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“Enriching Lives Through Diversity” Call to Artists and Writers For 12th 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 5, 2015. Embracing Our Differences' 12th annual outdoor exhibit is March 29-May 31, 2015, in Sarasota and Bradenton.

(Sarasota, FL) Embracing Our Differences invites artists and writers to submit art and inspirational statements for its 12th annual outdoor art exhibit celebrating diversity. The work of 39 artists and writers will be selected for the exhibit, which runs March 29-May 31, 2015, in Sarasota's Island Park and Bradenton's Riverwalk. 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 will read when enlarged to the exhibit's billboard-size dimensions of 16 x 12.5 feet. A total of \$3,000 in awards will be presented. There is no submission fee or limit on the number of entries. Submissions must be submitted online or postmarked no later than January 5, 2015. **Artists and writers can submit directly online at:**

artists.html. 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 impact and importance of diversity in our lives," 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 2014 exhibit, the organization received more than 6,000 works of art and statements from people representing 52 countries and 44 states. Students from 126 elementary, middle and high schools comprised 60 percent of the submissions.

New this year is a web portal that enables artists to submit their work online. "Prior to this, artists have had to submit their artwork by mail, from such distant countries as Brazil, Iran, Israel, Japan and South Korea," explains Shelton. "It will be very interesting to see the impact this accessibility will have on submissions."

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.

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 arts as a catalyst for creating awareness and promoting, throughout our community, the value of diversity, the benefits of inclusion and the significance of the active rejection of hatred and prejudice.