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Abbe Museum

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Abbe Museum Hosts the 2009 Waponahki Student Art Show

BAR HARBOR, Maine (April 23, 2009) The 2009 Wapohnaki Student Art Show opens today in the Community Gallery at the Abbe Museum. This marks the eighth year of this popular show sponsored by Maine Indian Education and the Abbe Museum. On exhibit are original works of art by 36 children representing the Passamaquoddy tribe and the Penobscot Nation. The artists range from early childhood to high school and come from the Indian Island School, Indian Township School, Beatrice Rafferty School, Woodland High School, Orono High School, and Old Town High School.

This annual exhibit provides Waponahki youth a chance to share their creativity and feelings with the people of Maine and beyond. Native children have a unique culture and outlook on life from which to draw inspiration and the pride in their heritage is clearly evident in the works of art that make up this exhibition. From whimsical to spiritual, simple to serious, the opportunity to be creative and to share that with the public gives these students a chance to express themselves in a way that they feel comfortable with.

As Beth Clifford, Curriculum Coordinator for Maine Indian Education affirms, “The Waponahki Student Art Show provides the students of Maine Indian Education with an opportunity unlike any other. Imagine the look on the students’ faces when they step into the Abbe Museum to see, for the first time, their own artwork framed and/or displayed as it would be in any museum setting! The sense of pride and feelings of accomplishment are beyond description...the exhibition and reception hosted by the Abbe Museum lives on in the memories of the children for many, many years.”

On May 4th Maine Indian Education’s Joint School Committee will meet in Bar Harbor and hold a private reception for the student artists and their families at the museum. Attending this year’s meeting will be Kevin Skenandore, Director of the Bureau of Indian Education, Bart Stevens, Associate Deputy Director-West, Roxanne Brown, Acting Associate Deputy Director-East, Line Officer for Nashville and Acting Line Officer for Minneapolis and Lynann Barbero, Director of the Bureau of Indian Education’s Reading First Program and Math Now Initiative, all who are administrators with the Bureau of Indian Education based in Washington, D.C.

The Abbe Museum is the only museum in the world dedicated to the Wabanaki, the Native American people of Maine and the Maritimes. The Abbe has a collection of over 50,000 archeological, historic and contemporary objects including stone and bone tools,

pottery, beadwork, carved root clubs, birch bark canoes, and supporting collections of photographs, maps, and archival documents. It holds the largest and best-documented collection of Maine Native American basketry in any museum. Its collections conservation program is recognized nationally as a model for museums.

For more information about the Waponahki Student Art Show or the Abbe Museum please contact Jason K. Brown, Public Affairs Manager at 207-288-3519 or jason@abbemuseum.org

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