

Jennifer Layden
Communications Coordinator & Technology Coach
920.492.2905 ext. 6109
E-mail: jlayden@ashwaubenonk12.org



MEDIA RELEASE

For More Information, Contact:

Jennifer Layden
Ashwaubenon School District
Jlayden@ashwaubenonk12.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

High School Mentors Bring Cultural Traditions and Lessons on Gratitude to Valley View Elementary

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Students at Valley View Elementary recently participated in a unique cultural experience as local high school mentors led an interactive presentation on Indigenous traditions, focusing on the history and values of the various nations.

The presentation moved beyond history books to show second-graders how Indigenous culture is a living, daily practice. Central to the lesson was the concept of gratitude. The high schoolers shared that being grateful is a tradition for many Indigenous people, practiced every single day. Students explored this theme through the book *We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga* by Traci Sorell and even learned how to express the concept in various languages from various nations.

Student leader, Naiveen Teller, said, "Representing our culture is important." The high schoolers highlighted several Indigenous traditions that resonated with the second-grade audience, including: food, clothes, traditions, sports like Lacrosse, the significance of animals, and modern connections.

To wrap up the visit, the second-graders participated in a hands-on "Grateful Tree" activity. Each child received two paper leaves to write down what they are personally thankful for before coloring them and gluing them to a communal poster. This activity served as a visual representation of the cultural lesson: that gratitude is a community effort.

"This is an outstanding group of student leaders at the high school, who take great pride in sharing their culture and traditions," said Jayne Ryczkowski, Graduation Coach and Title VI Coordinator for the district. This mentorship program highlights Ashwaubenon School District's goal of fostering inclusive environments where students learn directly from the diverse voices within their own community.

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