

## MEDIA CONTACTS

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### **Art Teacher from Venice Wins "People's Choice Award" in 2021 Embracing Our Differences' Exhibit**

*Artist and elementary art teacher Joanna Davis' "Infusion of Love" was voted "People's Choice" by visitors to the exhibit. Davis received a \$1,000 cash award.*

(Sarasota, FL) "Infusion of Love," Joanna Davis' touching illustration of a heart receiving multicolored, lifegiving transfusions won the "People's Choice Award" at Embracing Our Differences' 18th annual outdoor juried art exhibit celebrating diversity. Davis, who is an elementary art teacher at Garden Elementary School in Venice, received a cash award of \$1,000.

"As an art teacher, I have seen art heal a heart on multiple occasions," says Davis. "For many, art is therapy and can be as soothing for the soul as traditional therapy. If you find that your heart needs healing, try healing with a paintbrush or pencil!" Davis notes that she wanted her work to be appropriate both for young children and for adults. "I wanted young students to see that creating art can cure many ailments. As an adult and a proud ally of the LGBTQ+ community, the message of my piece is clear. Allow that pride into your heart. Accept it as you would any medicine. Become an ally and your heart will become whole."

Davis adds that she is that she is honored to receive the award. "There is no better award than a people's choice award!"

Sarah Wertheimer, executive director of Embracing Our Differences, says that the People's Choice award is determined by a survey that was available to the 254,280 visitors who attended this year's exhibit, which was on display January 20 to April 1. The exhibit will also be on display at Sarasota-Bradenton's Nathan Benderson Park, May 20-August 8.

"It doesn't surprise me Joanna's work touched the hearts of so many visitors who saw it," says Wertheimer. "It elegantly communicates a message of interdependence and connection with each other across the spectrums of colors. The symbolism is simple and powerful—and the work itself purely delightful."

For 18 years, Embracing Our Differences has drawn on the passion and perception of artists, students, writers and others to create powerful statements of diversity and acceptance in its annual outdoor public art exhibition consisting of 50 billboard-sized works of art and accompanying quotes. The scale and impact of this outdoor exhibition has continued to grow, attracting 3,562,280 visitors since its inception. This exhibit is the heart of a year-round program of activities designed to use art as a catalyst to create awareness and promote diversity. *For more information, call 941-404-5710 or visit [www.embracingourdifferences.org](http://www.embracingourdifferences.org).*

### **About Embracing Our Differences**

Embracing Our Differences is a not-for-profit organization that uses the transformational power of art and education to celebrate and promote the diversity of the human family. It accomplishes this through an annual, large-scale outdoor juried art exhibition and a comprehensive series of educational initiatives, programs and resources designed for teachers and students. Visit [www.embracingourdifferences.org](http://www.embracingourdifferences.org).

