



Embracing Our Differences Receives Emergency Grant from the Gulf Coast Community Foundation

SRQ DAILY FRESHLY SQUEEZED CONTENT EVERY MORNING TUESDAY APR 28, 2020

Sarah Wertheimer, the executive director of Embracing Our Differences, recently announced that the organization has received a \$40,000 Arts Appreciation grant from the Gulf Coast Community Foundation. The grant will help the organization adapt its educational outreach programming in response to the COVID-19 crisis. "The resources we provide to area educators and students are a top priority for us," says Wertheimer. "This vital grant allows us to adapt EOD's educational outreach programs and initiatives to virtual and online platforms to reach broad audiences—and it could not have come at a better time. We're grateful to the Gulf Coast Community Foundation for its commitment to diversity education in our community and for providing the support we need during this critical time." Wertheimer says that she's working closely with EOD's education director, Ben Jewell-Plocher, to create programs that can be accessed via online and virtual platforms. These include annual teacher workshops and intensives, which provide area educators with skills, strategies and resources relating to arts appreciation, character building and diversity education. Some of these initiatives can be seen here: <https://www.embracingourdifferences.org/virtual>.

Since 2004, EOD's international, juried exhibition celebrating the theme of "enriching lives through diversity and inclusion," showcases the art and words of thousands of artists and writers from around the world, including hundreds of area-based students and educators. The organization's ongoing education initiatives are also crucial to its mission. Presented in partnership with regional school districts and nationally recognized educators, these programs positively impact the lives of thousands of area teachers and students every year. These initiatives include annual workshops and retreats that provide arts and diversity curricula for area educators, bi-county reading initiatives, free bus transportation for students and teachers to visit area cultural venues, and student service clubs in high schools. "Embracing Our Differences continues to lead as one of southwest Florida's largest education programs with 950 teachers and 43,000 students participating in the organization's exhibit and educational programs in 2019 alone," says Wertheimer.