

***The Observer and the Observed* receives two national ECCO Awards**

The Sarasota Partnership for Children’s Mental Health received two awards at the national U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) conference in Chicago. The partnership received the Silver Excellence in Community Communication and Outreach (ECCO) Award, and the overall People’s Choice Award from among 23 nominated projects. Both awards were for the cultural diversity art project and documentary, *The Observer and The Observed*.

The conference was attended by 1,500 people; 80 SAMHSA project sites entered their work for consideration in various categories for these awards. “We were honored by these awards – one of these was voted on by our peers working in mental health across the nation,” said Anne Ferrier, creator/leader of the project and formerly the partnership’s Cultural and Linguistic Competency Coordinator.

“The Observer and The Observed” project and documentary engaged 16 local artists representing diverse cultures, ages and backgrounds in using artistic expression as a way to increase awareness and acceptance of the needs of children and families impacted by emotional and behavioral challenges. The project was a collaboration between the Sarasota Partnership for Children’s Mental Health, the 16 local artists who donated their time, the families who participated in the project, the numerous volunteers who guided the project, BRAD!BRYAN Multimedia Inc., which created the documentary to highlight the project, and the Art Center Sarasota. The art projects were on display at the Art Center Sarasota last July-October, and the documentary received accolades at the Sarasota Film Festival and Movieville International Film Festival.

“Every person has an ‘observer’ – a unique lens for how we observe, react and interact with the world, based on our beliefs, life experiences and the culture we have lived in,” said Ferrier. “We are always dealing with diversity. Diversity and culture is not in the color of our skin; it is in the way we see, listen, touch, speak and move.”

Following the project, the partnership continued the conversation by hosting World Cafes, monthly forums for people with diverse points of view to come together and listen to each other.

The Sarasota Partnership for Children’s Mental Health is a network of community partners, agencies and families working together to change the way children with social and emotional issues are helped and understood. Services and support systems are family-driven, culturally sensitive and individualized for each child and family. For more information, visit www.allaboutsarasotakids.org .

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For more information on the documentary film, visit www.observermovie.com .



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