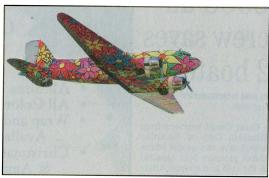
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STAFF PHOTO BY SAM WOLFE

The plane "Portraits of Hope" flies over the crowd during the second day of the First Flight Centennial Saturday afternoon.

Plane flies skies of hope for sick kids

Flowers painted by sick kids cover DC-3

By BRENDA KLEMAN

Correspondent

KILL DEVIL HILLS - Many types of aircraft took part in the First Flight Centennial airshow Saturday. One of them, a DC-3 painted in an array of brightly colored flowers, stood

out because of its unusual artwork but also because of who was responsible for it.

The brightly-colored flowers "Garden of Transit-AIRborne" were painted by 2,000 seriously ill children.

The idea for the flowered plane came from members of the non-profit charitable organization Portraits of Hope, in conjunction with NASA and

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PLANE

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the N.C. Department of Transportation. The art design was specifically made for the First Flight Centennial event.

Portraits of Hope founder Ed Massey said NASA took an interest in the project after seeing an interview he did on the Rosie O'Donnell Show. He added that discussions for the project went on for about two years.

'As far as we know, it is the only plane specifically designed for this event," he

The organization used a six-pointed flower design on the airplane because it universally represents joy, hope, and inspiration.

Massey said Portraits of Hope tries to bring creative

sick children around the but Massey said the plane's world. For the First Flight Centennial project, members of the organization went to hospitals with outlines of the flowers drawn on large selfadhesive panels. Children, many suffering from all types of serious illnesses including cancer, leukemia, HIV and burn victims, were given the flowers to paint.
"Many of these children are

fighting horrendous pain, but while they are working on the project they smile again," Massey said.

Portraits of Hope used specially-designed paint-brushes and tools to help the physically challenged children better manipulate them as they painted the flowers.

"These are often children who cannot engage in activities that other children take for granted," said Massey.

Unfortunately, many of the children who participated in therapy into the lives of the project are no longer alive,

part in the Wright event would to the children's family members.

plane, but this exhibition will taxicabs. be a fantastic, worldly event vibrant colors.

craft participating in a special masterpieces despite their centennial ceremonial fly-by hardships," he said.

As for future projects, Masbring pride and fond memories sey says he's in negotiations with Mayor Bloomberg, of New York City, to have the "We may be the slowest flowers painted on the tops of

"It serves to inspire the pubwith all eyes focused on the lic at large and is a shining reminder to all of the adver-The 10,000 square-foot plane sity the youngsters live with, of brightly painted surface will while highlighting their abilalso be among a hundred air- ity to accomplish marvelous