

Wakeville Blooms as Creativity Meets Consciousness



Photo by Lyndsie Schlink & Dallas Agnew ('26)

Since its creation in 2023, Wakeville has secured its place as an annual Wake Forest arts festival, but this year, it's blossoming into something even more meaningful—an arts festival centered on sustainability.

On April 5, Scales Fine Arts Center will come alive as students gather to share their creative passions, all with sustainability in mind.

At the heart of this transformation is Roksanna Keyvan, a senior student director whose vision has reshaped Wakeville into a powerful intersection of art, community and sustainability.

Keyvan's journey with Wakeville began in its inaugural year when she volunteered and wrote about the festival for the OGB. The following year, she joined the event's leadership team as themed marketing director. With the previous organizers having graduated, she was asked to step up and lead this year.

“I said yes, but on one condition: I want it to be about sustainability,” said Keyvan.

Keyvan, who designed her interdisciplinary major in environmental and social justice, saw an opportunity to fuse her academic passions with her lifelong love for the arts.

“I need to stay true to my passions and what I really care about, and I have loved art my whole life, but it's never been something I pursued academically,” said Keyvan. “So with this, I was able to take the arts and interweave it with my passions, and it truly became my child.”

According to the Pew Research Center, 32% of Gen Zers and 28% of Millennials have either donated money, contacted an elected official, or volunteered or attended a rally to help address climate change in the last year compared to far small shares of older generations. However, many still struggle to implement sustainable practices in their everyday lives.

By incorporating sustainability into the festival's core, Wakeville aims to inspire attendees to rethink their relationship with the environment by embracing eco-conscious living in ways such as decreasing fast fashion trends, repurposing materials creatively, and reducing waste through mindful purchasing.

This year's Wakeville goes beyond the traditional arts festival format, transforming into an interactive space where creativity meets climate consciousness. From a sustainable community closet to an upcycling booth where old clothes get a second life, the festival blends artistry with action, showing how small, thoughtful changes can ripple into larger environmental impact.

Junior Olivia Delgado, president of dEaCOfriendly, shared her excitement about the club's Wakeville collaboration with Wayward Fashion, a fashion group promoting sustainable, self-expressive clothing. Together, they'll lead DIY projects, including transforming old T-shirts into tote bags and teaching basic stitching techniques.

“My mission as dEaCOfriendly's president is to show people how interdisciplinary sustainability and environmental science is,” said Delgado. “Incorporating sustainability into the arts really brings that goal to life.”

Wakeville's sustainability push doesn't stop at fashion. The festival will also feature environmental-related art, potential plant-based catering and other events that still manage to tie in the profound theme.

“One performance wants to perform outside on the grass around the trees,” Keyvan said. “And even though it might not align with traditional sustainability in terms of conserving resources, it's really about embracing life and nature. Using natural light, using the natural space—acknowledging what it means to exist alongside nature, not just take from it.”

Keyvan, who serves as a teacher's assistant for a Sustainability in Fashion class, has even helped integrate Wakeville-inspired assignments into the course. The class includes many students involved in Greek life, a group traditionally absent from the festival due to its overlap with

Beach Weekend—a popular weekend getaway among fraternities and sororities. But this year, things are shifting.

“Through the class, many of them are contributing clothes to the community closet,” said Keyvan. “Even if they can’t attend, they’re still supporting Wakeville’s message of sustainability.”

For a Campus Tree Advisory Committee touch, the festival will open with a ceremonial tree planting. Assistant Director for Sustainable Strategy Erin Stephens approached campus Arborist Jim Mussetter to determine the best location for the annual Arbor Day planting.

The decision came down to two locations: between Johnson and Babcock or near Scales. The Campus Tree Advisory Committee chose the Johnson-Babcock site for the Arbor Day Planting, and Vice President for Sustainability Dedee DeLongpré Johnston suggested an additional Earth Month planting at Scales.

“I think she saw the opportunity—why should we limit ourselves to just one?” said Stephens.

This led to the decision to plant three new pawpaw trees—a native species to North Carolina—near Scales at the festival’s start, adding to the two already there and replacing a willow oak that was removed last fall due to its declining health.

This mindset of continuous renewal and sustainability extends beyond just the trees at Wakeville. Keyvan underscores how crucial it is to embed this thinking into every part of our lives, not just environmental efforts.

“Replace what we have, keep the cycle going and never let something go to waste,” said Keyvan. “It’s a cycle, and I hope people see that this cycle isn’t limited to Wakeville or environmental classes—it’s present in everything you do.”