

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Woman's Exchange  
Awards Grant to Embracing Our Differences**

*The \$2,500 grant will help provide free bus transportation for thousands of area students to visit EOD's annual outdoor exhibits and other regional arts and cultural venues and events.*

(Sarasota, FL) The Woman's Exchange recently awarded Embracing Our Differences a \$2,500 grant to fund the organization's Make-A-Day-of-It! program. This celebrated educational outreach initiative provides free bus transportation for thousands of area students and teachers to visit Embracing Our Differences' annual outdoor exhibits, as well as other regional arts and cultural venues and events.

"We're honored to receive this grant," says Michael Shelton, executive director of Embracing Our Differences. "These funds open a world of possibilities for thousands of students and educators in our area." Shelton adds that participants in the Make-A-Day-of-It! program not only experience the Embracing Our Differences exhibits at Sarasota's Island Park and Bradenton's Riverwalk, they also receive transportation to another venue or event on the same day.

“The celebration of diversity doesn’t end with the experience of our exhibit,” says Shelton. “Participants will see that theme expressed in art, theater, music and science at other venues throughout the day.”

How?

Shelton explains that Embracing Our Differences coordinates with partner organizations to "present a curriculum that complements our mission to promote art appreciation, character building, and diversity education. For example, The Ringling's education department will create a program exploring themes of personal expression and cultural identity in specific works of art. Other groups will collaborate in the same way. Participants will see that the themes we express at our exhibits are truly universal.”

The Make-A-Day-of-It! program currently partners with Florida Studio Theatre, Mote Marine Laboratory, Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, The Ringling, Sarasota Film Festival, and Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. Shelton emphasizes that, thanks to this collaboration, students are able to experience a life-changing day of diversity appreciation. "The additional cost of transportation adds up to an enormous educational experience," he says. Nearly 14,000 students participated during the 2014 school year.

“We’re all in this together, says Shelton. “The Woman's Exchange and our partner organizations share Embracing Our Differences' deep commitment to the human family.”

This year’s Embracing Our Differences exhibit runs through May 22 at Island Park and at Riverwalk. *For more information about this exhibit or Embracing Our Differences, please call 941-404-5710 or visit [www.embracingourdifferences.org](http://www.embracingourdifferences.org).*

**About the Woman's Exchange, Inc.** The Woman's Exchange is a self-sustaining, debt-free organization of vital importance to the community. Through the consignment operation, which consists of more than 260 volunteers and more than 5,000 consignors,

the Woman's Exchange has awarded a total of more than \$7 million in grants and scholarships to support the Arts of Sarasota and Manatee counties.

### **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. **[www.embracingourdifferences.org](http://www.embracingourdifferences.org); 941-404-5710.**

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