

## **Flower** power

## Painting panels for tower lets family give back to community

By Larry Mitchell

At one time, life for the Brott family of Willows centered on hospitals and special events for ailing children.

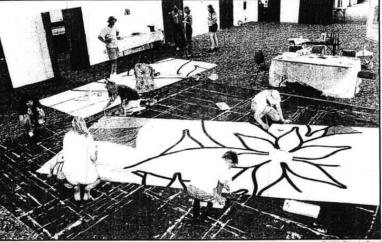
Then the miracles started happening, and little Holly Brott, a toddler who was terribly ill with cancer, got well.

For a while the Brotts maintained ties with the medical community and others who had provided so much help. But Holly's mother, Sherry, said eventually the family needed to make a break and return to normal life.

Last week, the Brotts were at Enloc Medical Center, once again joining in a hospital activity for children. None of them was sick, however. They were there to help paint flowers on large panels that will become part of a monument to the courage of youngsters battling diseases.

pitals and others who have recovered from serious illness to paint the panels.

At the end of this year, or early next year, els for the flower painting the panels will be placed on a 165-foot tower



A group paints flowers on large panels recently at Enioe Medical Center, part of a project that will end up on a 165-foot tower in Beverly Hills. Started by Ed Massey, an artist from Southern California, the finished product will be a monument to the courage of children bat-

For many months, he's been traveling around the state will have painted. They'll be sional pumping. Over the years, he watched the state helping arrange for children in hose supported by about 40,000 volunteers, as the gray structure weathered. It wasn't go to galleries, he said. teers have done such things as prep the pan- look worse and worse.

Here's how it all started. in Beverly Hills. Massey expects thousands of youngsters to be on hand for the unveiling.

Twenty years ago, when he was going to fight be decided to act. He was in a position to do so, having studied art at See FLOWER/10A

The project is the dream of 36-year-old Ed Massey, an artist from Southern California. It's been a huge project. When it's done, tower being put up. It covers machinery that Columbia University. His chief aesthetic he expects more than 3.500 children from has pumped a lot of oil and still does occalinterest has been public art — projects that including lots of school children. The volunvery pretty to begin with, and it began to

Besides getting involved in public art pro-jects, Massey had written children's books, "I thought why doesn't somebody do and he'd been visiting hospitals, reading his something with it," Massey said. stories to youthful patients. "I learned about

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the value of art therapy," he said. Visiting play rooms for children in hospitals, Massey said he noticed that flowers were one of the things these kids often drew.

That gave him the idea for decorating the oil-well tower. Children in hospitals could paint flowers, and the naintings could be put on the tower. It would be "a wonderful marriage," he said. "A child who may be battling a life-threatening disease would be giving life back to the structure."

The project was born 4½ years ago. Massey designed the pattern for the paintings with help from experts at the Huntington Botanical Gardens in Pasadena. The design is based on a flower with six petals, a floral figure that has appeared in artworks through history. Each side of the tower will represent one o the four seasons.

Several youngsters at Enloe on Wednesday were working on part of the winter scene. They painted panels that will be placed about half-way up the tower.

For the kids, it was a little like

painting by numbers. They were given a pattern already drawn on the panel, and they had to fill in the

It's been great to see the enthusiasm the project has inspired in the young painters, Massey said. He to hospital beds have been able to transform the structure. participate.

haven't moved their hands in his team have done a lot of fundmonths grasp the paint brush," he raising, and they are still seeking For months, the family faced horrisaid. "This has been the most help. Donations can be sent to ble uncertainty. Test after test kept uplifting program I've ever been Project 9865, 2118 Wilshire Blvd., involved with The children are get-ting the chance to say, 'I'm con-tributing to something.' The kids website: <www.project9865.org>, who and their family and friends will see this thing for many years."

polyvinyl laced with fiberglass, and senators Dianne Feinstein and Once all the panels are painted. they'll be specially treated to stand up to the weather.

The work is called Project 9865. It's named after the tower's address - 9865 Olympic Blvd. The tower stands on one the most heavily Holly if she'd like to do it, and she traveled streets in the LA area. It's was eager," said her mother, about five minutes from UCLA.

The Project 9865 budget of



Participating in the painting work at Enloe Medical Center: Back row, left is Holly Brott, right is Kyle Brott. They are holding a poster showing how the tower will look. Middle row (left to right) are Shawna Wright, David Wright and Paul Wright (like Holly, he was a cancer patient). Front row is Sam Brott. David and Sam are wearing Project 9865 hats. The Brotts are

and the volunteers who work with him have devised some ingenious Dinwiddle Construction to provide Children's Hospital in Oakland for systems so that even kids confined 120-foot cranes and manpower to a checkup.

rticipate. Massey is no mogul, able to Sherry, and her dad, Bob, endured "We've seen children who fund this effort on his own. He and the most terrifying time. A tumor

e this thing for many years." been easy to get support for the pened.
The painting is done on sheets of effort. Former Gov. Pete Wilson It w Barbara Boxer agreed to chair the project. And many companies and organizations are helping.

It was easy to recruit Holly Brott, too. As a former patient, she was invited to take part. "I asked

Sherry. Holly is fine these days. The about \$1 million includes in-kind only thing the 9-year-old needs to

But seven years ago she and was discovered on Holly's liver. pointing to the very worst progno-

website: <a href="mailto:cwww.project9865.org">cwww.project9865.org</a>, when she had to just "give Holly to God" and accept whatever hapwhen she had to just "give Holly to

> It was wonderful when the risky surgery succeeded. Sherry said Holly's tumor was removed and

> she recovered Most of the family - Holly, Sherry, Kyle, who is 11. and Samantha, who is 3%. — were down on the floor and painting at Esplanade Building

Wednesday. "We got a lot of community support," said Sherry, "It's nice to give