



## Photo earns Embracing Our Differences award



Clifford McDonald, a teacher at the Visible Men Academy in Bradenton, won an award from Embracing Our Differences for a photograph he took of one of the school's students.

By [Jay Handelman](#)

**Arts Editor**

Posted Jun 6, 2020 at 10:00 AM

A photograph of a young boy whose eyes show the reflection of the flags of the United States and Mexico has won the People's Choice Award from the annual Embracing Our Differences outdoor exhibition.

The photo by Clifford McDonald is of Elijah Garza, a first-grade student at the Visible Men Academy in Bradenton.

McDonald, a Sarasota-based artist and educator, said he will share the \$1,000 prize with the young boy.

McDonald said the image reflects the difficult situation children of immigrant parents face.

“This piece represents the opportunity that others see in the United States,” he wrote in his artist statement.

McDonald is a graduate of Booker High School’s Visual and Performing Arts program and received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art from the University of Maine at Presque Isle. He now teaches at Visible Men Academy.

The award was determined by a survey available to the 388,000 visitors who attended this year’s exhibit, Jan. 18-May 15 and through its website. The annual exhibition features 50 billboard-size works of art and accompanying quotes that are intended to celebrate diversity.