

Ameriquet Launches the *Soaring Dreams* Airship Project



Ameriquet Skyship 600B over LA Dodgers Stadium April 2005. Picture: Passage Events

In a company PR handout dated 3rd April 2005 from Orange, California an announcement drew attention to a first-of-its-kind project. More than 5,000 children in after-school programmes and hospitals across the USA have teamed up with Portraits of Hope and the Ameriquet Mortgage Company to create the most remarkable and recognizable blimp in the world, the Ameriquet Soaring Dreams Airship.

Launched during ceremonies at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles, this colourful work of art is now flying in the skies above America on a nationwide tour. As she flies above major sports events and public ceremonies, the Ameriquet Soaring Dreams Airship is intended to serve as an inspirational symbol of achievement, encouraging children everywhere to set their goals high and accomplish their dreams.

Through their participation in this

giant collaborative project, children aged 5 to 18 received encouragement to think big, to express their goals for their lives, and to achieve the spectacular. They painted nearly 40,000 sq. ft. (over 3,700 sq m) of canvas, creating the bold and colourful mural that envelopes the airship.

In total, the children painted a surface area more than five times the size of the Sistine Chapel ceiling and the equivalent of four DC-3 passenger aeroplanes and seven professional basketball courts.

This project is a partnership between Portraits of Hope - a programme that conceives and develops one-of-a-kind creative projects merging the healing arts with inspirational public art - and the Ameriquet Mortgage Company - one of that nation's largest mortgage lenders, and serves as the flagship for Ameriquet's Soaring Dreams philanthropy programme.

"Our community development mission hinges on providing children with opportunities to develop self-esteem, learn the value of teamwork and be encouraged to think and dream big," said Julie Brandt, Vice

President of Corporate Philanthropy for Ameriquet. "The Ameriquet Soaring Dreams Airship is a powerful visual symbol to all of us that we can achieve great things as individuals and as a community."

"This is an opportunity for the unimaginable to become reality," said Ed Massey, Portraits of Hope founder. "This programme encourages children to reach as high as their imaginations will allow, to be part of something bigger than themselves, and to be a part of history. It's a wonderful chance for these youngsters to be celebrated all across the country and the world."

In conjunction with the launch of the Ameriquet Soaring Dreams Airship, Ameriquet is announcing a nationwide contest that aims to find children who can best answer the question "What is the biggest dream/goal you have for your life?" The six winners will win a ride for two on the Ameriquet Soaring Dreams Airship.

Contest entrants can submit a written statement (100 words or fewer) that details their biggest goal and their plan for making it come true. Stories can be submitted at www.soaringdreams.org and must be received no later than Thursday, 30th June 2005.