

MEDIA CONTACTS

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Embracing Our Differences Receives Arts Appreciation Grant from Gulf Coast Community Foundation

The \$50,000 grant will help fund the organization's year-round educational initiatives.

(November 17, 2023) Sarah Wertheimer, the executive director of Embracing Our Differences, recently announced that the organization has received a \$50,000 Arts Appreciation Grant from the Barbara W. Herndon Charitable Fund at Gulf Coast Community Foundation (Gulf Coast). The grant will fund various aspects of the organization's year-round educational initiatives.

Wertheimer says with 1,981 teachers and 58,122 students participating in the organization's exhibit and educational programs in 2023 alone, Embracing Our Differences continues to lead as one of the largest education programs in southwest Florida. "The resources we provide to educators and students are a top priority for us. We're deeply grateful that Gulf Coast Community Foundation shares the same values we do regarding education and lends its support to positively impact the lives of regional students and educators."

One of the initiatives the grant will support is EOD's Make-A-Day-of-It! program, which provides free bus transportation for thousands of students and teachers to visit the outdoor exhibit and other arts and cultural venues. Wertheimer adds that a portion of the grant will also be directed to Embracing Our Differences' annual teacher

workshops and intensives, which provide area educators with skills, strategies and resources relating to arts appreciation and character building.

“We are thrilled to provide this Arts Appreciation Grant to our strong nonprofit partner, Embracing Our Differences. Through the transformative power of the arts, they educate and inspire to create a better world, which parallels with Gulf Coast’s vision of thriving communities with opportunities for all. Through their work with students, educators, and the entire community, Embracing Our Differences is making a meaningful difference in our region and we are grateful,” said Gulf Coast President and CEO Phillip Lanham.

For 20 years, Embracing Our Differences has drawn on the passion and perception of artists, students, writers, and others to create powerful statements of inclusion, kindness and respect 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 4.3 million visitors since its inception. This exhibit is the heart of a year-round program of activities designed to use art as a catalyst to create awareness and promote diversity. **Next year’s Bayfront Park exhibit runs January 21-April 14, 2024. For the first time since 2004, the exhibit will also be displayed in St. Petersburg, Florida’s Poynter Park March 2-March 31, 2024.**

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

About Gulf Coast Community Foundation

Headquartered in Venice, Fla., and with a second office in downtown Sarasota, Fla., Gulf Coast

Community Foundation has transformed the region through bold and proactive philanthropy for over 25 years. Serving the needs of the region as a partner in philanthropy and leader in community initiatives, Gulf Coast has surpassed granting \$510 million in the areas of: health and human services, civic and economic development, education, arts and culture, and the environment. Gulf Coast was named one of the “Best Nonprofits To Work For” nationally by *The NonProfit Times* in 2010, 2011, 2017, 2020, 2021, and 2023. To learn more visit GulfCoastCF.org and follow us on Facebook at @GulfCoastCommFnd.

About Embracing Our Differences

Embracing Our Differences is a nonprofit 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.