



Embracing Our Differences Welcomes Patrick Arthur Jackson

By [Sarasota Scene](#) |

November 11, 2024 | Sarasota

Embracing Our Differences recently welcomed Patrick Arthur Jackson as its new vice president of learning and engagement. In this role, Jackson will create and facilitate educational initiatives that support the organization’s mission and vision.

Prior to joining EOD, Jackson served as the manager of education, outreach, and program design at The Woodson African American Museum of Florida, where he led strategic initiatives that enhanced community engagement and expanded the museum’s impact. Before that, Jackson was a part of the education staff at American Stage, before serving as the organization’s associate artistic producer.

Sarah Wertheimer, President & CEO of Embracing Our Differences, says that she is “thrilled to welcome Patrick to our team. His passion for education and deep commitment to community engagement will be invaluable as we continue to expand our programs and impact. We believe his leadership will help us advance our mission and programs, making us an even stronger voice for acceptance and inclusion in our region.” She adds that Jackson will oversee the development and implementation of a

wide range of educational programs, including professional development workshops, curriculum design, and literacy initiatives.

Wertheimer notes that this transition comes as the organization bids a “bittersweet farewell” to Ben Jewell-Plocher, who served as EOD’s learning and engagement director for five years before accepting a position at Virginia Tech. “We wish Ben the best in his new role, knowing that such opportunities foster growth,” says Wertheimer. “His visionary leadership revitalized our education program and created

initiatives that significantly enhanced our community impact. Ben's commitment to fostering inclusiveness in regional schools has left a lasting mark on our organization, and we are deeply grateful for all he accomplished during his time with us."

Reflecting on his new role, Jackson says "it's an honor to join Embracing Our Differences, building on Ben's legacy to foster a culture of inclusivity and self-empowerment. Together with our community, I look forward to creating programs that not only uplift but also empower people to embrace their uniqueness and thrive in their own stories."

Jackson's educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts in Drama from Morehouse College, along with specialized certifications such as the National Leaders of Color Fellowship from South Arts, and a certificate in leadership from the Nonprofit Leadership Center. He is an alumnus of the Florida Studio Theatre Professional Training Program; a licensed clergy member; serves on various boards; and actively participates in central Florida's arts community as an actor, director, and producer. Throughout his career, Jackson has demonstrated a passion for advancing social change and empowering undervalued communities. His leadership philosophy reflects his commitment to creating inclusive spaces where all voices are heard and celebrated.

For 21 years, Embracing Our Differences has delighted viewers with its annual outdoor display of 50 billboard-sized works of art and accompanying quotations. This high-profile art exhibition draws on the passion and perception of artists, students, and writers, to create powerful statements of inclusion, kindness and respect. The scale and impact of this open-air art show has continued to grow, attracting more than 4.8 million visitors since its inception. EOD's annual exhibition is the heart of a year-round program of activities using art as a catalyst to create awareness and promote diversity.

Embracing Our Differences' next outdoor exhibition runs Jan. 19-April 13, 2025, in Bayfront Park, Sarasota; and March 1-March 31, 2025, in Poynter Park, St. Petersburg.

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