

MEDIA CONTACTS

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Embracing Our Differences Awarded Grant for its LGBTQ+ and Educator Outreach Initiatives

The \$2,750 grant, issued from the Our Sarasota Fund and the McCauley-Brown Fund of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, will fund projects that expand LGBTQ+ inclusivity and educator outreach initiatives.

(Sarasota, FL) The Our Sarasota Fund and the McCauley-Brown Fund of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County awarded Embracing Our Differences a \$2,750 grant in recognition of the organization's outstanding work promoting diversity and LGBTQ+ issues. The Our Sarasota Fund is a charitable group focused on assisting local non-profit organizations that offer programs that improve the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

According to Michael Shelton, EOD's executive director, the funds will be directed to projects that expand LGBTQ+ inclusivity and educator workshops.

"An ever-evolving component of our education initiatives are facilitating educator workshops that provide teachers with the best practices necessary to create safe environments that inspire our youth to develop a sense of identity and confidence, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, color or religion," he says.

Shelton adds that the late Dick McCauley and Clayton Brown were close friends who "shared my belief that everyone deserves an environment in which they can thrive and achieve their full potential regardless of their gender or sexual orientation. We're

grateful to the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and to the founders of these funds for their commitment to providing resources to create an environment in which educators recognize that a healthy respect for diversity and inclusion is the cornerstone of any progressive society.”

Since 2004, EOD’s outdoor art exhibit, celebrating the theme of "enriching lives through diversity," showcases the art and words of thousands of artists and writers from around the world, including hundreds of area-based students and educators. Crucial to the organization’s mission are its award-winning education initiatives. Presented in partnership with the regional school district and nationally recognized educators, these programs positively impact the lives of thousands of area teachers and students every year. These include annual workshops and retreats providing diversity curricula for area educators, free bus transportation for students and teachers to visit area cultural venues, and student docent programs in high schools. With more than 42,000 students participating in these programs in 2017, Embracing Our Differences continues to lead as one of the largest education programs in southwest Florida.

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

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.

About the Community Foundation of Sarasota County

The Community Foundation 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 \$304 million in more than 1,300 charitable funds, the Community Foundation awarded grants and scholarships totaling more than \$24.8 million dollars this past year in the areas of education, health and human services, the arts, animal welfare, and the environment. Since our founding, more than \$184 million has been invested back into the community through grants and scholarships. For more information, visit www.CFSarasota.org.