

[Homepage](#) 

‘Art on the Wind’ blends public art, environmentalism in Brookline

By Sarah Gordon / correspondent

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Brookline - Despite unpredictable weather, the “Art on the Wind” exhibit opened as planned on Saturday, Aug. 2, at Larz Anderson Park.

“Forty-five minutes into it, the rain started downpouring,” said the artist, Katrina Majkut. “But the pinwheels went on blowing and moving as intended.”

Majkut was awarded the Brookline Commission for the Arts’ Andrea Cilley Memorial Grant in early March. Now her plan has become a reality as pinwheels made out of recycled materials by Brookline schoolchildren scatter the park.

Andrea Cilley, or “Andi” as her friends called her, served as administrator of the BCA before her sudden death from a brain aneurysm in January 2007. Cilley was also an environmental activist, serving on the Solid Waste Advisory Committee and working to bring recycling programs to Brookline schools.

“It was her passion,” BCA Co-Chairman Brenda Sullivan said.

In Cilley’s memory, Sullivan and her co-workers at the Brookline Commission for the Arts decided to offer a one-time memorial grant. One Brookline artist whose work was inspired by nature or an environmental issue was to receive \$1,000 to turn their proposal into a public piece of art.

“I had really gotten into environmental art,” Majkut said. When the call came for artists through the Andrea Cilley Memorial Grant, Majkut seized the opportunity.

“I saw it as a continuation of what I had been doing,” she said.



By kate flock
The public eco-art exhibit "Art on the Wind" by Katrina Majkut at Larz Anderson Park, Aug. 2, 2008.

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Twelve applications were received in the beginning of 2008, and by March, Majkut had been selected as the recipient of the grant. Sullivan was impressed by her proposal that “captured the idea of recycled materials and environmental issues.”

In her environmental art, Majkut attempts to incorporate the “whole bag.” She sees environmental art as a “full-circle concept,” incorporating an environmental message while using eco-friendly recycled materials.

The inspiration behind the project, Majkut explained, is the “power of recycling and what can we do with objects around us.” She said she is also affected by current issues, such as rising gas prices and the lack of alternate energy resources.

Majkut worked with local children, who helped her build the pinwheels as she talked with them about environmental issues. She held two workshops at the Nature Camp of Brookline, with the Natick Girl Scouts, children from a Dover church and the Park School’s Greenworks club.

“It’s really important for [the kids] to see that their efforts can go into something greater than the classroom,” Majkut said.

“The pinwheel is a common toy,” she said. “We’re not as far away from alternate energy as we think.”

The pinwheels that now decorate Larz Anderson Park were constructed out of recycled 2-liter bottles, wire hangers and wine corks grounded into the soil.

“Andi would have been thrilled,” Sullivan said of her late friend and co-worker. “It’s a beautiful use of the space and carries an important environmental message.”

See it!

“Art on the Wind” will be on display at Larz Anderson Park (Goddard Street side) through the end of August.

For more information on artist Katrina Majkut, visit www.TheArtisanSquare.com.

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