

Venice Middle student's art featured in 'Embracing Our Differences'



DIVERSITY DUET: Eighth-grade student Mackenzie Reiss's painting, "A Duet is Often Better than a Solo," won Best of Show in the Student category of the 2015 Embracing Our Differences art competition.

VENICE, Feb. 20, 2015 – A painting by Venice Middle School eighth-grade student Mackenzie Reiss has been selected for display in the 2015 art exhibit Embracing Our Differences. Reiss is an eighth-grade student at Venice Middle School whose work "A

Duet is Often Better than a Solo” was chosen from among thousands of entries from 118 schools as “Best in Show” in the Student category.

Reiss’s colorful and imaginative piece, created using acrylic paints, depicts a guitar and a violin lounging on a blanket together under a starry sky. It will be featured as part of the Embracing Our Differences outdoor art exhibits at Sarasota’s Island Park and at Bradenton Riverwalk from March 29-May 31. Venice Middle School will receive \$1,000 to use for its art programs.

When asked what inspired her painting, Reiss said, “I like music and when I’m in band class my teacher tells us to listen to the other instruments and try to blend in with the ensemble. This idea reminded me of the way we need to listen to each other, even though we may not look or sound the same. We also must accept everyone as they are and attempt to befriend everyone around us.”

Venice Middle School is located at 1900 Center Road.

About Embracing Our Differences

Embracing Our Differences believes that diversity is one of the world’s greatest assets. The organization’s goal is to create a community where diversity and inclusion are honored, while teaching the importance of being an “*up-stander*,” not a “*by-stander*.” The centerpiece of Embracing Our Differences is an outdoor juried international art exhibit featuring 39 billboard-size images created by local, national and international artists, writers and students reflecting their interpretations of the theme “*enriching lives through diversity*.”

The Exhibit

Each year the Embracing Our Differences international art exhibit gets bigger and better. The 11th annual exhibit in 2014 was no exception; it hosted 293,000 visitors, bringing attendance to more than 1.9 million people since 2004. The 2015 exhibit received 6,454 submissions, representing 80 countries, 42 states and 118 schools. Submissions were received from such distant lands as China, Iran and Vietnam.