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“Enriching Lives Through Diversity”

Call to Artists and Writers For

13th Annual Embracing Our Differences Exhibit

Original works of art and statements that celebrate the theme of "enriching lives through diversity" are being accepted through January 4, 2016. Embracing Our Differences' 13th annual outdoor exhibit is March 28-May 31, 2016, in Sarasota.

(Sarasota, FL) Embracing Our Differences invites artists and writers to submit art and inspirational statements for its 13th annual outdoor art exhibit celebrating diversity. The work of 39 artists and writers will be selected for the exhibit, which runs March 28-May 31, 2016, in Sarasota's Island Park. Final selections, based on artistic excellence and originality reflecting the theme, "enriching lives through diversity," will be made by a panel of professional artists, curators and art professionals. The artwork will also be evaluated on how effectively it reads when enlarged to the exhibit's billboard-size dimensions of 16 x 12.5 feet. There is no submission fee or limit on the number of entries. Submissions must be submitted online or postmarked no later than January 4, 2016. **Artists and writers can submit directly online at:**

<http://embracingourdifferences.org/submit-art/>. For more information about Embracing Our Differences, call 941-404-5710 or visit www.embracingourdifferences.org.

"We're always thrilled by the high quality of art and statements we receive, and how powerfully they express the message of celebrating diversity," says Michael Shelton, executive director of Embracing Our Differences. He adds that anyone can enter, including professional and amateur artists, photographers, teachers and students. For the 2015 exhibit, the organization received more than 6,400 works of art and statements from people representing 80 countries and 42 states. Students from 118 elementary, middle and high schools comprised 60 percent of the submissions. A total of \$3,000 in cash awards will be presented in the form of three separate awards; \$1,000 each for "Best-in-Show Adult;" "Best-in-Show Student;" and "People's Choice." Both "Best-in-Show" awards will be granted by a three-judge panel of art professionals, while the "People's Choice" award is determined by visitors to the 2016 exhibit.

Another important component of the Embracing Our Differences art exhibits are the inspirational quotations that accompany each work of art.

"The combination of visual art and the written word adds a deeper dimension to the overall experience," says Shelton, adding that quote entries must be original and 20 words or less. A \$1,000 cash award will be presented to the best original quotation exhibited.

This year, both artists and writers will be able to submit their work online. "Last year we were able to introduce online submissions for art entries. This year we're pleased to offer online submissions for both artists and writers. In the years prior to that, entrants had to submit their work by mail, from such distant countries as Brazil, Iran, Israel, Japan and South Korea," explains Shelton. "The online accessibility has already had a very positive impact on the number of nations that we receive admissions from."

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 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. Information: www.embracingourdifferences.org; 941-404-5710.