

## MEDIA CONTACTS

Sarah Wertheimer ▪ 941-404-5710 ▪ [sarah@embracingourdifferences.org](mailto:sarah@embracingourdifferences.org)

Su Byron ▪ 941-726-8468 ▪ [su@subyronenterprises.com](mailto:su@subyronenterprises.com)

### **Embracing Our Differences Receives Jackie Robinson Grant**

*The \$20,000 grant from the Rays Baseball Foundation and Rowdies Soccer Fund will help expand EOD's vital arts-based education programming in Pinellas County schools.*

(April 22, 2025) Sarah Wertheimer, President & CEO of Embracing Our Differences, announced that the organization has received a \$20,000 Jackie Robinson Grant from the Rays Baseball Foundation and Rowdies Soccer Fund. The grant is part of the Tampa Bay Rays' annual tribute to Jackie Robinson and his historic role in integrating Major League Baseball. It supports nonprofits that exemplify Robinson's nine core values: courage, determination, teamwork, persistence, integrity, citizenship, justice, commitment, and excellence.

Wertheimer explains that the grant will support expanded access to EOD's large-scale outdoor art exhibition in St. Petersburg—launched two years ago—by funding field trips for elementary students across Pinellas County, with a focus on underserved schools. It will also help introduce two successful Sarasota-based literacy programs, Bucket Fillers Reading Day and Embracing Our Differences Reading Day to Pinellas students for the first time.

“We're honored to be recognized by the Rays and Rowdies Foundation and to carry forward Jackie Robinson's legacy,” says Wertheimer. “This support allows us to

reach more students in Pinellas County with programming that fosters empathy, inclusion, and critical thinking through art and literacy.”

Wertheimer noted that more than 55,000 students and 2,000 educators participated in EOD’s programming during the 2023–2024 school year, affirming the organization’s place as one of the largest arts-based education programs in Southwest Florida.

The Jackie Robinson Grant was established in 2020 to support organizations that reflect the values Robinson championed on and off the field. Embracing Our Differences is one of five nonprofit recipients of this year’s awards.

For 22 years, Embracing Our Differences has captivated audiences with its annual outdoor exhibition of 50 billboard-sized works of art and quotations celebrating inclusion, kindness, and respect. With more than 4.8 million visitors to date, the exhibition remains the centerpiece of a year-round education program that promotes respect and connection to community through cultural field trips, reading days, student clubs, and teacher workshops.

“Our education programs give us the chance to reach and inspire thousands of students and educators—regionally and around the world—through the transformative power of the arts,” says Wertheimer.

“Expanding these efforts into Pinellas County is a natural and necessary step in continuing the work of building stronger, more inclusive communities—work that honors the values Jackie Robinson stood for.”

*For more information about Embracing Our Differences, call 941-404-5710, or visit [www.embracingourdifferences.org](http://www.embracingourdifferences.org).*

**Photo caption:**

- *Patrick Arthur Jackson, Embracing Our Differences' vice president of learning and engagement, represented the organization recently at Tropicana Field as one of five recipients of the Tampa Bay Rays' 2025 Jackie Robinson Grant. The Rays awarded a total of \$100,000 to nonprofits exemplifying Robinson's nine core values.*

**About The Tampa Bay Rays**

The Tampa Bay Rays mission is to energize the community through the magic of Rays baseball. The organization is committed to building a strong community bond through meaningful interactions and charitable donations and has proudly represented Major League Baseball since 1998.

**About Embracing Our Differences**

Embracing Our Differences is a nonprofit organization that employs the transformational power of art and education to promote a more inclusive community that celebrates individuality and common humanity. 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](http://www.embracingourdifferences.org).