



New exhibit along Bradenton Riverwalk embraces differences



One piece of art from the Embracing Our Differences, a Sarasota non-profit group promotes respect on a 12x16 foot billboard. This work is one of 39 pieces of art along the Bradenton Riverwalk, on display until May 22.

By Virginia Johnson, Entertainment Host / Reporter
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BRADENTON --

A new outdoor art exhibition along the Bradenton Riverwalk encourages us to embrace our differences.

Thirty nine billboards carry a message. It's the same message from the group responsible for the outdoor art -- [Embracing Our Differences](#).

"Respect," said the group's Executive Director Michael Shelton. "I sometimes oversimplify it, and say you know, we just want people to learn how to play nice in the sandbox."

It's the 11th year of the Sarasota-based program, and it's the second time the art graces the Bradenton Riverwalk. The exhibition runs through May 22.

For this display the group received more than 6,000 art and writing submissions from 44 states and 52 countries.

It's no accident the biggest cluster of the exhibition is right next to a children's playground.

"That's because first of all, they are the brightest ones out there, by far," said a smiling Shelton. "Not only the brightest but the most creative. About two-thirds of our art and creative writing part of our exhibit comes from our students."

The group hosts the same exhibition in a Sarasota park as well.

Their educational program reach thousands of students in Manatee and Sarasota counties.

"We think having reinforced this constant message though creative thinking skills, that not only will they come out better thinkers with a broader view of the world, but they'll be kinder, gentler people too," said Shelton.