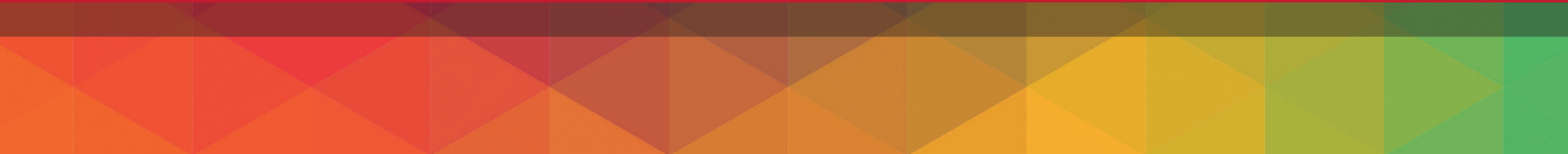




BRUSHWOOD
CENTER
AT RYERSON WOODS

INSPIRING CHANGE

BRUSHWOOD CENTER AT RYERSON WOODS / ANNUAL REPORT 2022



OUR VISION

We work toward a future of resilient and connected communities, both human and ecological, where all lead healthy and thriving lives.

OUR MISSION

Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods works collaboratively with community partners, artists, health care providers, and scientists to improve health equity and access to nature in Lake County, Illinois, and the Chicago region. We engage people with the outdoors through the arts, environmental education, and community action. Brushwood Center's programs focus on youth, families, Military Veterans, and those facing racial and economic injustices.



2022 was an exciting year at Brushwood Center. We connected more than 9,000 people to art and nature, thanks to our passionate and dedicated volunteers, artists, and donors. With your help, Brushwood Center improved the lives of communities across Lake County and the Chicago Region through the healing power of nature and the arts.

Our new mission and vision reflect our commitment to our community: working toward a future of resilient and connected communities, both human and ecological, where all lead healthy and thriving lives. This year, Brushwood Center collaborated with more than 80 partner organizations and 300 artists on programs that improve health, equity, and access to nature.

We expanded our advocacy for health equity by launching the *Health, Equity, and Nature Accelerator*. Using research, community organizing, and advocacy, the Accelerator's goal is to increase investment in health equity solutions that intersect with climate and environmental justice.

Through Brushwood Center's *It's A W.I.N.* (Art and Wellness in Nature), more than 1,500 students experienced field trips, art classes, concerts, and education programs. These programs took place at Brushwood Center and at partner locations in Waukegan, Highwood, Round Lake, and North Chicago.

Brushwood Center's *At Ease* program for Veterans and the military community served more than 350 Veterans, with over 90% expressing a resulting increased sense of wellbeing in program evaluations.

Lastly, our art and music programs thrived this year! Our exhibitions and music performances reflected diverse voices exploring themes on justice and freedom, identity, and expanding narratives on the natural world and its vital impact on wellbeing.

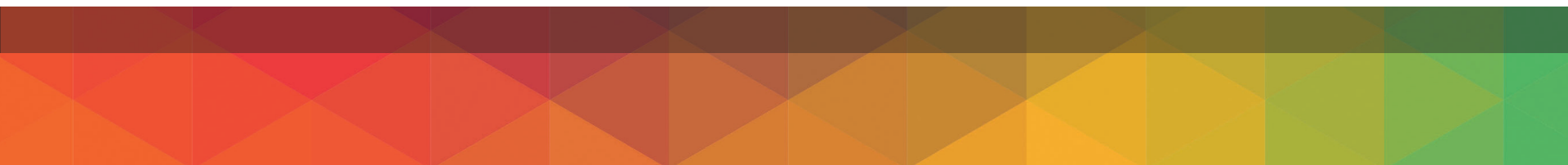
Thank you for being a part of this inspirational work and for helping to ensure an impactful 2022!



Catherine Game
Executive Director



A. Gail Sturm
Chair, Board of Directors



HEALTH, EQUITY AND NATURE ACCELERATOR

Brushwood Center's *Health, Equity, and Nature Accelerator* was born in response to growing community demand for systemic change to address racial and ethnic inequities at the intersection of health, climate, and nature. Through the Accelerator, Brushwood Center is advancing community-driven strategies for bridging the healthcare and environmental sectors and improving health outcomes in Lake County and the surrounding area.

In 2022, through the collection of community-driven data, Brushwood started building a *Health, Equity, and Nature Report for Lake County*, the first report of its kind in the nation, in partnership with an Advisory Board of community advocates, public health experts, and technical advisors. The report will inform a community-driven action plan to mobilize constituents and inform policy and decision-makers.

2022 LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLE

On June 15, 2022, community, civic, and business leaders from across Lake County addressed economic and racial disparities at the intersection of health, climate, and nature. The goal of this roundtable was to create a community space for understanding the impact of access to greenspace and environmental justice and to identify collaborative community-informed opportunities to improve the health of people and the environment in Lake County.

