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HIGHLIGHTS

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BORIS YARO / Los Angeles Times

ART AND FRIENDSHIP: Sarah Javaherifar and other Wilbur Avenue Elementary School students wrote greeting cards and participated in an art project for sick children. **B3**

Local Students Help With Art Project for Sick Kids

Wilbur Avenue Elementary School students Thursday collaborated in a project that, when completed, will cover a surface three times the painting area of the Sistine Chapel and four feet taller than the figure of the Statue of Liberty.

The students in kindergarten through third grade took turns using an extended paint roller to apply base coat on a 40-by-8-foot canvas panel.

Panel 19 is one of the largest of 100 that will be decorated by pediatric patients throughout California as part of a creative therapy program. The assembled numbered panels, representing the four seasons, will form the outer walls of a 155-foot tower billed by organizers as the largest monument in the western United States.

More important than the monument is the partnership between the Tarzana students and the children at Cottage Hospital in Santa Barbara, Panel 19's next stop, where pediatric patients have been waiting two months for the chance to adorn it with flowers.

Fortuna Ippoliti, whose 7-year-old daughter, Simone, attends Wilbur, got the school involved in Project 9865. The name refers to the street address of the old oil-



Simone Ippoliti and classmates make cards and work on part of a proposed huge, colorful monument.

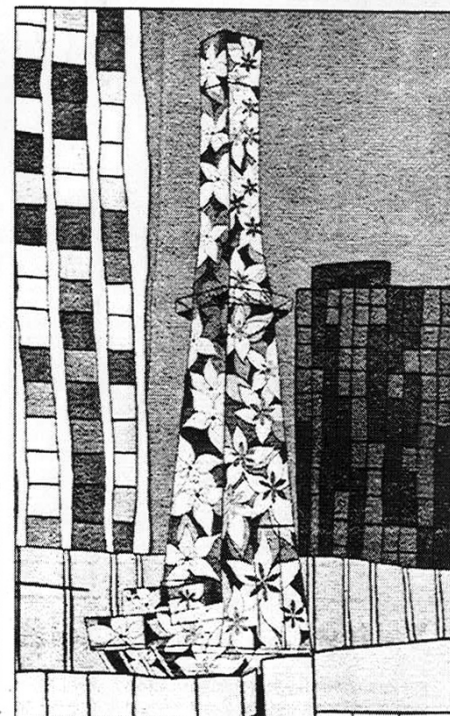
drilling tower on Olympic Boulevard in Beverly Hills that is destined to be transformed by the children's finished work.

"It's important for children, no matter how young, to understand that they have a responsibility to others, and this is a great way to teach them," Ippoliti said.

Between turns at painting, the children colored greeting cards and composed messages to the hospitalized children who will complete the next phase of the project.

"I did this only for you," wrote Scarlet Quezada, 7, in a card she had lavished with bright red hearts and printed letters.

Wilbur Avenue's contribution will be part of the "Spring" side of



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the monument, which will be visible from 10 miles away. The school is one of 200 statewide participating in the project, created by artist Ed Massey and his brother Bernie to give hospitalized children something other than an 8-by-11-inch sheet of paper to work on, Bernie Massey said.

—AGNES DIGGS