

TAMPA BAY NEWSWIRE

Gulf Coast Community Foundation Awards Major Grant to Embracing Our Differences

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The \$40,000 Arts Appreciation grant will help fund the organization's 2020 exhibition, which runs January 18-April 5 in Bayfront Park in downtown Sarasota. It will also empower Embracing Our Differences' celebrated educational outreach initiatives.

(Sarasota, FL) Celebrating its 25th anniversary, Gulf Coast Community Foundation recently awarded Embracing Our Differences a \$40,000 Arts Appreciation grant, which offers unrestricted funding to area arts organizations in support of their artistic missions. According to Sarah Wertheimer, Embracing Our Differences' executive director, the grant will help fund the organization's 2020 outdoor exhibition celebrating diversity, which runs January 18 through April 5 at Bayfront Park in downtown Sarasota. The grant will also be directed to empower EOD's annual educational outreach programs and initiatives.

“Embracing Our Differences has a clear mission to promote diversity through the power of art and education,” says Wertheimer. “Gulf Coast Community Foundation has supported our mission since the beginning—and we’re deeply grateful. Their profound commitment has played a pivotal role in our growth and will empower us to celebrate the amazing spectrum of human potential in the years to come.”

Wertheimer says that the grant will also provide vital resources for Embracing Our Differences’ annual outreach initiatives, including its Make-A-Day-of-It! program, which provides free bus transportation for thousands of students and teachers to visit the outdoor exhibit and other arts and cultural venues. She adds that a portion of the grant will also be directed to Embracing Our Differences’ annual teacher workshops and intensives, which provide area educators with skills, strategies and resources relating to arts appreciation, character building and diversity education.

“This grant opens up a universe of life-changing possibilities for students and educators throughout the area. Students come away from our initiatives with practical, positive strategies. They learn to reject destructive attitudes and embrace the full potential of inclusion and diversity. Last year, more than 950 teachers and 43,000 students participated in our programs. With the support of the Gulf Coast Community Foundation, we can build on that in the school year ahead. It makes all the difference in the world.”

Since 2004, EOD’s outdoor art exhibit, celebrating the theme of “enriching lives through diversity,” showcases the art and words of thousands of artists and writers from around the world, including hundreds of area-based students and educators. Embracing Our Differences’ annual outdoor exhibits are the heart of a year-round program of activities designed to use art as a catalyst to create awareness and promote diversity.

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

About Gulf Coast Community Foundation

For 25 years, together with its donors, Gulf Coast Community Foundation has transformed our region through bold and proactive philanthropy. Gulf Coast is a public charity that was created in 1995 through the sale of the Venice Hospital. Since then, it has become the philanthropic home of nearly 1,000 families, individuals, organizations, and businesses that have established charitable funds there, and has invested over \$340 million in grants and initiatives in the areas of health and human services, civic and economic development, education, arts and culture, and the environment. Learn more at GulfCoastCF.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.