Pictured: Panelists speak at the Roundtable at the Greenbelt Cultural Center in North Chicago





THE 39TH ANNUAL SMITH NATURE SYMPOSIUM

This annual event series, taking place since 1984, lifts up the voices of artists, youth, and scientists who are advancing climate justice solutions in our communities and at a global scale. The Symposium memorializes the legacy of Hermon Dunlap and Ellen Thorne Smith, who gave their land and cabin to help form Ryerson Woods. In 2022, The Smith Nature Symposium honored the extraordinary leadership of Cristina Mittermeier and Paul Nicklen and their momentous impact on ocean justice and conservation as photographers, marine biologists, and founders of SeaLegacy.

Pictured: Heeyoung Kim, leader of Brushwood Center's Botanical Art Academy, welcomes Cristina and Paul to Brushwood Center

PUBLIC ARTS PROGRAMS

Brushwood Center's public arts programs amplify artists, musicians, community members, and scientists who provide insight to the challenges facing our communities and creative approaches to solutions.

Brushwood Center is committed to providing accessible arts programs, and hosts more than 300 artists a year through The Annual Smith Nature Symposium, Nature in Concert Series, Brushwood Art Supply Exchange (BASE), and rotating art exhibitions.

In 2022, our exhibitions and music performances reflected diverse voices exploring themes on justice and freedom, identity, and expanding narratives on the natural world and its vital impact on wellbeing.

It's A W.I.N. (Art and Wellness in Nature)

Serving youth, families, and overburdened communities in Waukegan, North Chicago, Highwood, and Round Lake, *It's A. W.I.N.* provides vital nature and arts programming through a broad partnership network. We collaborate with community partners to co-design culturally relevant programs, support their educational and wellbeing goals, and increase families' access to and confidence in nature.

1,500 students joined us for field trips, art classes, concerts, and education programs. They listened to birds, observed wildlife, and identified native wildflowers and trees, along with learning mindfulness meditation techniques and artistic expression.

NATURE EXPLORER BACKPACK PROJECT / MOCHILAS DE EXPLORADOR

In 2022, the *It's A. W.I.N.* program developed a Lake County Environmental Justice coloring book with community artists and Clean Power Lake County. The coloring book and other art and bilingual nature supplies were distributed in 900 Nature Explorer Backpacks through partnerships with libraries and organizations in our partner communities.

Pictured: Students enjoying their Nature Explorer Backpacks at the Waukegan Park District



AT EASE: HEALING IN NATURE EXHIBITION OPENING

The *At Ease* program curated an inspiring art exhibition featuring work by program participants, including active-duty service members, Veterans of military service, and Veteran and active-duty family members. The show explored themes of healing, wellness, reflections on military service, and engaging with nature and the outdoors.

Pictured: Guitars for Vets at the At Ease Exhibition Opening



AT EASE

Art and Nature for Veterans

At Ease: Art and Nature for Veterans is an innovative approach to empower military Veterans' wellbeing through nature-based art, music, and photography programs. It is a partnership with local Veteran organizations, the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center, natural area sites, and teaching artists and musicians. *At Ease* is the only program in the region offering a nature-based approach that helps build skills in creative expression and provides Veterans with access to mental health support.

At Ease expanded this year to serve over 350 veterans, thanks to feedback and support from our Veterans Advisory board. Over 90% of *At Ease* participants reported that they experienced increased wellbeing (relaxation, happiness, or calm) and that they learned a new art skill or knowledge of nature. "It's not just being out in nature and kind of seeing through the lens what's actually around you, but it's also doing it with other Veterans. I think any successful Veteran program it's always going to be about being around other Vets. And that's the key," said one *At Ease* participant.

In 2022, The US Department of Veterans Affairs began engaging with *At Ease* as an effective model for increased partnership with public lands for supporting medical treatment and therapy for Veterans.

WE THANK OUR DONORS

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FINANCIAL

REVENUE

Individuals	\$755,460
Foundations	\$124,510
Corporations	\$41,219
Government	\$99,942
Organizations	\$6,327
Program Revenue	\$44,485
Other Income and Expense	\$52,178
Net Assets Release from Restriction	\$34,451
Total Revenues	\$1,158,572

EXPENSES

Program Services	\$675,209
Management & General	\$33,900
Fundraising	\$44,177
Total Expenses	\$753,286

NET ASSETS

Net Assets without Donor Restrictions	\$405,286
Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	\$1,337,699
Increase in Net Assets	\$1,708,534
Total Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$401,113
Total Net Assets at End of Year	\$2,109,647

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Land acknowledgement statements are designed to bring more awareness and understanding of the history of indigenous peoples and their territories, but they should also be more than that; they should be a call for us to rethink our relationship with the environment and the histories of all peoples, and to challenge the legacies of settler colonialism in our society. **Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods honors this land as the traditional home of Algonquian-speaking peoples. We celebrate their traditions and culture and their immemorial ties to this land.**

BRUSHWOOD CENTER AT RYERSON WOODS
21850 N. Riverwoods Road, Riverwoods, IL 60015
BRUSHWOODCENTER.ORG

*Improving Health Equity through
Community, Nature and the Arts*