

# DAILY NORTH SHORE

## Upcycling Goes Upscale

by Jen Shea • March 20, 2019



**Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods offers supplies for turning discarded items into art.**

The concept of “trash to treasure” is hardly new but thanks to the launch of Brushwood Art Supply Exchange (BASE) at the Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods, upcycling discarded items into works of art will be easier than ever.

The Brushwood Center in Riverwoods kicked off the new program on March 10 with an opening reception that introduced the community to the BASE studio and tool library. In addition to offering art and craft classes for all skill levels, the new program will utilize a recycling center that converts donations to art supplies. And it will offer a store with low-cost art and craft materials for sale.

“Upcycled art is when you take an item that you would not normally think of as an art supply to do a creative project,” explains Brushwood Director of Arts and Administration Julia Kemerer, adding that BASE will serve as a “creative re-use center. “We’ll have the store, where low-cost art and craft supplies will be, and then there’s also the tool library that will be available for people to use.”

Classes offered at BASE will range from bookbinding and creating embroidered maps to upcycled basket weaving and creating with earthen elements.

“This is a community resource for artists and craftspeople of all ages and abilities to meet, explore, and tap into their creative outlet freely,” says Executive Director Catherine Game.

March and April will bring many opportunities to participate in BASE and take advantage of this new facility.

Botanical art classes will meet on Saturday afternoons. On March 19, an embroidery class will begin to meet from 7 to 9 p.m. On April 16, a bookbinding class will begin, holding its first meeting from 7 to 9 p.m. On Sunday, April 7, the Brushwood Center will host a photography exhibition, “Invitation to Joy,” from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Kemerer got the idea for BASE last August after visiting a similar center in Eugene, Oregon. “Within a few hours of visiting there, I realized it was something Brushwood could and should do,” she says.

BASE will have a wide variety of materials available, from fabrics to frames.

“We will offer items for every medium you could think of,” Kemerer adds. And the class selection will offer tutorials on many aspects of upcycled art.

“We’re offering lots of different classes that will utilize items from BASE,” she says. “The classes are all very accessible and very low pressure for everyone at every skill level.”

Upcycled art has grown in popularity over recent years, but BASE will be the first such center in this area.

“They’re all around the country,” Kemerer says. “This is the only one in Lake County that I know of.” BASE will be open during the same hours as the Brushwood Center. Leaders encourage visitors to stop by for the “craft-ins” on Saturday mornings especially, when there will be an open house-like atmosphere.

Above all, Kemerer says, people should visit BASE to enjoy the benefits of upcycled art. “It inspires creativity, is a great way for the community to recycle their art supplies, and it’s fun,” she says. “It’s important for people to be able to express themselves. And it’s a wonderful way to relax in this stressful world.”

Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods promotes the importance of nature for nurturing wellbeing, cultivating creativity, and inspiring learning. Programs offered include art, photography, music, literature, and film. For more information or to get involved with the new BASE program, visit [brushwoodcenter.org](http://brushwoodcenter.org).