

Township of
Langley



Est. 1873



CANADA 150

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 10, 2017

UPCYCLING DESIGN CHALLENGE: INSPIRATION FOUND IN THE ENVIRONMENT AND ART

The Upcycling Design Challenge returns this spring to encourage residents to keep unwanted items out of the landfill by turning them into works of art, something functional, or both.

By combining creativity with environmental stewardship, trash is turned into treasure, participants become eco-artists, and those who see the results are inspired to think about the importance of reducing, reusing, and recycling.

It is the type of challenge that is just up Phyllis Sabean's alley.

"It gets people thinking about the stuff they use – it's great for us hoarders," laughed Sabean, an artist who entered the contest for the first time last year and won first prize in the Best Use of Textiles category for her Ribbon Dancer garden art.

Sabean, an Aldergrove resident who has always been "on the crafty side," has a passion for gourd art. Using hard shell gourds grown in eastern Canada and Arizona, she carves, burns, or paints them just like a piece of wood to make colourful, eye-catching spheres.

The owner of An Eye Full Creations, Sabean also teaches garden sculpting, an art form that has benefitted from her discovery of a unique material. While selling bath and body products at a flower show a few years ago, she learned about Paverpol, an environmentally friendly, water-based textile hardener that sticks to anything natural and can withstand the elements outdoors.

"I fell in love with it," said Sabean. The product changed the way she uses mixed media and creates three dimensional art, as everyday materials ranging from fabric, wood, and stone to glass, paper, and metal can be combined and turned into fine art.

That is exactly what the Upcycling Design Challenge encourages.

“I loved the idea that I could create art from natural fabrics. All my fabric scraps and even my hubby’s old T-shirts have been turned into garden art,” Sabean said. “Now I teach others to use old T-shirts and other natural fabrics that would have otherwise become landfill.”

She added that turning discarded items into art is also “a great way to support community thrift stores by buying old worn natural fabrics and donating to their cause.”

The technique is also a great way to preserve and display antique items such a doilies and lace that have been passed down through generations. “These were our moms’ and grandmas’ artwork of the day, and it’s great to be able to upcycle and incorporate them into our artwork,” she said.

Now a certified Paverpol instructor, Sabean used the technique to create her award-winner Ribbon Dancer out of old T-shirts, a doily, and broom skirt on a recycled concrete and rebar base.

She is currently thinking about how to use this year’s featured material, Styrofoam, in the 5th annual Upcycling Challenge.

Presented by the Township of Langley and the Langley Arts Council, the event runs from Wednesday, May 10 to Sunday, May 21, when all entries will be on display at Willowbrook Shopping Centre.

Submissions must be created out of at least 75% found or recovered material and will be judged in categories of Best in Show, Most Practical, Best Use of Challenge Material, and Best Youth. A People’s Choice Award will also be presented to the artist of the piece receiving the most votes from viewers. Winners will receive cash, prizes, or a Willowbrook Gift Card, which will be awarded during an evening reception on Thursday, May 18, from 6:00 to 8:00pm.

Entrants must be 10 years of age or older. Deadline for submissions is Saturday, May 6.

For further information and entry forms, visit tol.ca/upcycling or call 604.532.7300.