

The 2022 Berkshire County Hexagon Project



It is with gratitude and humility that we acknowledge that we are learning, speaking, and gathering on the ancestral homelands of the Mohican people, who are the indigenous peoples of this land. Despite tremendous hardship in being forced from here, today their community resides in Wisconsin and is known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. We pay honor to their ancestors by continuously aiming to better understand and integrate their history into school curricula. We show respect to their descendents by engaging with their living culture, which has endured the repercussions of the westward diaspora. We acknowledge that the place names of our rivers, towns, roads, and landmarks have significant meaning to the Stockbridge Munsee Community and we strive to know, understand, and respect their origin. We understand that our privilege has allowed us to live and learn here as a result of broken promises, unfair negotiations, and racist mindsets and we address the need for awareness, visibility, and advocacy. As we make progress regarding restorative justice practices in education, we commit to building connections, understandings, and partnerships to provide a more inclusive and equitable space for all.

Dear Students, Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers,

We invite you all to participate in the 2022 Hexagon Project, together with us. The Hexagon Project is an arts integration project taking place in social studies, ELA, science, and art classes at Mount Everett and all over Berkshire County. The hexagon shape will serve as a template on which we will create art in response to learning about local, indigenous history and culture, and connections to place and people. On October 7th, 2022, students from Southern Berkshire, Berkshire Hills, Lenox, Lee, Pittsfield, North Adams, Waldorf, Berkshire School, and Montessori will exhibit their hexagons in a mural installation in Great Barrington, at the starting point of the Indigenous Peoples' Day Ceremonial Walk.

Please join us in learning from and with each other in the following activities:

Intergenerational Interaction: Students will interview an elder they are close with. Please record the interview (I've used VoiceRecorder before and found it to be easy but use whatever you have access to) so that students can better transcribe the stories.

Origin Stories: Illustrate an indigenous origin story or one that you learned from your elder. We will look at topographic and other maps to understand how the land influenced the native ways of life.

Design a wampum belt: Students will learn what wampum was used for before and after colonization. They will learn about Mohican life in the past in the Berkshires, and their present life in Wisconsin. Their task is to design a belt to be given to their people from our people here.

Hexagons: The final hexagon design will be a response to any of the project lessons in the form of illustration and/or collage. They must be 2-dimensional so that they can be laminated to withstand the elements of nature. Hexagons due to Ms. Graham by October 4th.

October 7th, from 2:00 - 4:00 - Join us at the gazebo behind Town Hall in Great Barrington for our opening reception! Refreshments will be served. This is a half day of school—after your child arrives home, please accompany them to Great Barrington and partake in the *optional* celebration! Representatives from the Stockbridge Munsee Community are excited to meet you!

Many thanks,

Steph Graham
sgraham@sbrsd.org

Intergenerational Interaction–Interview an Elder

Name of Interviewer:

Name of Interviewee:

Questions –

1. What is your name, age, and place of residence?
2. When did your family come to this place? What was their journey like?
3. Who had the biggest influence on you as a child? Why?
4. What was/is your relationship to the land? (Play, work, food, etc.). Can you recall a story about an experience you had?
5. Do you remember any stories your Grandparents told you?

