



ARTS BRIEFS

May 23, 2019

Community Foundation of Sarasota County awards grant to Embracing Our Differences

The McCauley-Brown Fund of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County has awarded Embracing Our Differences a \$2,000 grant for its 2019- 2020 Unity Days program. The initiative engages Sarasota County high school students and staff in a day of team-building activities that inspire cooperation, communication and empathy. During the 2019-20 school year, EOD will provide Unity Days events to all seven Sarasota County public high schools.

Sarah Wertheimer, EOD's executive director, explains that the organization launched the program last year at Sarasota High School. "After 100 percent of the participants testified that they learned something new and the activities helped them interact better with others, Sarasota County school district administrators requested that EOD provide these special events at all public high schools in Sarasota County."

Ms. Wertheimer said that, through a series of activities facilitated by a trained professional, approximately 75 students at each school will be asked to participate. Prior to each event, a core group of student leaders will be identified and meet multiple times with the facilitator to receive training to help lead the event. The color orange will be worn as a visually compelling expression of solidarity and as a symbol of unity, sending the unified message to students that they are not alone.

"Thanks to this important grant from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, more than 500 students will engage in critical thinking and inquiry that will provide them with a safe and healthy means of discovering their own identities and the importance of supporting their peers," said Ms. Wertheimer. "With the knowledge and confidence gained through these experiences, students become active leaders, creating an inclusive culture in their respective schools and communities. By building a community of diverse student leaders, we will ensure that students feel safer and more secure in their schools."

For more information about Embracing Our Differences, call 941-404-5710 or visit www.embracingourdifferences.org.

