Grace (Gealey) Byers can currently be seen as Anika Calhoun on the hit FOX series Empire, which returns for season three in the fall of 2016. Byers was raised in the Cayman Islands by her African American mother and Caucasian father. Both of her parents are deaf and thus, she was raised learning sign language and understanding what it meant to be a child of deaf adults (CODA). Although people treated her parents as “deaf and dumb” and Byers as “too light” or “too dark,” these challenging experiences made her strong and committed to following her dreams.

Byers moved to America alone to attend the University of South Florida in Tampa, where she received a B.A. in Theater Arts. During her time at USF, acting afforded Byers the opportunity to communicate viscerally – a desire that stemmed from her childhood. Following college, Byers attended the University of California Irvine's graduate program and obtained her M.F.A in acting. A successful showcase took her from Los Angeles to New York City, where Byers performed professionally. Several theater productions, short films, and national commercials led her to Chicago, where she is currently based. In her free time, Byers is involved in Saving Our Cinderellas, a movement that helps and empowers young girls and women to stand up against bullying, address social issues, and uplift one another in support of positive interests.

From near-death experiences to a unique childhood, Grace (Gealey) Byers shares her personal philosophies with audiences. She believes in taking the time to be still and become aware of oneself, and to have compassion and grace for one another. She feels that there are always opportunities for growth, that each person has their own complex and intricate story. On a more personal level, Byers discusses the discrimination she faced in moving to America, the social and cultural adjustments she made after moving, and the importance of celebrating life in the moment.

**Topics:**
- My Story: The Ups, Downs & Challenges
- My Brush With Death & What It Has Taught Me About Life
- Saving Our Youth: Empowering Young People To Stand Up Against Bullying
- Offering Grace In Place of Judgement
**SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

**TITLE SPONSOR | $7,500**
- Designated as an official sponsor for the Celebrate Diversity Awards Banquet
- Will publicly receive a Recognition Plaque at the event
- Corporate logo on the cover of the program
- Full-page ad in the program; Ads must be received ten (10) days before the scheduled event
- Three (3) reserved tables seating eight (8)
- Twenty-four passes to a private reception with the guest speaker

**MATADOR SPONSOR | $5,000**
- Designated as an official sponsor for the Celebrate Diversity Awards Banquet
- Will publicly receive a Recognition Plaque at the event
- Full-page ad in the program; Ads must be received ten (10) days before the scheduled event
- Two (2) reserved tables seating eight (8)
- Sixteen (16) passes to a private reception with the guest speaker

**RED AND BLACK | $3,000**
- Designated as an official sponsor for the Celebrate Diversity Awards Banquet
- Will publicly receive a Recognition Certificate at the event
- Half-page ad in the program; Ads must be received ten (10) days before the scheduled event
- One (1) reserved table seating eight (8) and 4 VIP reception tickets

**RAIDER | $1,500**
- Designated as an official sponsor for the Celebrate Diversity Awards Banquet
- Public recognition at the event
- One (1) reserved table seating eight (8)
- Four (4) passes to a VIP reception with the guest speaker

**TABLE SPONSOR | $1,000**
- Public recognition at the event
- One (1) reserved table seating eight (8)

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**SPONSORSHIP FORM**

Yes, I would like to sponsor the Celebrate Diversity Awards Dinner at the following level:

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<td>Table Sponsor</td>
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To pay by credit card please call Cory Powell at 806-742-8692

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