



Embracing Our Differences holds bullying workshop for Suncoast educators

Posted: Friday, May 29, 2015 10:50 am



SARASOTA, Fla. -- Embracing Our Differences has partnered with the **Sarasota County** school district and educators from the Anti-Defamation League and Facing History and Ourselves to create a three-day workshop called "Embrace Courage: Bully Prevention in Schools" which is designed to give educators the skills they need to stand up to bullying both on and off campus.

The inaugural workshop will take place June 3-5 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the USF Sarasota-Manatee campus.

The institute is funded, in part, by grants from the Kates Foundation and Gulf Coast Community Foundation.

"No community is immune to the devastating effects of bullying, including cyber bullying. Surveys of Sarasota and Manatee county students show that nearly 40 percent of them fear bullying and that nearly 11 percent have skipped school to avoid it," says Michael Shelton, executive director of Embracing Our Differences.

According to Shelton, 64 educators, responsible for more than 10,000 students from Sarasota and Manatee counties, have already signed up for the workshop.

"We're very grateful to the Kates Foundation and the Gulf Coast Community

Foundation for helping make this a reality,” he says. “We’re also thankful to USF Sarasota-Manatee for opening up its campus to host this event.”

Over the course of the workshop, teachers and counselors, representing grades K-12, will create lesson and action plans to be used to provide support to both students and faculty in the event of bullying encounters.

Community partners, including district representatives, law enforcement officers and counselors, will provide information regarding local resources.

“We hope to give area educators access to the resources that are necessary to create a safe environment for their students,” says Bernadette Bennett, program specialist for K-12 social studies for the School Board of [Sarasota County](#), and chair of Embracing Our Differences’ Education Committee. “We understand that things don't change overnight; we're not going to end bullying, but we are going to do our part to heighten awareness about it.”

This workshop is the latest in a variety of education initiatives offered by Embracing Our Differences.

Embracing Our Differences is best known for their annual outdoor exhibit at [Island Park](#) and Riverwalk, which showcases artwork on "larger-than-life" canvases which integrates powerful imagery with thought-provoking messages to celebrate diversity.

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