

## MEDIA CONTACTS

Sarah Wertheimer ▪ 941-404-5710 ▪ sarah@embracingourdifferences.org

Su Byron ▪ 941-955-8103 ▪ subyrone@verizon.net

### **Embracing Our Differences Welcomes New Board Member**

*Larry Lev, a longtime leader in the national YMCA movement, brings his skills in community service, fundraising, and implementing creative strategies in awareness-building to the EOD board.*

(Sarasota, Florida) Dennis McGillicuddy, co-founder and board chair of Embracing Our Differences, recently announced that the organization has welcomed Larry Lev to its board.

Before retiring in 2015, Larry Lev served as senior vice president and COO of Metropolitan YMCA of the Oranges (2009-2015), New Jersey's largest YMCA association, boasting six branches, and a workforce of more than 1,000. During Lev's tenure, the association grew from a budget of \$23 million to \$32 million. In his game-changing term as president and CEO of the YMCA of the Palms in Naples (2006-2009), the annual campaign increased from \$360,000 in 2005 to \$829,000 in 2008. He also raised \$2.5 million for a project that transformed a museum facility into new child development center. In all, Lev spent 47 years with the YMCA in locations around the country and the world.

Sarah Wertheimer, the executive director of Embracing Our Differences, has seen first-hand evidence of Lev's desire to make a difference.

"One of the first things Larry did when he 'retired' to Sarasota in 2015, is come to EOD's offices and ask how he could help," she says. "Since then, he's volunteered

taking groups on exhibit tours in Bayfront Park, assisting with in-school programs, and serving on our Ambassador Circle. He's committed to championing the virtues of equality and inclusion in our community. He shows that determination in everything he does." Wertheimer adds that Lev's seasoned skills and track record in fundraising, program development, and strategic planning, will prove invaluable to EOD's mission. "We're honored that he's joined our team."

Lev says that, "I'm committed to working with Embracing Our Differences. I strongly believe in its mission of providing resources and initiatives to help create an environment in which Floridians recognize that a healthy respect for diversity and inclusion is the cornerstone of any progressive society."

The Embracing Our Differences board of directors includes Dennis McGillicuddy, chair; Graci McGillicuddy, vice-chair; Richard Bergman, secretary/treasurer; Larry Lev, John Weber, and Chief Judge Charles E. Williams. The board wishes to acknowledge the passing of one of its founding members Carol Poteat-Buchanan (1929-2018), a celebrated philanthropist, education advocate, and beloved champion of human rights. *For more information about Embracing Our Differences, please call 941-404-5710 or visit [www.embracingourdifferences.org](http://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](http://www.embracingourdifferences.org).**