



Portraits of Hope to Unveil First Lifeguard Towers as Summer of Color Exhibition Comes to 31 Miles of LA Beaches

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This Wednesday, May 19th, at 10am, the first 3 of 156 lifeguard towers will be unveiled simultaneously at the Santa Monica Pier beach, signifying the beginning of the installation and exhibition phases of “Summer of Color,” a massive public art and civic project conceived and developed by Portraits of Hope, and involving all LA County lifeguard towers from Malibu to Palos Verdes.

Summer of Color is the culmination of the efforts of nearly 6,000 children in schools, hospitals, and social service programs – and 2,500 adult volunteers -- who have participated in the initiative’s program activities, which included painting the brightly colored panels for the walls and roof tops of the towers.

For six months preceding the installation, Portraits of Hope worked with children and adults from 118 school, hospital, youth, and social service programs in civic leadership and creative therapy sessions. The Braille Institute, Special Olympics, Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center, and Program for Torture Victims are among the many organizations that have participated.

All 2,200 panels for the 5-month exhibition are set to be installed on the towers during the next 3 weeks courtesy of Chris Bonas and Morley Builders, giving beachgoers this summer an unprecedented view of Zuma, Malibu, Santa Monica, Venice, Marina Del Rey, Playa Del Rey, Dockweiler, El Segundo, Manhattan Beach, Hermosa Beach, Redondo, Torrance, Palos Verdes, and San Pedro beaches.

“This project is a great visual symbol of community accomplishment, and it is especially meaningful because of the challenges many of those involved in the project have had to face,” says Ed Massey, co-founder of Portraits of Hope.

The project and exhibition has been championed by LA County Supervisors Zev Yaroslavsky and Don Knabe, and the LA Department of Beaches and Harbors and the LA County Lifeguards have worked closely to help coordinate the civic effort.

In preparation for the exhibition, the rails and cross beams on all 156 towers were freshly painted 3 weeks ago by 1,200 volunteers.

“During the civic leadership program sessions, we emphasize the power of teamwork and collaboration to affect positive change in our communities and lives. *Summer of Color* puts those concepts into practice,” added Bernie Massey, co-founder of Portraits of Hope.

Portraits of Hope initiatives are privately funded. The partnership and support of the private sector makes it possible to involve thousands of children in the program and to promote the project’s themes of civic leadership, environmental initiative, and community engagement.

Key partners and pillars: Ford Motor Company, which helped the LA County Lifeguards go green, and whose hybrid vehicles will be utilized for the installation of the panels on the beach towers; Laird Plastics and

Recycling, the first company in its industry to recycle outdoor plastic boards; Image Options printing and technology services; Skinny Cow, Benjamin Moore Paints, Verseidag Seemee US, EFI Vutek, Morley Builders, Drumstick, Vista Paint, Cornerstone OnDemand, The Weingart Foundation, Chris Bonas, Hotel Casa Del Mar, Adina Beverages, AAA Flag and Banner, Nazdar Coatings, Robert Gore Rifkind Foundation, Starbucks Volunteer Services, Subversive Nature Designs, Wooster Brushes, MACtac, Hasbro Studios, and The Bachelor, among other businesses, foundations, and individuals.

(http://www.portraitsofhope.org/about/what_people_are_saying.php)

After the Exhibition: The art panels will be donated to the participating institutions and to social service agencies around the world to beautify interior and exterior facilities. Many of the panels will be shipped to Haiti for transitional homes, temporary shelters, schools, hospitals, and senior centers – similar to how thousands of Garden in Transit panels from NYC were utilized in New Orleans after Katrina for transitional homes, school buildings, government structures, etc. (<http://www.portraitsofhope.org/about/poh-program-facts.php>)

About Portraits of Hope: Founded by brothers Ed Massey and Bernie Massey, Portraits of Hope merges the production and exhibition of high-profile public art with creative therapy for hospitalized children, and civic leadership education for students of all ages. The 501 (c)(3) program provides youngsters and adults who often face medical, physical, and/or socio-economic challenges with an opportunity to collaborate on high-impact projects and accomplish the spectacular. To date, Portraits of Hope has involved tens of thousands of children and adults in huge civic collaborations - in the U.S. and abroad – that have strikingly transformed everything from airplanes, buildings, and the New York City taxi fleet to blimps, tugboats, and NASCAR race cars.

For more information about the event or partner involvement, please contact: **Jed Wallace** (media) jed@streetrelations.com or 310.403.0559, **Stephen Ricci** (operations) 310.508.9684 / 310.951.5936 or **Portraits of Hope** 310.474.5141