



# Venice Gondolier

## Venice teacher gives an 'Infusion of Love'

May 1, 2021



Joanna Davis, an art teacher at Garden Elementary School in Venice, stands in front of her work, "Infusion of Love," which recently won the People's Choice Award in Sarasota through the Embracing Our Differences annual exhibit.

**SARASOTA** — A teacher at Garden Elementary School in Venice received the award for People's Choice by visitors checking out the Embracing Our Differences art exhibit in Sarasota.

Joanna Davis teaches art at Garden. Her artwork, "Infusion of Love" shows a heart "receiving multicolored, lifegiving transfusions," according to a news release from Embracing Our Differences.

The event ran Jan. 20 through April 1 and was Embracing Our Differences 18th annual outdoor art exhibit that celebrates diversity, it said in the news release.

Davis received an award of \$1,000.

“As an art teacher, I have seen art heal a heart on multiple occasions,” Davis said in the news release. “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.”

In the news release, she said she wanted the art to be appropriate for children and adults.

“I wanted young students to see that creating art can cure many ailments,” she said. “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.”

She said the award was an honor.

“There is no better award than a people’s choice award,” she said.

Embracing Our Differences Executive Director Sarah Wertheimer said more than 250,000 visitors looked at the exhibit.

More than 3.5 million people have visited the exhibitions in the past 18 years — with the art being displayed on 50 canvasses the size of billboard. For more information on it, visit [www.embracingourdifferences.org](http://www.embracingourdifferences.org) or call 941-404-5710.

The work will be displayed at Nathan Benderson Park in Sarasota starting May 20 and running until Aug. 8.

“It doesn’t surprise me Joanna’s work touched the hearts of so many visitors who saw it,” Wertheimer said in the news release. “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.”