

# MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 6 June 2017

## Free art making workshops for mental health carers to be held in Parkes

A series of free art workshops for carers of people with mental health issues will start next week in Parkes.

The workshops will run over 15 weeks with respected local artists Maralyn Nash and Pol Cruz.

The weekly workshops run for two-and-a-half-hours on a Thursday (10.30am-1pm) at the Coventry Room at Parkes Shire Council. Whilst a specific 15 week program has been developed participants can join at any time.

Regional arts development organisation Arts OutWest has set up this and eight other local programs across the region on behalf of House with No Steps, who have provided the funding.

“Arts is a great vehicle for assisting people with their mental health wellbeing, particularly when we’re able to strengthen these projects through relationships with the health sector,” Arts OutWest executive director Tracey Callinan said. “These workshops have been designed as a time-out activity for carers – those looking after family members with mental health issues, including issues such as dementia.”

Visual artist Maralyn Nash will run eight weeks of the program, followed by ceramic artist Pol Cruz. Maralyn has designed her workshops will focus on ‘Kintsugi’, the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with gold. “Reinforcing that embracing our imperfections and wounds can be transformed into something even more beautiful through art”, Ms Nash said.

Caring on from Maralyn’s theme but also looking at issues of recycling and caring for the environment, Pol Cruz will use ‘raw materials’ like found objects, pottery, recycled materials, discarded bits and pieces of wire, tin and wood to help give the participants insights or creative ideas on how to create or produce unrelated objects into a piece of art.

It’s hoped that works created during the workshops will be shown in small exhibition showcasing the transformational journey of health and healing through the arts.

Arts OutWest has built this program in close consultation with mental health and disability support services across the region. Health professionals will attend some of the sessions. Arts OutWest has many years’ experience running arts projects with health outcomes and is regarded as a regional leader in the arts and health field.

Other workshops and programs, across music, visual arts and drama, are running in Orange, Lithgow, Bathurst, Forbes, Cowra and Grenfell.

Workshops are free. To sign up call Arts OutWest on 6338 4657 or email [artsoutwest@csu.edu.au](mailto:artsoutwest@csu.edu.au)

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