



Hail a tulip taxi



Photos: William Farrington

'Flower children' makeover

By JEREMY OLSHAN
Transit Reporter

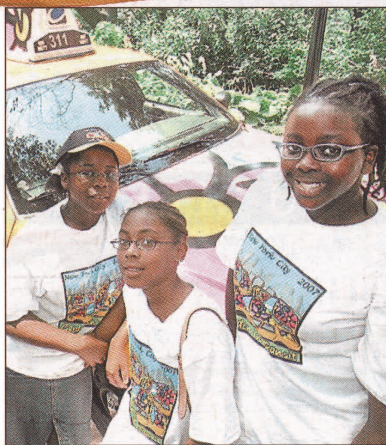
The city's taxis will soon be cruising on flower power.

New York's most artistic kids will be recruited to paint colorful floral motifs that will be affixed to the hoods, roofs and trunks of taxis as part of the biggest public art display to hit New York since Christo's saffron-hued "Gates" invaded Central Park last year.

Dubbed "Garden in Transit," the project is organized by the nonprofit Portraits of Hope, which has previously invited children — many of them seriously ill — to paint everything from buildings to blimps on similar adhesive vinyl canvases.

"New York is a vertical city, and from above it will now look like a garden," said Bernie Massey, co-founder of the organization.

"The symbol of our program is the flower, which stands for hope, joy, beauty and life across cultures."



FARE THEE WELL: Frankie Gonzalez (above left), Lonese Askew and Shanta Harrell are helping decorate city taxis (top).

Thousands of volunteers will be needed from schools, kids' programs and hospitals, Massey said, including adults to supervise the work.

Painting will begin in September, and the installation is expected to run through the end of 2007.

Taxi owners will have the option of making their cabs available for the project.

The Taxi and Limousine Commission yesterday ap-

proved the plan — which is part of "Taxi 07" — a centennial celebration of city cabs. Mayor Bloomberg touted the project outside City Hall.

"Taxicabs are one of New York's most enduring symbols, and they will turn into a colorful canvas," he said yesterday.

Groups interested in participating in the project are asked to call 311.

Additional reporting by David Seifman