

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

Eloise Beil, Director of Collections and Exhibits, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum  
802 475-2022 ext. 107, [eloiseb@lcmm.org](mailto:eloiseb@lcmm.org)

Vera Longtoe Sheehan, Director, Vermont Abenaki Artists Association  
802 579-0049, [vera.sheehan@abenakiart.org](mailto:vera.sheehan@abenakiart.org)

### **Vermont Humanities Council Grant Supports Programs with Abenaki Artists at Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and Area Libraries**

Lake Champlain Maritime Museum is pleased to host “Presenting Abenaki Culture in the Classroom,” a Summer Workshop for Educators, on Wednesday, August 2. Members of the Vermont Abenaki Artists Association serve as faculty for this all-day seminar, and for a series of panel discussions for young adults and adults to be offered in the fall and spring at area libraries. Supported in part by a grant from the Vermont Humanities Council, these programs are presented in conjunction with the traveling exhibition *Alnobak: Wearing Our Heritage*, now on view at Lake Champlain Maritime Museum.

Developed by Abenaki culture bearers with deep understanding of how this vibrant regional culture continues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Summer Workshop for Educators will provide teachers and home school educators with new resources and age-appropriate techniques to help elementary students learn about the Abenaki tribe’s 11,000 years in the Champlain Valley. The seminar will help participants to better support any Native students while presenting American history, and will establish a network of educators and Native culture bearers who can remain in dialogue through online and social media platforms. The program will also include a gallery talk in the exhibition *Alnobak: Wearing Our Heritage*, which explores Abenaki identity and continuity through garments, accessories, and family photographs.

Workshop presenters draw on recent scholarship and oral history combined with cultural traditions and personal experience to provide a Native perspective on the history and culture of Vermont and New England. “History books, museums, and schools in New England often present Native culture as if the Abenaki disappeared in the eighteenth century,” says VAAA director Vera Longtoe Sheehan. “Now we are trying to bridge the gap between the Native and non-Native communities through the Wearing Our Heritage project. Our goals are to reclaim our place in New England history, to make connections between our shared past and the present, and for the region’s Native people to be recognized as experts in their own history and culture.”

Lake Champlain Maritime Museum has been collaborating with the Vermont Abenaki Artists Association (VAAA) and the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts to present the traveling exhibition, an illustrated catalog, and a series of public programs at LCMM, the Flynn Theater, and area libraries including Fletcher Free Library in Burlington, Bixby Library in Vergennes, Pierson Library in Shelburne and Charlotte Public Library. The library programs, which will take place this fall and in the spring of 2018, will include presentations and discussion of topics such as the experiences of youth living in traditional and contemporary worlds; women’s experiences with the dichotomy between the respected position of Abenaki women in our past and the challenges faced by Indigenous women today; the expression of community and tribal identity through art and how cultural traditions suggest possibilities for change in the future.

Lake Champlain Maritime Museum (LCMM) provides opportunities for audiences of all ages to discover and reflect on the history and archaeology of the Champlain Valley through educational programs, exhibitions, and publications. The Museum’s exhibit buildings and on-water programs are

offered daily from late May through mid-October. LCMM works with community partners to develop new initiatives and to increase our capacity to support the statewide movement toward students' project-based and self-directed learning, as well as free-choice learning for all ages. Find more information and program registration at [www.lcmm.org](http://www.lcmm.org) or 802 475-2022.