. We not only got to learn about the algae bloom itself but the community and the many different parts of it that were affected," said Carrion. "We're so excited to share everything we learned through our videos."

Sinchi and Pasquariello conducted and filmed multiple interviews for the project including conversations with the mayors from all four towns around Lake Hopatcong. Carrion took the lead on transcribing the interviews, developing the script, and editing the three videos. The students worked under the guidance of LHF Grants and Program Director Donna Macalle-Holly and Academy for Environmental Science Teacher Dr. Nancy FitzGerald.

"We are proud to share the final product with the community," stated Macalle-Holly. "The student team did an amazing job, and we are hoping to see a great turnout on May 25 as they showcase what they have accomplished."

The program will run live on the Lake Hopatcong Foundation's [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

After the live premiere, the student project will be available for viewing on the Foundation's [YouTube channel](#). It will also become a permanent part of Smithsonian's Stories: YES collection on Museum on Main Street's website, museumonmainstreet.org.

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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Academy for Environmental Science students Kailey Pasquariello and Matthew Sinchi interview Hopatcong Mayor Mike Francis for their Stories: YES project.