

# SRQ 20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

## Embracing Our Differences Celebrates Reading Day

*Business*

SRQ DAILY FRESHLY SQUEEZED CONTENT EVERY MORNING THURSDAY FEB 13, 2020



More than 7,500 elementary school students from 60 schools in Sarasota and Manatee counties will celebrate reading and diversity on March 10, through books by authors/illustrators Todd Parr and Patricia Polacco. Embracing Our Differences (EOD) is partnering with the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading to distribute 8,200 books and stimulate conversations about diversity, bullying, and respect in 440 classrooms across Sarasota and Manatee Counties. To date, 280 volunteers from the community have signed up to be readers. Over the course of the day, more than 8,200 books, focused on the theme of diversity and inclusion, will be

gifted to every participating student and classroom. In 2019, this reading initiative reached 6,300 students from local elementary schools and provided more 6,500 books for students and classrooms. This massive outreach reflects a collaboration between EOD and the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, a joint effort supported by The Patterson Foundation, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, United Way Suncoast and an anonymous family foundation.

Embracing Our Differences' annual outdoor exhibits are the heart of a year-round program of activities designed to use art as a catalyst to create awareness and promote diversity. The 2020 exhibit continues through April 5 at Bayfront Park in Sarasota. **For more information about Embracing Our Differences, call 941-404-5710 or visit [embracingourdifferences.org](http://embracingourdifferences.org).**

*Community Foundation of Sarasota County president and CEO Roxie Jerde enjoys reading to students at Alta Vista Elementary during the 2019 EOD Reading Day.*