



Barancik boosts EOD initiative

Celebrating its 20th anniversary, Embracing Our Differences is seeing a boost to its education programming, allowing it to serve more teachers and students in Sarasota and Manatee County schools and to hire additional staff to support projects.

Part of that growth is thanks to a recent \$100,000 matching grant from the Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation.

While Embracing Our Differences is best known for its annual international art exhibition, the organization's year-round education initiatives include professional development opportunities for educators, reading days, unity days, and other learning programs and events.

Since 2004, more than 529,000 students have participated in these programs, including 52,274 students and 1,808 teachers during the 2021-22 school year alone.

'Some of our best work happens inside school classrooms across Sarasota and Manatee counties,' EOD executive director Sarah Wertheimer said. 'Our ongoing educational initiatives touched 10,000 more students last year than the year before. Teachers who participate in these programs overwhelmingly rate them as meaningful and relevant educational experiences for their students.'

Wertheimer said EOD's 20th anniversary theme is 'Embracing Kindness.'

'We invite the community to join us in creating a world where kindness, respect and individuality are valued,' Wertheimer said.

EOD's signature outdoor public art exhibition has continued to grow, attracting more than 4 million visitors since its inception. Next year's Bayfront Park exhibit runs Jan. 18-March 12.

'Embracing Our Differences has brought the world to our doorstep with a common message of love and acceptance for all,' said Teri A Hansen, Barancik Foundation president and CEO. 'It's really quite amazing that no matter what country the artist of quote comes from, the message of love for humanity resonates across the globe. It gives me hope for the future.'

For more information about Embracing Our Differences, call 941-404-5710, or visit embracingourdifferences.org. To participate in the Barancik challenge, visit embracingourdifferences.org/donate.

