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WEST RYDE WOMEN MAKING ART AND FRIENDS

'The sky's the limit when it comes to creativity' ... says a group of women who take part in the Arts Activation Ryde (AAR) project at West Ryde.

The women, from various backgrounds and cultures, gather monthly to learn a new skill, share their stories, laugh a lot and make new friends.

This month, master cake-decorator, Felis Huang, will show them how to make amazing decorations and embellishments for cakes out of Japanese Light Clay.

Ms Huang, who runs a cooking school from the popular *Felis Kitchen* in Eastwood, said: "You can learn to make beautiful objects like fruit, flowers and figurines very quickly, because the clay is very pliant and easy to handle."

Arts Activation Ryde is a project partnership between City of Ryde Council, Artisans Ryde and City of Ryde Status of Women Advisory Committee. It was developed to encourage women from diverse backgrounds to join in social interaction and be part of the community.

City of Ryde Council AAR coordinator Dianne Turner said: "It's a simple idea that is good for the individual and good for the community, by strengthening bonds between people and places."

Here's why:

- Art is a way of introducing ourselves to others.
- People are more likely to 'come out of their shells' during shared experiences.
- People who have difficulty expressing themselves verbally are often able to communicate through visual means.
- Friendships grow during cooperative projects, or just from working side by side and discussing each other's creations.

Cake decorating with Japanese Light Clay. Wednesday 24 September, 10.00am – 1.00pm, West Ryde Community Centre, 1A Station Street, West Ryde. Bookings are essential on 9952 8315 or email dturner@ryde.nsw.gov.au

Arts Activation Ryde takes place on the fourth Wednesday of the month. All material is provided. In coming months there will be workshops on origami and African mask making.

Photo: Master cake decorator Felis Huang at her Eastwood cooking school.

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