

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Louies Modern Embraces Thor's Differences
Embracing Our Differences Partners with Louies Modern
To Celebrate Diversity and the 2014 Giving Challenge
May 6, 5 p.m. ▪ Louies Modern

This free event, part of the 2014 Giving Challenge's Business Partnership initiative, was inspired by the true story of how Thor, Embracing Our Differences' four-legged mascot, was welcomed to Louies Modern after being discriminated against by another establishment.

(Sarasota, FL) Embracing Our Differences (EOD) and Louies Modern, an establishment in downtown Sarasota, have joined forces to present "Louies Embraces Thor's Differences," Tuesday, May 6, 5 p.m., at Louies Modern, 1289 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. This collaboration is part of the 2014 Giving Challenge's "Business Partnership" initiative. The free event features artwork from EOD's past and present exhibits, music performed by pianist Danielle Furst, and inspired hors d'oeuvres. Along with meeting EOD board members, staff, high school docents and art and quote winners, guests can make donations to Embracing Our Differences, which is eligible to win a \$5,000 grant as part of the Giving Challenge, a 24-hour online fundraising event.

What's Thor's have to do with it?

Michael Shelton is the executive director of Embracing Our Differences. When he and his Maltese puppy, Thor, were turned away from a downtown restaurant recently, he ended up at Louies Modern. It was the start of a beautiful collaboration.

“It was our first visit to Louies Modern and we were made to feel welcome—even though Thor is a dog,” says Shelton. “This is bigger than just allowing man's best friend to be with their human companions. The Seidensticker family, the people who own Louies Modern, are accepting, open-minded people who are always looking for ways to enhance their customers' experience. It's a heartwarming demonstration of how diversity and inclusion are good for business.” Shelton adds that Thor will be on hand to greet guests.

The Community Foundation of Sarasota County, The Patterson Foundation, Manatee Community Foundation, William G. and Marie Selby Foundation, Charlotte Community Foundation, and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation partnered to make the 2014 Giving Challenge possible for local organizations with completed profiles in The Giving Partner, an online tool helping donors make more informed decisions about philanthropy. The Giving Challenge takes place May 6-7, from noon to noon. ***Donors can make their gifts online at www.GivingPartnerChallenge.org by searching for Embracing Our Differences.***

Since 2004, Embracing Our Differences' annual juried art exhibit has graced downtown Sarasota's bayfront with billboard-sized images created by artists, writers and students from around the world reflecting their interpretation of the message, “enriching lives through diversity.” Last year, in celebration of the exhibit's tenth anniversary, the exhibit made a successful debut in Bradenton and returned there this year for an expanded two-month run. The Embracing Our Differences exhibits are showcased simultaneously in Sarasota's Island Park and at Bradenton's Riverwalk, through May. *For more information about Embracing Our Differences, call 941-404-5710, or visit www.embracingourdifferences.org.*