

Sarasota 8th-Grader Named Student Winner Of Annual Art Exhibit

The winners will be on display April 4 to June 1 in Sarasota's Island Park, 5 Island Park Drive.

By [D'Ann Lawrence White](#), Patch Staff | Mar 26, 2018 10:04 am ET

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SARASOTA, FL – One painting is a twist on Grant Wood's American Gothic portrait. But, instead of a white Midwest farming couple, it features a black man and a Muslim woman.

Another painting is a play on the famous World War II poster of Rosie the Riveter showing her muscle. However, in this version, Rosie the Riveter is multiracial.

These were among the 8,325 entries from 98 countries submitted for the Embracing Our Differences 15th annual juried outdoor art exhibit. The winners will be on display April 4 to June 1 in Sarasota's Island Park, 5 Island Park Drive.

Since 2004, the nonprofit Embracing Our Differences has used art and prose to promote diversity through its annual international art exhibit consisting of 45 billboard-sized works of art accompanied by an inspirational quote.

Awards were given for Best-in-Show Adult, Best-in-Show Student, and People's Choice categories, with the last chosen by visitors to the exhibit. Adult winners received \$1,000; students received \$1,000 to be directed to their school's art program.

Among the student winners was Elisa Uzcategui, an eighth-grade student at Sarasota Military Academy Prep, who received the Best-in-Show Student award for her work, "The New Rosie the Riveter."

"Rosie is a symbol of American feminism," said Uzcategui. "I wanted to show the new Rosie in a different light, so I made Rosie multiracial. Her eyes are a mix of Caucasian and Asian traits, her hair is an Afro and her skin color resembles people of Latin American and Hispanic origins. My new Rosie represents the strength of many races."

The award for the Best-in-Show inspirational quote was given to Hayley Peace, a sixth-grade student at Pine View School in Osprey, for "If your heart opens, doors will too."

Other quotes selected for the 2018 exhibition include:

- "Sometimes being the bystander can be just as bad as being the bully" by Haylie Smith, a seventh-grader at Sarasota Middle School.

- "Flags show where we come from; actions show who we are" by Seth Morano, an 11th-grader at Booker High School in Sarasota.
- "Hatred is a cage, kindness is the key" by Dorian Carter, a sixth-grader at Pine View School.
- "I'd rather go alone than follow a group of people going the wrong way" by seventh-grader Gianna Nicora.
- "I'm proud being me and celebrating you being you" by Nkoyo Uche-Nwosu of Lagos, Nigeria.

"Yet again, thousands of people answered the call to create art that celebrates the values of diversity, inclusion and respect," said Sarah Wertheimer, incoming executive director of Embracing Our Differences. "We're honored to enter our 15th year with this outpouring of faith in humanity from the global human family."

Wertheimer said the winning images combine a deep understanding of both medium and message.

"It's not enough to have something to say," she said. "You have to get your message across when the art is blown up to billboard size."

Wertheimer said the quotes accompanying each artwork are insightful.

"Every quote provides insight into our common humanity—as well as the differences that make us all unique," she said. "We're always moved by the heartfelt thought, creativity, wit and compassion the quotes represent."

For more information about Embracing Our Differences, call [\(941\) 404-5710](tel:9414045710) or visit EmbracingOurDifferences.org.