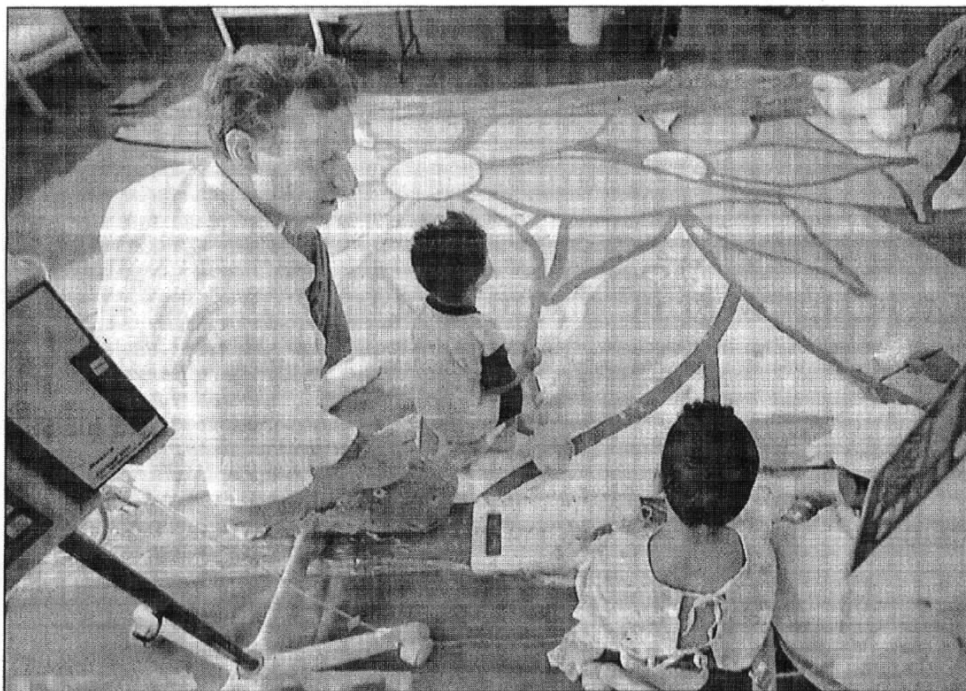


THE PORTERVILLE Recorder

THURSDAY MAY 20, 1999

GETTING THE COLOR JUST RIGHT



RECORDER PHOTOS BY JOHN TIPTON

Los Angeles artist Ed Massey encourages young patients at Lindsay hospital to paint a panel that's a part of Project 9865. Young hospital patients throughout the state are taking part in the project that will be displayed in Los Angeles.

Art brings joy to hospitalized children

Therapy: Project is largest in the world.

By HENRY WINCKEL
THE PORTERVILLE RECORDER

LINDSAY — Six-year-old Carlos Sanchez stepped slowly out of his wheelchair in the activities room at Lindsay District Hospital.

A vinyl panel stenciled with floral patterns lay on the floor, stretching from wall to wall.

Sanchez, suffering from dehydration and still hooked up to an I.V., was handed a brush and encouraged to begin painting a section of the panel.

He knelt carefully, dipped the brush into a container with green paint, and then pressed it against the panel.

At first his brush strokes were tentative, but soon he was fully absorbed in the activity.

Sanchez is one of thousands of children throughout California participating in a creative art therapy program designed to bring joy and instill pride in youngsters who have been hospitalized.



Carlos Sanchez paints a wooden replica of the tower in Los Angeles that will be covered by the large, painted panels.

At the same time, these children are helping to create the largest public art project in the world, according to artist Ed Massey who designed the panels and initiated the program with his brother, Bernie Massey.

"Eventually, this floral panel will join about 100 others in covering a 165-foot oil tower in

Beverly Hills, making it the largest monument in the western United States," Ed Massey said.

This will provide the tower, currently in a state of disrepair, with a major facelift.

"Each of the tower's sides will represent one of the four seasons, transforming it into a

colorful collaboration and a tribute to the legacy of these kids," he said.

Realizing that most pediatric patients are unable to come to the tower, Massey and his brother have spent the last four years bringing the tower to them.

"We've traveled and brought these panels to hospitals throughout the state," he said. "Our promise is that we will go to any hospital where there are children — even if there's only one kid at that hospital."

Yesterday found the Massey brothers at Lindsay District Hospital in the morning, and Valley Children's Hospital in Madera County that afternoon.

Ed Massey estimates the project, known as Project 9865, will be fully completed by the end of this year. The project derives its name from the tower's address on Olympic Blvd.

"Not only is this a tremendous outlet for the kids," he said, "but seeing the expression on their faces while they're painting has proven to be the most uplifting thing we have ever done."