6. How do you connect with people in your family? What do you do to show them you care?

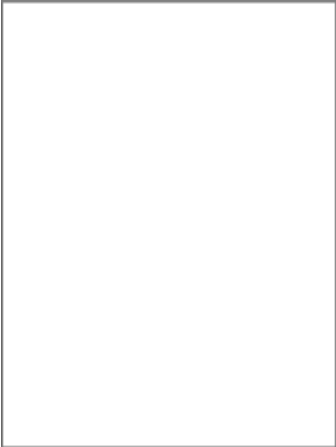
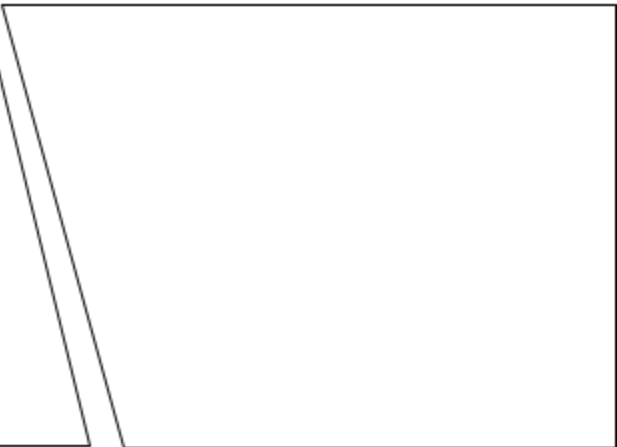
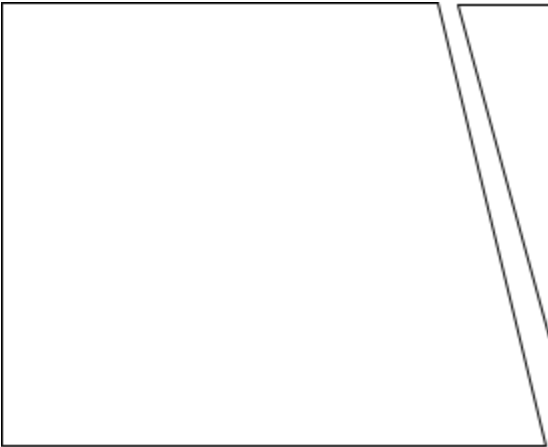
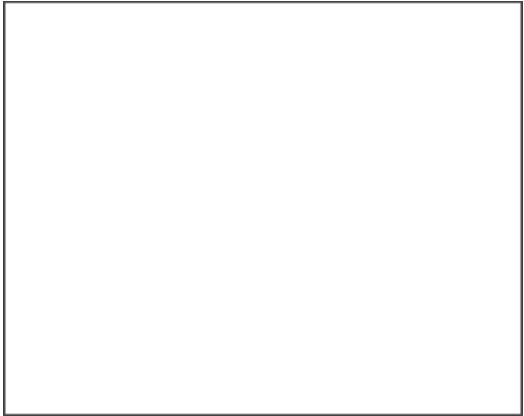
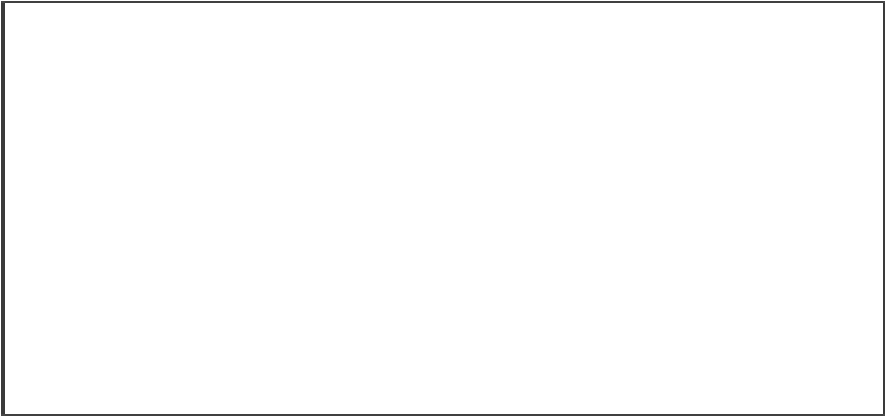
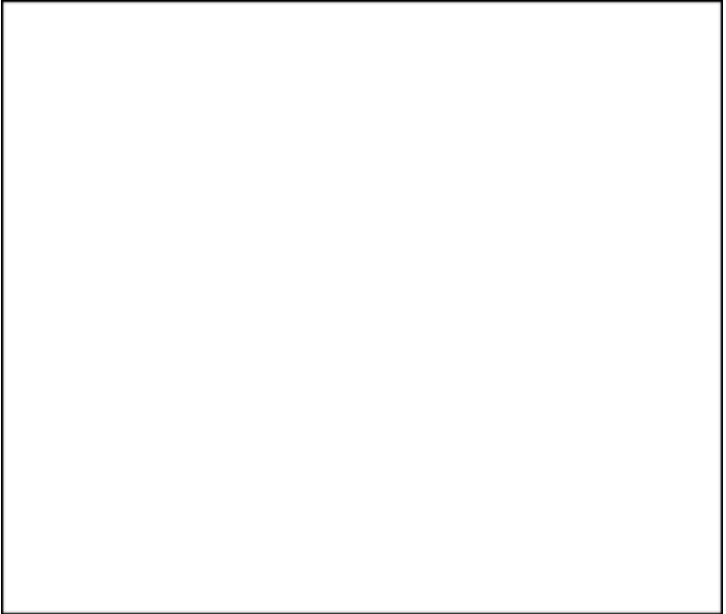
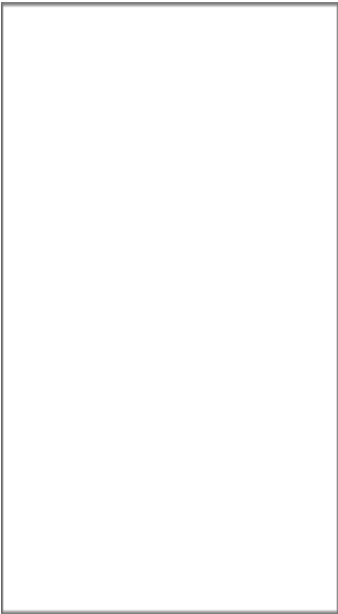
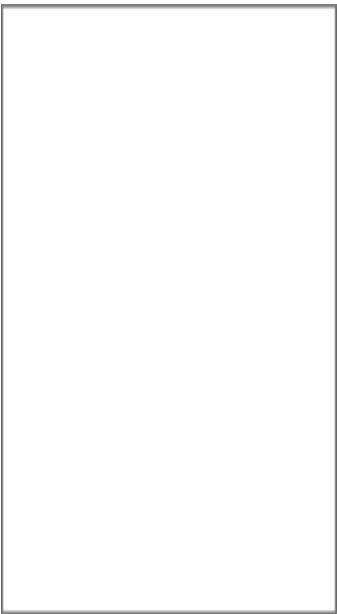
7. What are some traditions in your family?

Students—Use the space below to illustrate a story you learned from your interview.

Origin Stories

Use the space below to draw a map that includes important places/landmarks in your life. How do you travel between these places? Why are they important? Include the paths and modes of travel.

Origin Stories: We have listened to a few origin stories shared with us from various interconnected tribes from the Northeast. One common theme is the connection to the land. Create a 4-6 panel comic book story explaining the origin of the land around you. Use the space below for sketching ideas.



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Options:

1. Illustrate an origin story or family tradition, in connection to the land or people.
2. Design a wampum belt that would be given to the Mohican People from the people in the Berkshires.
3. Illustrate an aspect of Indigenous life (transportation, relationships, survival, etc.)
4. Honor Mohican leaders.

