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Brookfield Craft Center  
286 Whisconier Road, PO Box 122  
Brookfield, CT 06804  
info@brookfieldcraft.org  
www.brookfieldcraft.org  
203-775-4526

A not-for-profit school dedicated to fine craft since 1952.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:**

Danielle Nielsen, Registrar & Accessibility Coordinator

Em. [dnielsen@brookfieldcraft.org](mailto:dnielsen@brookfieldcraft.org)

Ph. 203-775-4526

**Brookfield Craft Center Developing Accessibility Programs and Exhibitions**

*BCC incorporates a new program for students with autism and an upcoming exhibition showcasing disabled artists.*

**Brookfield, CT.** — **The Brookfield Craft Center** begins expanding its outreach and accessibility to students with disabilities. BCC has shown focus towards developing goals to better adapt and make the craft center more accessible, safe, and accommodating for its students and community. Part of this plan comes two exciting new opportunities: An autism social group and an upcoming exhibition meant to showcase the work of disabled artists.

The Autism Social Creative Space Initiative (ASCSI) is meant to fill a missing gap in community support for high-functioning/low-support needs autistic young adults ages 18-25, who can participate independently without an assistant aid present (paraeducator, professional aid, counselor or parent) and to give them a safe space to express themselves creatively and socialize.

This group encourages students to unmask with other autistic neurodivergent artists for an evening of socializing. The goal of this group is to allow other young adult autistics of this spectrum to feel they can safely and appropriately confide in one another the challenges they go through, support one another with common experiences, as well as unwind and relax with simple, but expressive art projects.

The first run of this 6-week group will take place March 15th through April 19th from 5:00pm to 7:00pm at the Brookfield Craft Center. Registration and more information can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/32k2amse>. There are only 5 spots available for this class. This class is currently low-cost tuition at \$25.00 for the entire program.

In addition to this exciting new opportunity, BCC is proud to host *The Accessible Artist* exhibition, curated by Danielle Nielsen, in the Lynn Tandler Bignell Gallery. This gallery exhibition will be for artists who have any type of disability whether that be physical, mental, developmental, psychological, or otherwise invisible. The art should connect to the artist's disability in some capacity whether that be a direct correlation or inspiration of their experience or a reflection of their disability and their community.

The exhibition will be held June 15th through July 14th. More information can be found on the BCC website in the near future.

Both the autism social creative space and the exhibition were developed by local Bethel, CT artist Danielle Nielsen, 26. As a high-functioning/low-support needs autistic neurodivergent artist, Danielle aligns her creative work with managerial and editorial organizational communications, while coordinating and advocating for individuals with disabilities. Examining challenges faced throughout her life,

Danielle’s inspiration comes from “wishing to make our communities better aware of the challenges neurodivergent face in a social society that has predetermined rules which do not supportively or safely accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities without treating them as unequal individuals.”

Danielle is a WCSU graduate with a BA concentration in illustration and a minor in creative writing, and is a graduate of the full Kathwari Honors Program. Danielle’s skills lie in many areas but primarily enjoys 2D and digital illustration and creative writing. She has worked with companies such as Tumblr Inc. and Amazon Prime Video, and since April of 2023, works at BCC as an arts administrative registrar and accessibilities coordinator, acting as liaison for individuals with disabilities as well as the point-of-contact for resolving inquiries regarding disability accessibility and ADA compliances.

**About the Brookfield Craft Center** - BCC, a non-profit organization, was founded in 1952 and is recognized as one of the core fine craft schools in America. The Center offers classes and workshops, taught by professional artist instructors, in glass arts, woodturning, ceramics, jewelry, blacksmithing, fiber arts, painting and drawing, digital photography and other creative endeavors for people of all ages. The historic Mill Building (ca 1780) Gift Shop and Exhibition Gallery is a beautiful venue for displaying fine craft. All works are carefully juried and representative of the type of skills individuals can learn in our classes. As a force for arts advocacy and community building, Brookfield Craft Center strives to teach and preserve the skills of fine craftsmanship, and to enable creativity and personal growth through craft education.

