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Embracing Our Differences' 3rd Annual Embracing Dr. Seuss' Differences Day:

Seeking Volunteer Readers!

What better way to celebrate the 113th birthday of this beloved writer of children's books than by reading to a group of children?

"You're never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child." –

Dr. Seuss

(Sarasota-Manatee, FL) Embracing Our Differences is partnering with Sarasota County and Manatee County elementary schools and the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading to celebrate the 113th birthday of Dr. Seuss on March 2. **The organization seeks community volunteers to read to children in elementary schools throughout Sarasota County, including Venice, Englewood, Nokomis, North Port, and north Sarasota, and throughout Manatee County, including Palmetto, Ellenton and areas east of I-75.** Volunteers can get more information and complete an online application form at <http://embracingourdifferences.org/Seuss>. **The deadline to apply to volunteer is February 15.** For more information about Embracing Our Differences and the 2016 "Embracing Dr. Seuss' Differences Day," visit www.embracingourdifferences.org.

"Dr. Seuss epitomizes a love of children and learning," says Brenna Wilhm, education director for Embracing Our Differences. "His use of rhyme is an effective tool for teaching young children about the joys of reading and language. When we celebrate Dr. Seuss and reading, we send a clear message to our children that reading is fun and important."

The books selected for this year's readings are designed to stimulate conversations regarding diversity, bullying, character education and respect for others:

- Pre-K: - **Green Eggs and Ham**: All about trying new things, when those new things seem strange or unappealing.
- Kindergarten: **Hooper Humperdink...? Not Him!** The narrator's having a party, and there's one kid he intends not to invite. Eventually though, he opts for inclusiveness.
- 1st Grade: **Horton Hatches an Egg**: Horton faces down danger and derision to hatch an egg that isn't his. A classic.
- 2nd Grade: **Butter Battle Book**: A grandfather tells a young boy about the giant wall that separates the Yooks and Zooks.
- 3rd Grade: **The Lorax**: Dr. Seuss pleads for the planet.
- 4th Grade: **Hooray For Diffendooper Day**: The school is at risk of being closed for underperforming on standardized tests.
- 5th Grade: **The Sneetches**: Intended as a satire of discrimination between races and cultures, this book was specifically inspired by Dr. Seuss' opposition to anti-Semitism.

"What better way to celebrate the birthday of this beloved author than by sharing these wonderful stories with children," adds Wilhm. "It's an inspired experience for young and old alike."

Since 2004, downtown Sarasota's Island Park has been the backdrop for Embracing Our Differences' colorful, larger-than-life canvases integrating powerful imagery and thought-provoking messages celebrating diversity. The scale and impact of this outdoor exhibition has continued to grow, attracting over 2 million visitors since its inception. **The 2016 exhibit is set for March 30 to May 31 in Sarasota's Island Park.**

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

About the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is a collaborative effort by foundations, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and a life of active citizenship. The Campaign focuses on an important predictor of school success and high school graduation: grade-level reading by the end of third grade. **Visit www.gradelevelreadingsuncoast.net.**

About Embracing Our Differences

Embracing Our Differences is a project of Coexistence, Inc., a local non-profit that began in 2004. The project showcases a community-based outdoor exhibit promoting positive, inspirational artistic and verbal expressions of inclusion, acceptance and respect. The mission of Embracing Our Differences is to use the transformational power of the arts to educate and inspire to create a better world. **Visit www.embracingourdifferences.org.**