

## Embracing Our Differences awards five college scholarships



Emilia Przepiora of Riverview High School, Melanie De La Rosa-Rein of Booker High School, and Kennedy Hart of IMG Academy – all high school seniors who served as members of their school’s Coexistence Club – were recently awarded \$1,000 four-year renewable scholarships by Embracing Our Differences.

They join Chloe Labrecque and Cam Pham, rising sophomores at the University of Florida who received their first scholarships in 2020.

The students are part of an EOD scholarship initiative that supports students at regional high school Coexistence Clubs. The club members serve as docents for thousands of students from area elementary and middle schools who visit EOD's outdoor exhibit each year in addition to leading student-driven initiatives in their schools to promote inclusion and acceptance.

“We are thrilled to work with all the amazing Coexistence Club students, the dedicated teachers who advise and guide this student-driven initiative and our steadfast supporters who make the Coexistence Club program and scholarships possible,” said Ben Jewell-Plocher, EOD's education director.

Przepiora will be starting at University of Florida in the fall, majoring in psychology. De La Rosa-Rein will be starting at State College of Florida in the fall, majoring in psychology. Hart will be starting at Rice University in the fall, majoring in bioscience.

“I am honored to have received a scholarship from EOD, but that is not what I will remember about being in the Coexistence Club,” Hart said. “Through EOD, I was challenged to be open-minded, embrace different perspectives, and express myself. I will carry these lessons and experiences with me for the rest of my life.”

Labrecque was a Riverview Coexistence Club member and will be a sophomore at University of Florida in the fall, majoring in English. Pham was a Riverview Coexistence Club member and will be a sophomore at the University of Florida in the fall, majoring in business.

“As an Asian-born person, I have always struggled to love my culture because of the judgements I encountered when I first came to the United States,” Pham said. “It was hard to ignore those hate words, yet it felt good in the end when I have realized that I am more than just Asian. We are all humans and more alike than different.”

EOD's 2021 outdoor exhibit has been extended and is on view at Nathan Benderson Park in Sarasota through Aug. 8. For more information about Embracing Our Differences, call 941-404-5710 or visit [embracingourdifferences.org](http://embracingourdifferences.org).

*Submitted by Su Byron*