

Redlands Daily Facts

Kids' artwork will soar nationwide

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LOMA LINDA — Danielle Sigala guided her sons hand to the plate of paint.

Jalih grinned as he dabbled the paintbrush into the thick blue paint before making quick strokes on the plaster blimp.

"I am painting here, here, and here" the gleeful three-year old said with each stroke.

But the 3-year-old future Picasso missed the blimp and giggled as he painted a blue dot on his mom's hand.

Then the small blimp was finally covered in his red and blue paint strokes.

"That's it," he beamed.

Jalih's next stop was the pieces of vinyl spread on the floor.

But it was not just painting as usual. Jalih, a patient at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital, has spina bifida and was awaiting a procedure.

He was one of about 20 of the patients who took a break to paint a part of history.

The children painted six colorful shapes on self-adhesive vinyl material that will adorn an Amerquest Blimp that will fly five days a week, including appearances at major sporting events.

Portraits of Hope and Amerquest Mortgage stopped by the hospital Monday afternoon as part of the Soaring Dreams program.

The stop at the children's hospital was one of 66 paint sessions slated to be competed in March, when the completed airship — and the children's work — will be unveiled.

The blimp is scheduled to fly over

Loma Linda in March or April for the children to see.

The painting sessions are for kids in after-school programs, at-risk youth and children in hospitals.

But there's something special about visiting a hospital, says Susan Nassberg, executive director of Portraits of Hope.

"For us, it's always the most uplifting," said Ed Massey, co-founder of Portraits of Hope. "We bring in some of their enjoyment."

Nassberg said the shapes painted were actually considered the smaller shapes, but the visit to the hospital was the first time that there had been six shapes painted.

"Every shape is part of the design," she said.

The size of the shapes the children paint depends on how large the room where they are painting is, she said.

"They are having fun and being children and enjoying themselves and laughing and making history," she said.

Ben Livingston, 16, will spend Thanksgiving, his favorite holiday, in the hospital because he has cystic fibrosis. He said the painting brightened his stay at the hospital.

"The massive art and how it is living history. I think it is cool," he said.

Fifteen year-old Brittan Boyland-Broussard said she had not painted that way since she was a young child, but enjoyed it.

"It gives kids something to look forward to instead of being in their rooms all day," she said.

And the children were eager to paint. Three-year-old Alexandria Carrasco applied a thick layer of lavender paint to the large piece of vinyl in front of her.

"She has been asking all day to go paint," said her mother Cheryl.



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Brittan Boyland-Broussard, 15, paints on what will be part of a blimp.