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Lakeside students selected for 'Soaring Dreams' program

by **Patt Bixby**

Children from the Lakeside after-school program took part in what is a historic undertaking.

Portraits of Hope and Ameriquet Mortgage have created the "Soaring Dreams" program, which goes to after-school programs, inner-city youth, children in hospitals and pediatric facilities to teach children that they can accomplish anything they set their minds to.

"Children should dream big, bold dreams," said Ed Massey, Portraits of Hope founder. "Soaring Dreams encourages children to extend beyond boundaries, imagine life's possibilities without limitations, and to reach as high as their imagination will allow."

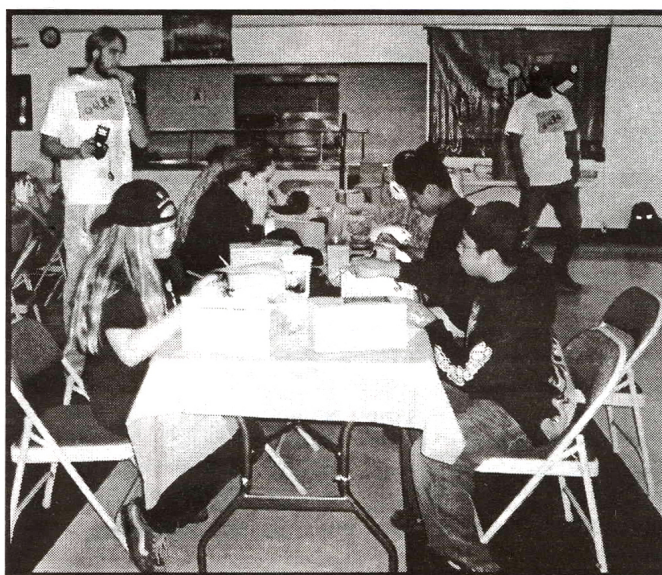
Lakeside kids, along with children from 66 west coast facilities, will create the largest airborne public art project in the world. Forty thousand square feet of special material

that will adhere to the world's largest blimp will be painted. The surface of this airship is five times larger than the Sistine Chapel Ceiling, the equivalent of 4 DC-3s, or more than 7 basketball courts.

Special material was spread out across the floor of the Community Center. The kids used special, high-quality artist's paint to paint the panels, then signed the edges with their names. When all the panels are completed, they will be adhered to the "Soaring Dreams" airship.

"Come Spring of 2005, the Ameriquet Soaring Dreams Airship will travel the United States broadcasting major sporting events, including baseball, football and major league all-star games."

Portraits of Hope is dedicated to improving the human condition through the arts. Children in pediatric facilities and children's hospitals are given special brushes and special non-toxic paint so that they



Lakeside children shown here painting their panels for the "Soaring Dreams" blimp. Photo by Patt Bixby

can experience the freedom of painting. Ed Massey has invented a special brush that attaches to shoes that were donated by Nike. This gives children the opportunity to paint with their feet if they are unable to use their arms. Massey feels that each child should have the freedom to

express themselves.

The airship is expected to fly above the cities and towns where the kids participated in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. When the blimp comes to Lakeside on Nov. 30, 2005, the kids who took part in the project will be able to look up and say "I did that!"