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FINAL  
EDITION  
FIFTY CENTS

# Dayton Daily News

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RAIN, FLURRIES  
HIGH 44. LOW 24.  
FORECAST, B10

## HOPE

*Displays art from  
children worldwide*

CONTINUED FROM A1

structures around the world since 1995, but this is the first time it has used an airplane.

The initial idea came from NASA, which wanted to include Portraits of Hope in the centennial celebration, Massey said.

"Without knowing anything about aviation, we said, 'We want an airplane,'" he said Monday.

NASA directed Massey to Steve Merritt, aviation program officer for North Carolina's aviation department. Merritt is coordinating the civilian flying side of the celebration.

Merritt thought the venerable DC-3 would have nostalgic appeal, be big enough for the flower patterns to be visible from the ground, and slow enough that the wind wouldn't peel off the decals.

"The DC-3 is probably the greatest airplane ever built and it's the most beautiful airplane ever

built," said Merritt, who has been flying for 33 years.

It also happened to be an airplane Merritt has always wanted to fly, so he turned to a DC-3 instructor pilot he knew, Dan Gryden of Griffin, Ga.

Gryden was skeptical the Federal Aviation Administration would approve of such an unusual aircraft-covering job, Merritt said, but he supported the idea.

"He said, 'Well, if you can pull it off, let's do it.'"

Merritt said the FAA approved the idea, and other companies volunteered a hangar for the work and decal specialists to do the job.

Massey said the program offers a form of art therapy to children. He has been offering to fly journalists and promoting the project as a news story to increase the chances for the hospitalized children to see their work on TV or in newspapers.

Some didn't survive long enough to see the flights, he said.

Merritt, who has been flying the plane with Gryden, said it has been a hit.

"Everybody loves the airplane, period," he said.

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