



Gulf Coast Community Foundation Awards Major Grant To Embracing Our Differences

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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 mission. According to Sarah Wertheimer, Embracing Our Differences' executive director, the grant will help fund the organization's 2019 outdoor exhibition celebrating diversity, which runs January 19 to March 15 in Bayfront Park in downtown Sarasota. The grant will also be directed to empower EOD's annual educational outreach programs and initiatives.

"We're very grateful to Gulf Coast Community Foundation for its monumental support of Embracing Our Differences' mission to promote and celebrate diversity through the power of art and education," says Wertheimer. "Gulf Coast's contributions have played a pivotal role in our growth over the past 15 years. With

their support, we will continue to honor the amazing spectrum of human potential-and celebrate the differences that make each individual precious and irreplaceable."

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 retreats, which provide area educators with skills, strategies and resources relating to arts appreciation, character building and diversity education.

"This grant opens up a world of possibilities for thousands of area students and educators to play a leadership role in transforming lives and building stronger communities," says Wertheimer. "Last year, 932 teachers and 39,211 students participated in our initiatives. We're teaching concrete strategies to inspire students to reject destructive attitudes and embrace the full potential of inclusion and diversity. For both educators and students, this new awareness can be life-changing."

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

Together with our donors, Gulf Coast Community Foundation transforms 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, we have become the philanthropic home of more than 700 families who have established charitable funds here, and we have invested \$300 million in grants 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.