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Community Foundation of Sarasota County Awards Substantial Grant to Embracing Our Differences

The \$31,488 grant will help fund the cost of EOD's 2020-2021 EdExploreSRQ initiatives, which include curriculum development and virtual field trips to the annual outdoor exhibit.

(Sarasota, FL; January 15, 2021) The Community Foundation of Sarasota County recently awarded Embracing Our Differences (EOD) a \$31,488 grant, which will help fund the cost of EOD's 2020-2021 EdExploreSRQ initiatives, including curriculum development and virtual field trips to the annual outdoor exhibit. This grant is provided by the Embracing Our Differences EdExploreSRQ Fund, which was created by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and The Patterson Foundation to raise awareness of and increase access to programming offered by Sarasota's artistic, cultural, and scientific organizations. EdExploreSRQ is a web-based search platform that transforms the way Sarasota County teachers, principals, and parents identify and discover experiential learning opportunities in the community.

"EdExploreSRQ is a vital portal for educators and students to experience hands-on learning opportunities offered by area cultural groups—and it's especially important now during the pandemic," says Sarah Wertheimer, EOD's executive director. "Thanks to this substantial support from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County,

Embracing Our Differences is able offer our educational outreach programs via online platforms to reach broader audiences.”

According to Wertheimer, during the 2019-2020 school year, more than 20,000 students participated in EOD’s EdExploreSRQ programs and/or classroom curriculum—and she expects a similar number to participate this year. When the pandemic hit in March, Wertheimer says that the EOD team worked quickly to create programs that can be easily accessed via virtual platforms. These include annual teacher workshops and intensives, which provide area educators with skills, strategies and resources relating to arts appreciation, character building and diversity education. *Some of these initiatives can be seen here: <https://www.embracingourdifferences.org/virtual>.*

Since 2004, EOD’s outdoor art exhibit, celebrating the theme of “enriching lives through diversity,” showcases the art and words of thousands of artists and writers from around the world, including hundreds of area-based students and educators. Embracing Our Differences’ annual outdoor exhibits are the heart of a year-round program of activities designed to use art as a catalyst to create awareness and promote diversity.

The 2021 exhibit will run January 20 through April 1 at Bayfront Park in downtown Sarasota.

For more information about Embracing Our Differences, call 941-404-5710, or visit www.embracingourdifferences.org.

About the Community Foundation of Sarasota County:

The Community Foundation of Sarasota County is a public charity founded in 1979 by the Southwest Florida Estate Planning Council as a resource for caring individuals and the causes they support, enabling them to make a charitable impact on the community. With assets of \$421 million in more than 1,500 charitable funds, the Community Foundation awarded grants and

scholarships totaling \$48.9 million dollars last year in the areas of education, the arts, health and human services, civic engagement, animal welfare and the environment. Since its founding, the Community Foundation has been able to grant more than \$323 million to area nonprofit organizations to our community thanks to the generosity of charitable individuals, families, and businesses. For more information, visit www.CFSarasota.org or call (941) 955-3000.

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.