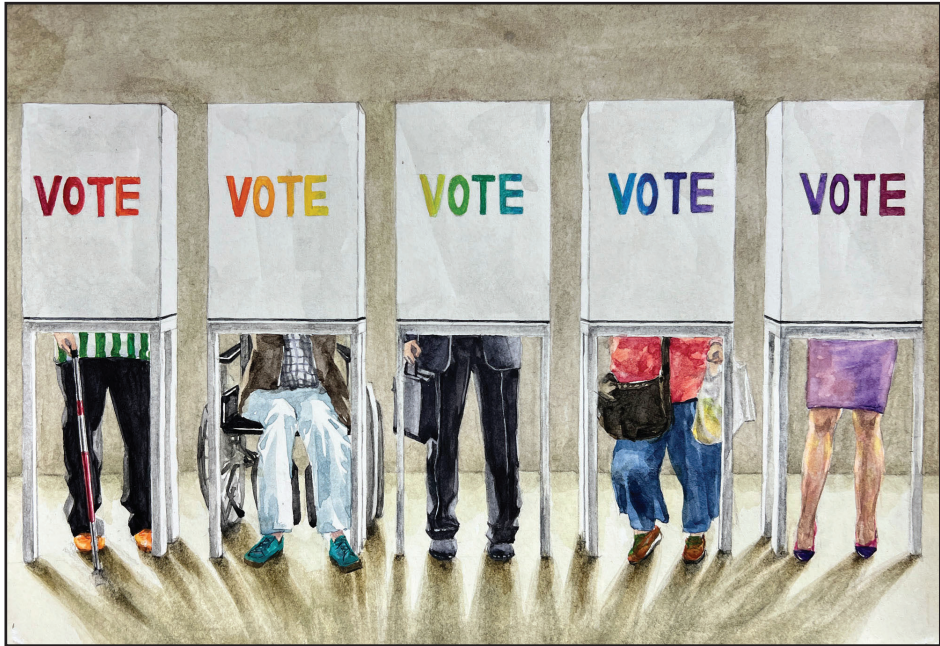
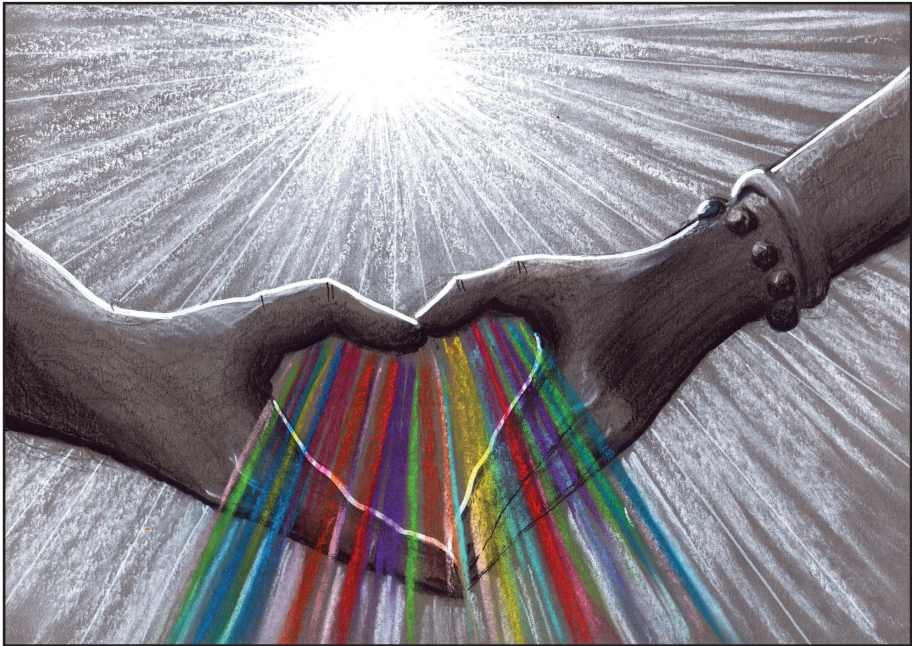


Embracing Our Differences Annual Exhibit

Runs to April 19 at Sarasota’s Bayfront Park



“Equal Booths” by Siwon Jung of Seoul Scholars International Art & Design in Seoul, Republic of Korea—winner of the Best-in-Show Student Artwork Award—portrays a diverse line of voters stepping into identical polling booths to highlight the profound equality of the democratic act.



“The Power of Love” by Eda Uzunoğlu of Istanbul, Turkey—winner of the Best-in-Show Adult Artwork Award—depicts two hands forming a radiant heart, symbolizing love’s ability to illuminate and unite our shared humanity.

Embracing Our Differences’ 2026 international outdoor art exhibition is on display at Sarasota’s Bayfront Park.

Sarah Wertheimer, President & CEO of Embracing Our Differences, says, “Every year, this exhibition reminds us that art has the power to bring people together in ways that feel both hopeful and deeply human. In a world that can feel divided, moments like this—standing side by side, experiencing these stories—matter more than ever.”

Wertheimer notes that EOD is offering free Saturday tours through April 18 at 10 a.m. “It’s a wonderful opportunity to experience the exhibition and explore our new line of upcycled merchandise, hand-sewn from past exhibition banners.”

This year’s response to the call for artwork and inspirational quotations was strong with 14,904 entries pouring in from 125 countries and 48 states. Students from 574 schools around the world submitted artwork or quotations to the juried exhibition. Awards for artwork are given for “Best-in-Show Adult,” “Best-in-Show Student,” and “People’s Choice” categories, with the last chosen by visitors to the exhibition.

Adult art winners each

receive \$2,000; students receive \$2,000, which they split with their school’s art program. Awards are also given for inspirational quotations. Adult quotation winners each receive \$2,000; students receive \$2,000, which they split with their school’s Language Arts programs.

To see all the works in the 2026 exhibition, visit the online gallery at www.embracingourdifferences.org.

2026 WINNERS:

#2 The **Best-in-Show Adult Artwork Award** was presented to Istanbul-based artist Eda Uzunoğlu for “The Power of

Love,” a radiant image of two hands forming a heart from which bands of color burst into the darkness. Her illustration transforms a simple gesture into an emblem of hope, reminding viewers that compassion generates its own light.

#1 The **Best-in-Show Student Artwork Award** went to “Equal Booths” by Siwon Jung, an 11th-grade student at Seoul Scholars International Art & Design in Seoul, Republic of Korea. Jung’s watercolor depicts a row of polling booths where only the lower halves of voters are visible—each different in ability, background, and circumstance. Above them, the shifting

colors of the word “VOTE” underscore the shared right and equal voice each person carries into the booth.

The **Best-in-Show Adult Quotation Award** is: “Kindness is the language we all understand, even when our stories are written in different alphabets,” submitted by Yuliya Mitskevich of Warsaw, Poland.

The **Best-in-Show Student Quotation Award** is: “Dulling someone else’s pencil will not make yours any sharper,” by Ingrid Cushman, a 10th-grade student at Pine View School in Osprey.

For 23 years, EOD has welcomed the community to its annual outdoor exhibitions of 50 bill-board-sized works of art and quotations celebrating inclusion, kindness, and respect. With more than 5.2 million visitors to date, the exhibitions remain the centerpiece of year-round education programming that fosters understanding and connection through cultural field trips, reading days, student clubs, and teacher workshops.

The 2026 exhibitions run to April 19 in Bayfront Park, Sarasota, and March 7–April 12 in Poynter Park, St. Petersburg.

For more information about these exhibitions or **Embracing Our Differences**, call 941-404-5710 or visit EmbracingOurDifferences.org.

