



PEOPLE & BUSINESS

## EOD Receives Grant for Tourist Development

By [Scene](#) |

**August 25, 2021 – Sarasota**

The Sarasota County Commission awarded Embracing Our Differences a \$43,157 Tourist Development Cultural/Arts grant to help fund its 2022 exhibition season, which runs January 15 through April 10 in Sarasota’s Bayfront Park. For 18 years, Embracing Our Differences has drawn on the passion and perception of artists, writers, students 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 more than 3.6 million visitors since its inception in 2004. This exhibit is the heart of a year-round program of initiatives designed to use art and words as a catalyst to create awareness and promote diversity.

Sarah Wertheimer is Embracing Our Differences’ executive director. “This generous grant supports our commitment to engage viewers locally, nationally, and even

internationally,” she says. “It’s a powerful vote of confidence for our important work.” Wertheimer adds that the 2021 exhibit attracted 384,000 visitors, of which 29 percent came from counties in Florida outside of Sarasota County; 33.5 percent were visitors from out of state; and three and a half percent were international tourists.

“Embracing Our Differences’ annual outdoor exhibit is literally a way of getting art and ideas out in the open,” says Wertheimer. “We’ve developed quite a fan base, both within and outside our region and visitors look forward to seeing it every year. This exhibit is a vital part of the cultural fabric that makes Sarasota a major arts and cultural destination. It sets our region apart and it also affirms that we’re connected to global issues of the day.”

According to Wertheimer, the call for artworks and inspirational quotes for the 2021 exhibit resulted in 15,912 entries pouring in from 128 countries and 48 states. Students from 412 schools around the world submitted artwork or quotes to the juried exhibit; more than 65 percent of submissions were from students.

**A call for art and quote submissions for the 2022 exhibit is ongoing through October 6.**

*For more information about Embracing Our Differences, call 941-404-5710, or visit [www.embracingourdifferences.org](http://www.embracingourdifferences.org).*