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Community Foundation of Sarasota County Awards Grant to Embracing Our Differences for its Unity Days High School Initiative

The \$2,000 grant was issued from the McCauley-Brown Fund. The Unity Days program engages Sarasota County high school students and staff in a day of team-building activities that inspire cooperation, communication and empathy.

(Sarasota, FL) The McCauley-Brown Fund of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County awarded Embracing Our Differences a \$2,000 grant for its 2019-2020 Unity Days program. The initiative engages Sarasota County high school students and staff in a day of team-building activities that inspire cooperation, communication and empathy. During the 2019-20 school year, EOD will provide Unity Days events to all seven Sarasota County public high schools.

Sarah Wertheimer, EOD's executive director, explains that the organization launched the program last year at Sarasota High School. "After 100 percent of the participants testified that they learned something new and the activities helped them interact better with others, Sarasota County school district administrators requested that EOD provide these special events at all public high schools in Sarasota County."

Wertheimer explains that, through a series of activities facilitated by a trained professional, approximately 75 students at each school will be asked to participate.

Prior to each event, a core group of student leaders will be identified and meet

multiple times with the facilitator to receive training to help lead the event. The color orange will be worn as a visually compelling expression of solidarity and as a symbol of unity, sending the unified message to students that they are not alone.

“Thanks to this important grant from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, more than 500 students will engage in critical thinking and inquiry that will provide them with a safe and healthy means of discovering their own identities and the importance of supporting their peers,” says Wertheimer. “With the knowledge and confidence gained through these experiences, students become active leaders, creating an inclusive culture in their respective schools and communities. By building a community of diverse student leaders, we will ensure that students feel safer and more secure in their schools.”

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

About the Community Foundation of Sarasota County

The Community Foundation of Sarasota County is a public charity founded in 1979 by the Southwest Florida Estate Planning Council as a resource for caring individuals and the causes they support, enabling them to make a charitable impact on the community. With assets of over \$398 million in more than 1,400 charitable funds, the Community Foundation awarded grants and scholarships totaling \$34 million dollars last year in the areas of education, the arts, health and human services, civic engagement, animal welfare and the environment. For more information, visit www.CFSarasota.org or call (941) 955-3000.

About Embracing Our Differences

Embracing Our Differences is a not-for-profit 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.